

The Dental Therapist Project: Expanding Care to Every Community

*David Jordan
Dental Access Project Director
Community Catalyst
AACDP NOHC Pre-Session
April 2012*



About Community Catalyst

- A national non-profit health advocacy organization
 - everyone should have access to high-quality, affordable health care
- Collaborates with national, state and local consumer organizations, policymakers and foundations
- Builds and supports consumer advocacy networks in more than 40 states
- Runs successful state and federal issue campaigns: Children's Health, Prescription Access and Quality, Delivery System Reform, Dental Access, Community Benefits



Oral Health is Important to Overall Health



Yet tens of millions of Americans can't get dental care and are suffering as a result.

Photo credit: United Press International

Each State's Unmet Oral Health Needs and Environment is Unique



Consumers Must Be Involved

The best decisions are made when the people most affected have a voice.



Policymakers Will Hear From:

- Dentists
- Dental hygienists
- Dental schools
- Dental Insurance companies

State and Federal Policymakers Will Hear From:

Where is the consumer?

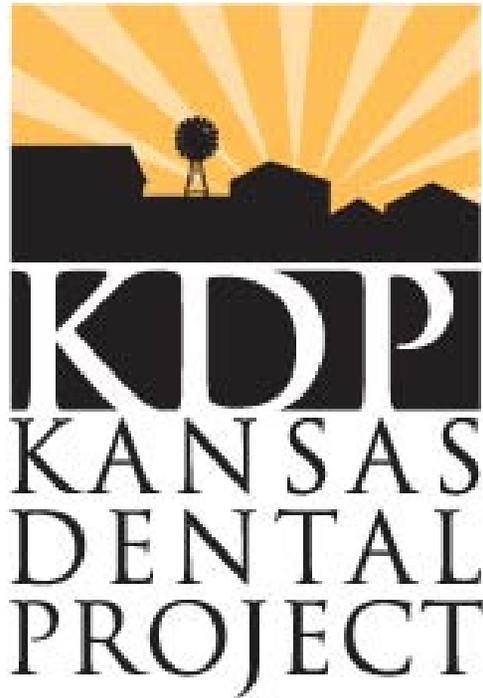


How We Partner With State Groups

- **Policy**
ability to analyze policy
- **Communications**
communicate with policymakers and public about policy
- **Organizing**
let the affected constituencies know when their interests are at risk or could benefit
- **Stakeholder coalitions**
find common ground with other interest groups
- **Resources to make this work**



Filling the Gap

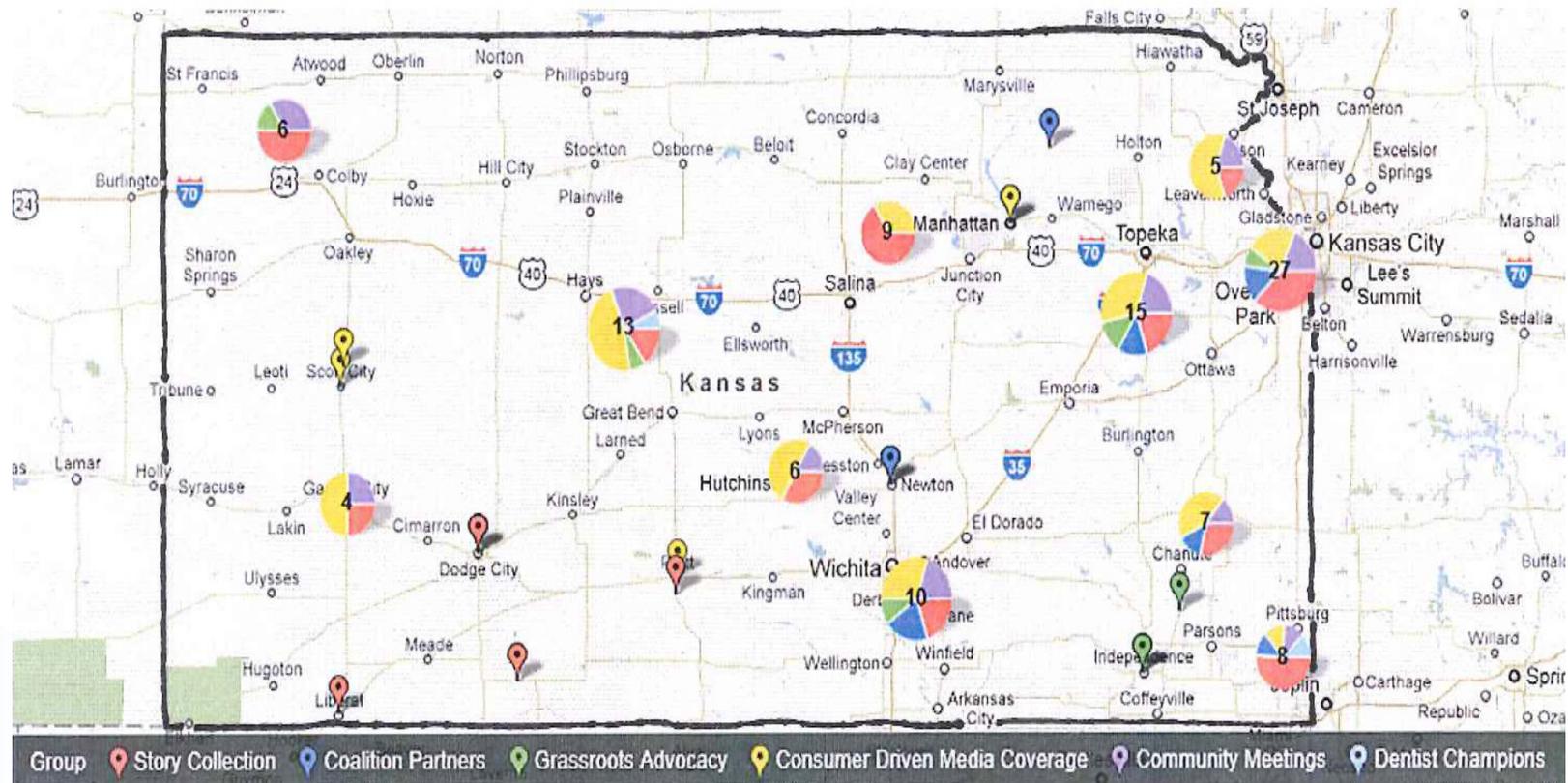


A statewide plan to address the
dental workforce shortage in
Kansas

Kansas

- 42 organizations are members of the coalition including the Kansas Dental Hygiene Association
- Over 200 stories collected
- Legislation introduced to establish Registered Dental Practitioner
- Support from safety net providers and the primary care association
- Wichita State University developed curriculum for a new provider

Kansas



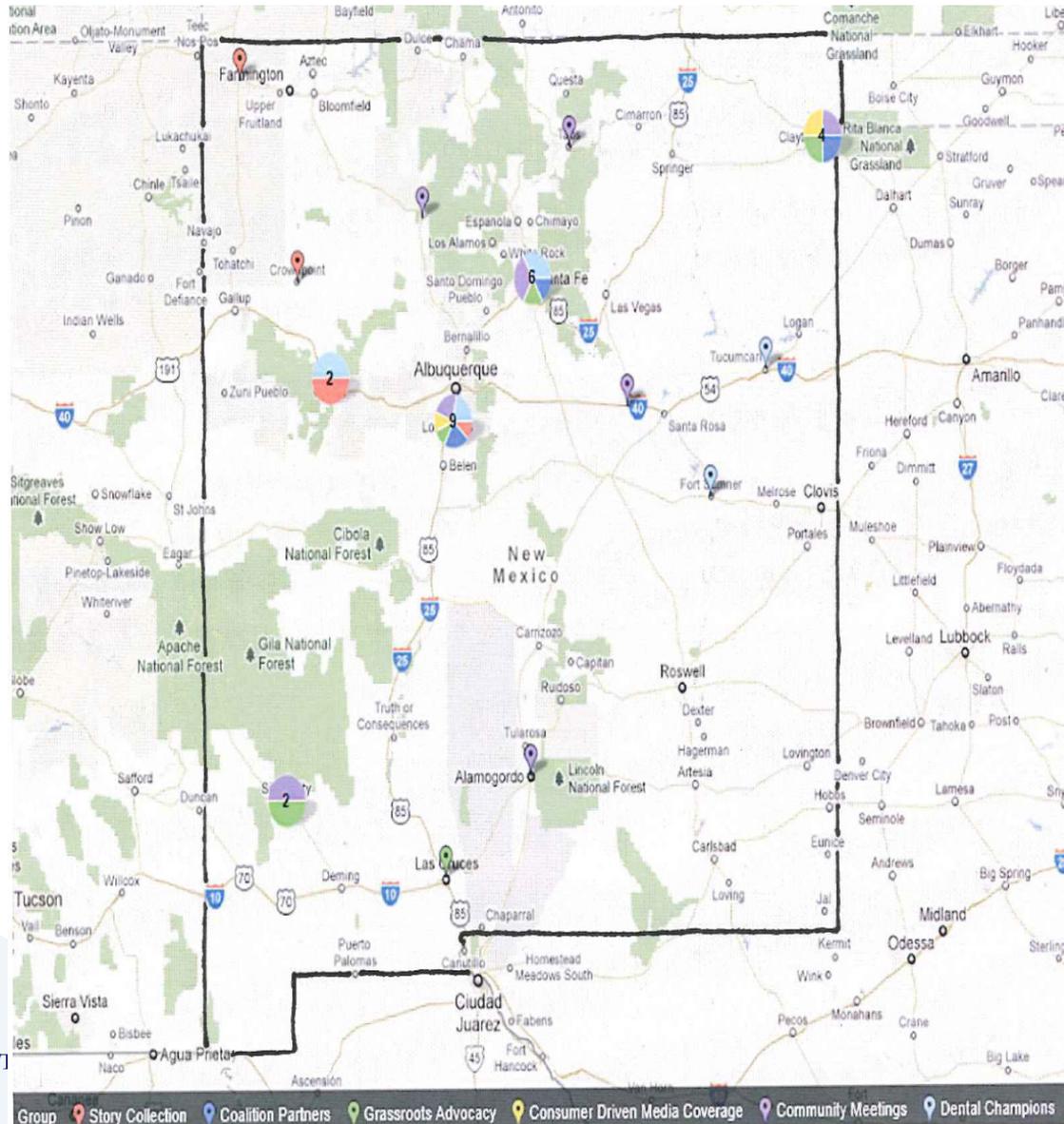


Health Action New Mexico

New Mexico

- Received support from key organizations such as New Mexico Public Health Association, Albuquerque Area Indian Health Board, AARP New Mexico, NM Health Resources
- Generated significant media coverage – two op-eds in Albuquerque Journal, KABQ, local NPR station
- Introduced legislation to establish dental therapist and dental therapist hygienists
- Received support from individual dentists and dental hygienists

New Mexico





Our mission

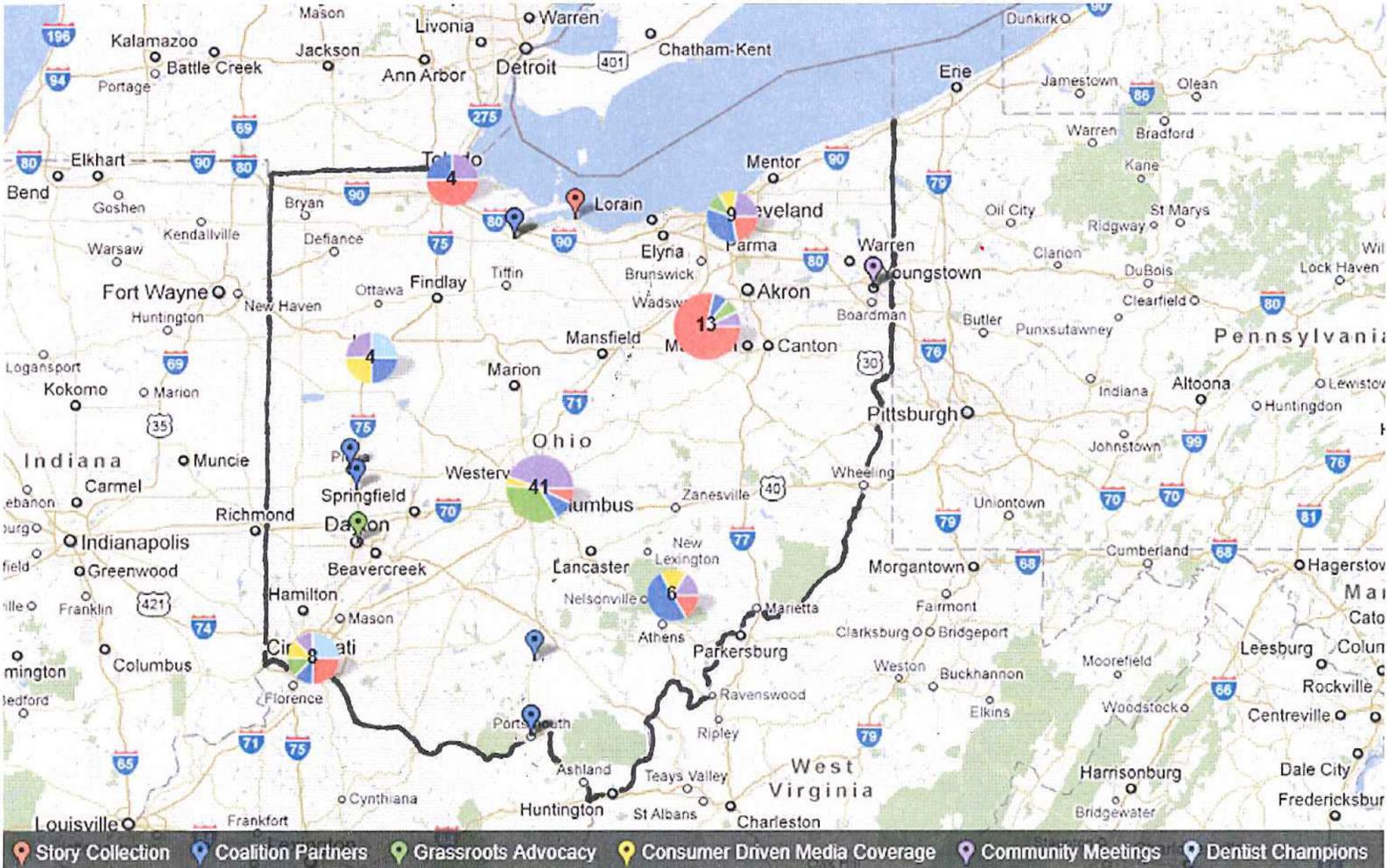
The Universal Health Care Action Network of Ohio (UHCAN Ohio) is a statewide organization working for high quality and affordable health care for all Ohioans through education and grassroots organizing

Ohio

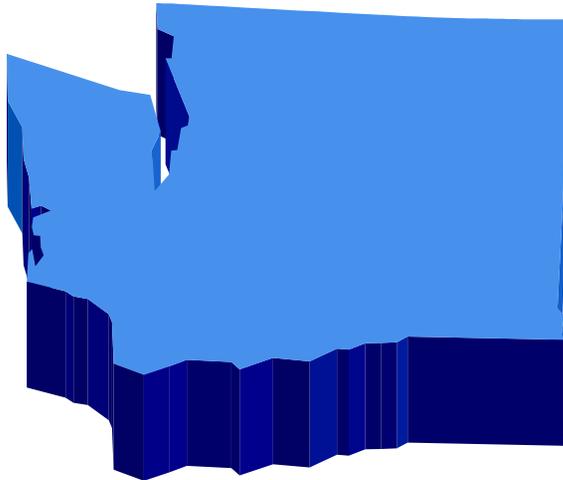
- 37 organizations have joined the Dental Access Now! Coalition
- Held over two dozen community meetings throughout Ohio
- Developed work group that included consumers, community voices, dentists, and dental hygienists to develop Ohio based model
- Conducted poll of registered voters that shows that 75% of voters support establishing a new dental provider
- Generated significant media coverage from community meetings and development of fact sheets profiling each of states 71 DPHSAs (up from 56 two years ago)



Ohio



WASHINGTON



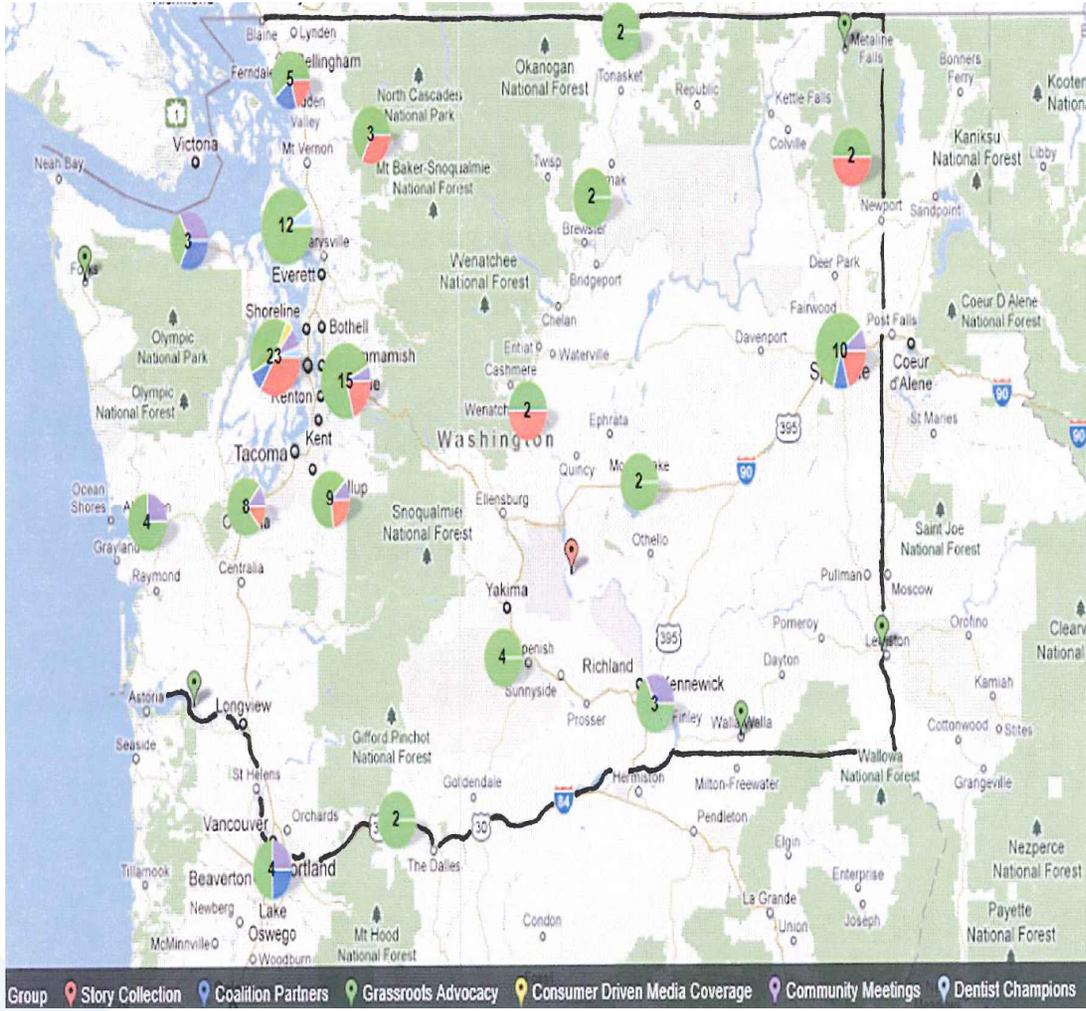
CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE

A Voice for Washington's Children, Youth & Families

Washington

- Worked with legislative champion, Rep. Ann Cody, to develop dental workforce bill – 2 year dental therapist and 1 year career pathway for bachelor's trained hygienists
- Secured Senate champion, passed Senate health care committee
- Secured support of the Washington Hospital Association
- Partnered with Washington State Dental Hygienists Association to support the bill
- Mobilized hundreds of grassroots advocates to support the bill
- Secured support from tribal community
- Partnering with University of Washington MEDEX Program; Eastern Washington University; community colleges

Washington



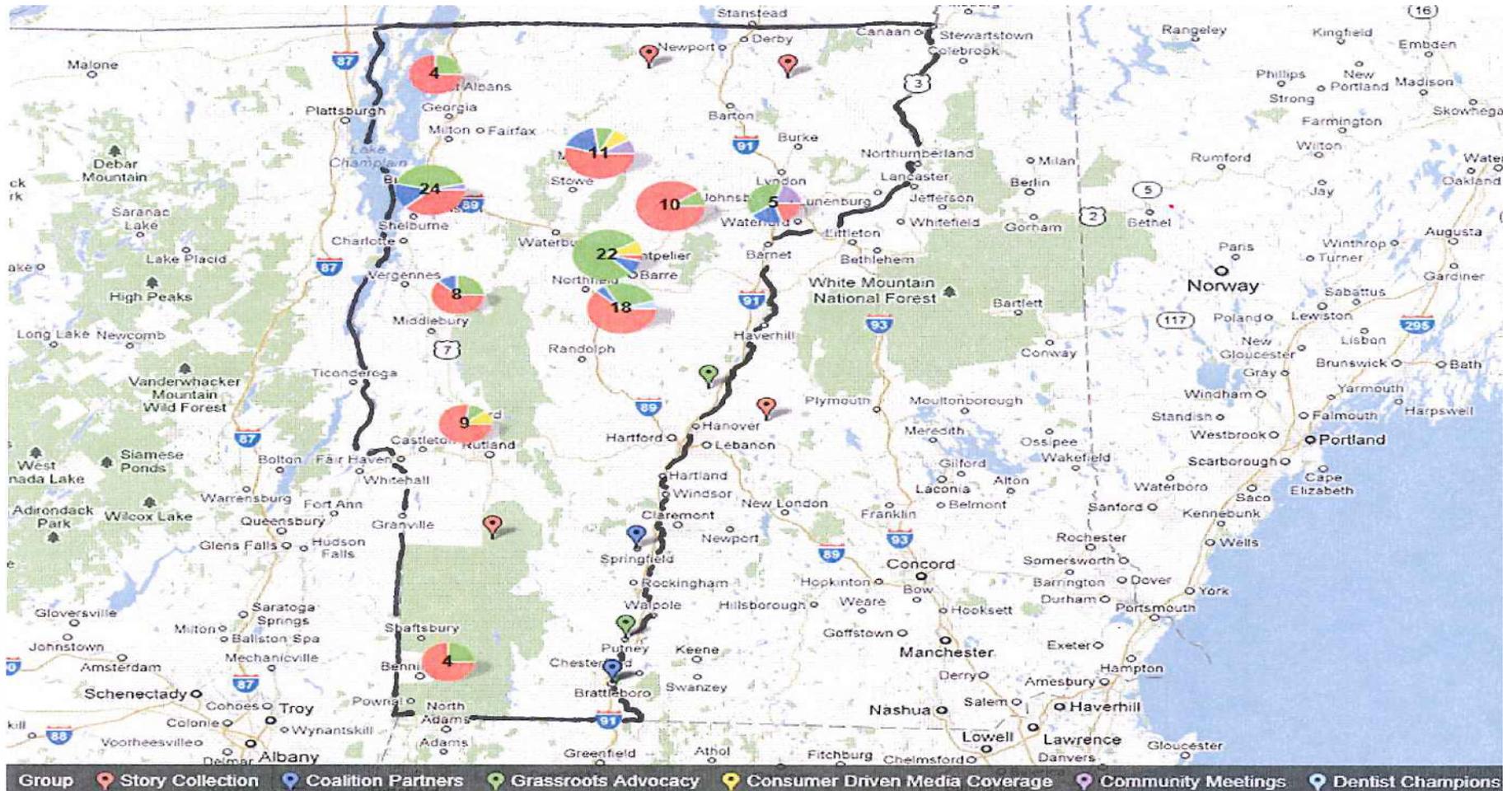
VERMONT
Oral Health Care
— for All —
COALITION

Vermont

- Over 50 organizations are members of the Vermont Oral Health Care for Coalition
- Developed broad based policy agenda including workforce, expanding Medicaid dental benefits, and integrating oral health into state's universal health care law
- Collected over 200 stories from consumers with unmet needs
- Held oral health care summit
- Collaborating with Vermont Technical College's Dental Hygiene Program on model and curriculum development
- Developed strong partnership with Vermont Dental Hygienists Association

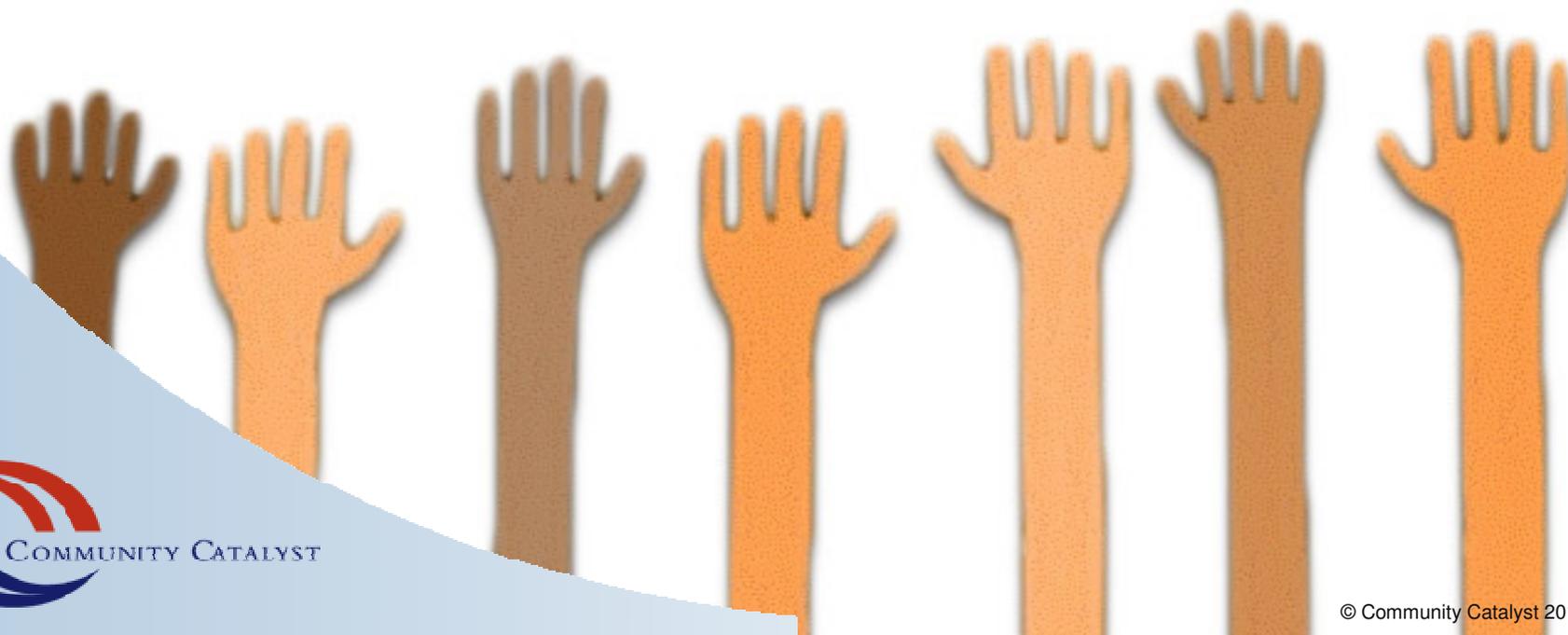


Vermont



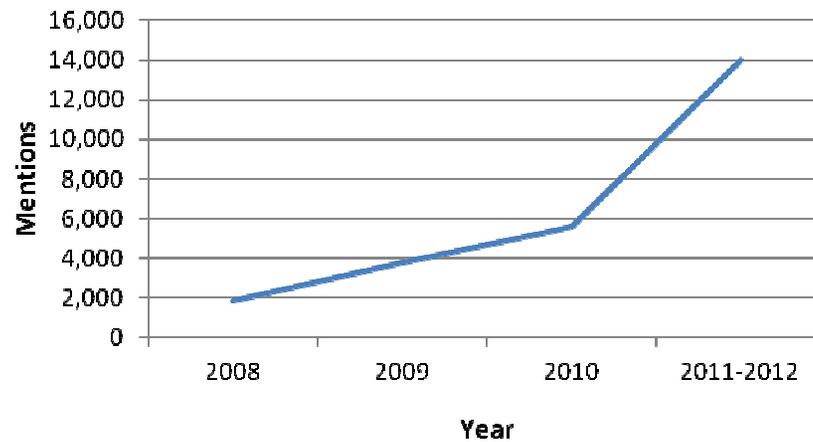
How is our work making a difference?

- Increased awareness of oral health
- Changing state and federal policy environments
- Growing momentum

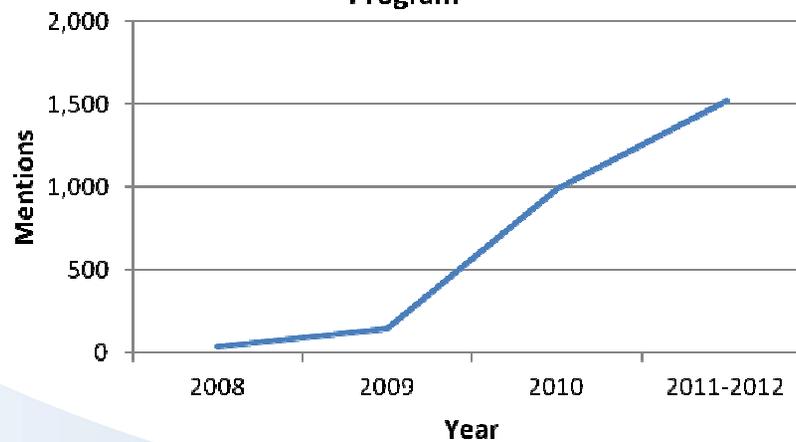


Growing Awareness and Coverage

Dental Therapy Google Search Results



Conversation: WKKF Initiative and Alaska DHAT Program



Growing support for oral health and dental therapy

- 79% of survey respondents say that receiving regular dental care is very or somewhat important
- 41% of respondents report that they or someone in their household has put off dental care in the last twelve month due to costs
- Respondents recognized that too many Americans cannot regularly access preventive and routine dental care and, as a result, 78 percent of respondents said they would support training new providers to offer routine dental care
- The survey indicated that cost and availability of providers are the major barriers to care:
 - 84 percent of respondents believe that the number of people who cannot afford dental care is a problem
 - 82 percent of respondents believe that it is hard for people to get free or low-cost dental care in the communities where they live
 - Nearly one third of respondents (30 percent) say they do not have access to a place where they get regular dental care

Changing State and Federal Policy Environments

- Senator Sanders and Subcommittee on Primary Health & Aging
 - Series of hearings
 - Report- Dental Crisis in America: The Need to Expand Access
- NY Times op-ed from former HHS Secretary Sullivan
- Growing research: literature review, ER report
- Ongoing national media coverage

Kansas

- Legislation to expand scope of practice for dental hygienists expected to pass
- Registered dental practitioner curriculum developed
- Fort Hays State University committed to launching training program

New Mexico

- Legislation passed to establish community dental health coordinator and expand scope of practice for dental hygienists
- Union County Health and Wellness network committed to housing dental therapy pilot and completed strong economic modeling on how dental therapists could benefit rural health systems like their own
- Significant support and collaboration with tribal communities

Ohio

- Developed a resource/hotline to help Medicaid enrollees access dental care
- Conducted poll of registered voters that shows that 75% of voters support establishing a new dental provider
- Growing recognition from policymakers and health departments regarding state's oral health issues

Washington

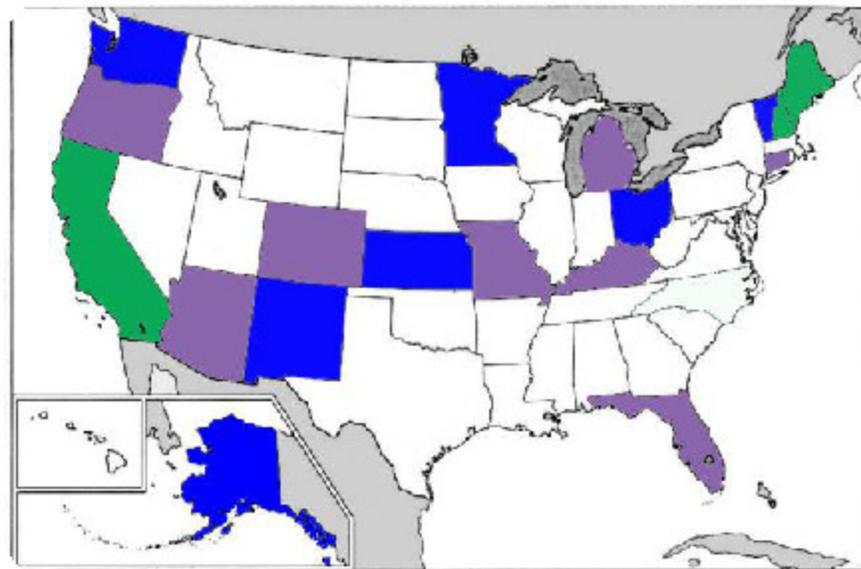
- Protecting Medicaid benefits (adult dental and children's benefits)
- Changing policy dynamic, the March Washington State Dental Association Newsletter reports, "Dr. Wentworth believes this issue will become increasingly difficult to defeat. "From calls asking for media interviews, to listening to questions posed by legislators, it is clear to me the midlevel issue has extensive support both outside and inside the dental community. The issue may be slowed down, but not without our profession losing credibility among those in the Legislature and among those advocacy groups that we partner with on other important issues."

Vermont

- Passed policy that expands Medicaid dental benefits for pregnant and nursing mothers
- Partnered with Sen. Sanders on successful field hearings
- State Department of Health added oral health to the department strategic plan
- Secured training partner at Vermont Technical College



MOMENTUM IS BUILDING: STATES INTERESTED IN DENTAL THERAPY



WKCF Funded

Pew Funded

States interested in
dental therapy

Electronic copies of this presentation are available by calling 617-338-6035. Organizations seeking to distribute or otherwise make widespread use of this publication are asked to notify Community Catalyst.

Discussion

Community Catalyst, Inc.
30 Winter Street, 10th Fl.
Boston, MA 02108
617-338-6035
Fax: 617-451-5838
www.communitycatalyst.org

