

Cavity Free In Tennessee

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Opportunity for Tennessee

- Tennessee - 5th state to develop a partnership with health care professionals
- Role Model
- Healthy People 2010 Oral Health objectives 21.1, 21.2, and 21.12
- Impact many other Healthy People 2010 Oral Health objectives

The Facts

- The US Surgeon General's 2000 Report, "*Oral Health in America*", identified tooth decay as the single most common chronic childhood disease:
 - *5 times more common than asthma*
 - *7 times more common than hay fever*

More Facts

- An emerging awareness of the nature and severity of diseases and disorders in the mouth and their serious implications for overall health has made it imperative that all health professionals engage more fully in oral health promotion and disease prevention.

The Reality

- More than ½ of all children between the ages of 5 and 9 have at least one cavity or filling
- By age 17, the incidence increases to 78%
- More than 51 million school hours are lost each year to dental-related illness
- 80% of child tooth decay is found in 25% of US children and adolescents

The Reality

- Low-income children are half as likely to have made a dental visit in the past 12 months
- One out of 4 children in America is born into poverty, and children living below the poverty line (annual income of \$17,000 for a family of four) have more severe and untreated decay
- Tooth decay is found in more than 40% of children by the time they reach kindergarten

Why Nurses?

- Public views general illness as a more significant concern than oral disease
- The target group frequently visits health professionals
- 6 visits in 1st year of life
- A part of EPSD&T
- Primary care providers educating families about good health practices
- Focusing on prevention and advocacy is a long-standing tradition in medicine

Legislation

- Legislation initiated by Oral Health Services
- Amended Dental Practice Act
 - Public Health Nurses in Public Health Clinics
- July 1, 2004



Training

- “Train-the-Trainer” method
- Nurse Directors, Nurse Supervisors, Dental Staff
- Dental Staff support

Training...



Training...



Training...



Training...



Where are we now?

- 7 Rural Regions - Trained
- 3 Metros - Trained
- Over 300 nurses trained
- > 3,000 children have received fluoride varnish – September 2004 – February 2005

Other Methods of Prevention

- Dispel myths
 - “Baby teeth aren’t important”
 - “...going to get decay and lose teeth anyway”
- Risk Behaviors
 - Diet
 - Proper care of teeth
 - Importance of dental home
- Refer early to establish dental home
- Refer for treatment

Ripple Effects

- Raised awareness of basic oral health
- Raised awareness of importance of oral health as it relates to total health
- Collaboration among health care professionals
- Increased use of fluoride varnish as anti-caries agent in dental program



Win ~ Win

Increased preventive measures, fewer cavities, more dental referrals, increased collaboration & appreciation among health professionals