



Excellent Oral Health for ALL Virginians

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Send Us Your Feedback!



The Coalition's Legislative Committee is currently

drafting our legislative agenda for the upcoming **2014 Legislative Session.**

If you have any input regarding legislative priorities that will increase access to dental services, please contact Sarah Bedard Holland at 804.269.8721 or sholland@vaoralhealth.org.

[View our 2013 Legislative Priorities](#)

Thank you for your feedback!

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Webinar: Working Together to Promote

May 2013 Bulletin

Virginia Initiatives Collaborate to Improve Children's Access to Dental Services

Virginia's Medicaid dental benefit provides comprehensive coverage for children, including a dental visit by age one, as recommended by the [ADA](#), [AAPD](#) and [AAP](#). Despite this, only half of all Medicaid-enrolled children visit the dentist annually. The number is even lower - less than 25 percent - for children under three.



To address this issue, stakeholders from throughout the state are working collaboratively to implement strategies to increase the number of children receiving dental services.

Of note, Smiles for Children (Virginia's Medicaid dental benefit program) recently submitted an action plan to the federal Medicaid office that includes strategies to improve oral health care for all Virginia children, like reducing broken appointments and recruiting new providers. The plan aims to increase utilization of dental services among Medicaid-enrolled children by **10 percentage points** - a goal that, if met, will bring Virginia's utilization rate well above the national average.

The plan's early childhood component is met by the Coalition's early dental home action team - a subgroup of the Coalition's [medical and dental collaboration initiative](#) that is specially focused on increasing utilization among children ages 0-3 by promoting fluoride varnish application, encouraging dental referrals, educating consumers and linking providers across disciplines. The action team is comprised of dental professionals, early childhood educators, primary care providers and representatives from Smiles for Children.

To support these efforts, Virginia is one of seven states that has been selected to participate in a Medicaid Oral Health Learning Collaborative launched by the Center for Health Care Strategies with support from the DentaQuest Foundation.

If you would like to participate in or know more about the Coalition's activities, please contact Katherine Libby, program

Oral Health Care During Pregnancy



The American Academy of Pediatrics will host a free webinar on **Monday, June 3 at 1pm EST** to discuss the importance of collaboration among health professionals to ensure that the oral health needs of pregnant women are met.

[View more information](#) or [register online](#)

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[Read about the Coalition's accomplishments](#)

Please check with your HR department to find out if your gift can be matched.

manager, at 804.269.8723 or klibby@vaoralhealth.org.

[Read the news release about the Medicaid Oral Health Learning Collaborative](#)

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Community Water Fluoridation: Surgeon General Says Yes, Yet Portland Says No



Dr. Regina Benjamin, U.S. Surgeon General, joined many of her predecessors in officially endorsing community water fluoridation as an effective public health strategy. In a [letter](#) read at the National Oral Health Conference last month, Dr. Benjamin referred to water fluoridation as "one of the most effective choices

communities can make to prevent health problems while actually improving the oral health of their citizens."

In related news, Portlanders voted this week against community water fluoridation, leaving the city's 900,000 residents at an increased risk for tooth decay. Half of all first through third graders in Portland have tooth decay, and Oregon ranks 48th among states in access to fluoridated water.



[Read the ADA news release regarding Dr. Benjamin's endorsement](#)

[Read more about the Portland decision](#)

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Of Interest

Oral Health and Overall Health

[Oral health and overall health](#) are fundamentally intertwined. The following links present current information on how oral health is connected to overall health well-being.



- [Health Benefits of Saliva](#)
- [Periodontal Disease and Ischemic Stroke](#)
- [Periodontal Disease and Systemic Disease](#)

VCU's Inter Health Professional Alliance Honored

VCU's Inter Health Professional Alliance (IHPA) was recently honored by the University and the Council for Community Engagement for its student-led initiative.

[Learn more about the IHPA](#) or [download their fact sheet](#)



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www.vaoralhealth.org

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