



**Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors**  
**Topic Area: Oral Health**

**Labor, Health and Human Services, Education Appropriations Bill**  
**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**  
**National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion**  
**Division of Oral Health**

(dollars in thousands)

<b>Program</b>	<b>FY20 Enacted</b>	<b>FY20 President's Request</b>	<b>FY21 Recommendation</b>
Division of Oral Health	\$19,500	N/A	\$36,500

**Funding recommendation:** The CDC Division of Oral Health, which is located in the CDC National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, currently receives \$19.5 million from Congress to distribute to states for oral health prevention programs. The Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors strongly recommends an appropriation of \$36.5 million for the Division of Oral Health, which is a \$17 million increase from their current funding. Of the additional \$17 M, \$8 M would go towards funding 12 more states for Component 1 (surveillance, community water fluoridation, dental sealants) and 6 more states for Component 2 (medical-dental integration), \$1M would go toward supporting 4 additional tribal and territorial programs, \$4 M would support the provision of program technical assistance and support for surveillance, evaluation, policy and communication activities, and \$4 M would go towards research, epidemiologic analysis, translation of science to action, infection prevention, etc.

**Justification:** The mouth and teeth are integral to human health and well-being. When we lose the functions of the mouth and teeth, we lose our health. Oral diseases, including dental caries (tooth decay), periodontal disease (gum disease), and oral cancers, progress and become more complex over time, affecting people at every stage of life. This creates a significant personal and financial burden on individuals, public health systems and dental care systems. Oral diseases, are considered chronic disease just like diabetes, hypertension (high blood pressure), asthma, and breast and other cancers. Oral diseases impact almost everyone who lives in the U.S. sometime during their lives. Oral diseases cause people to lose time from work and school, go to the emergency department for relief of pain, and impact some people's ability to get a job or enlist in the military. And yet, while the CDC provides funding to every State Health Department for cancer, diabetes, and heart disease and stroke prevention programs, it funds less than half the states for oral disease prevention programs.

**Role of the state health agency:** State health agencies are responsible for assessing and tracking oral disease in the state's population, developing and implementing policies and programs to prevent or minimize the disease, and assuring that laws and regulations are in place to keep the public safe and healthy. To translate proven health promotion and disease prevention approaches into policy

development, health care practice, and personal behaviors, state oral health programs must have adequate capacity and infrastructure.

**How funds are allocated or used:** In 2001, CDC began funding state health departments for state oral health program infrastructure and capacity building. Grants are competitively awarded to state health departments. The average grant size is \$370,000 per state, per year. In 2018, 45 states applied but only 20 were funded. Twenty states have never been funded (Alabama, Arizona, California, Delaware, DC, Indiana, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Washington, Wyoming). Eleven states that were previously funded, are no longer funded (Alaska, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Michigan, Mississippi, Nevada, New York, Oregon, Texas, Wisconsin).

**Public health impacts:**

- Dental caries is one of the most common chronic diseases in the United States.
- About 1 of 5 (20%) children aged 5 to 11 years have at least one untreated decayed tooth.
- 1 of 7 (13%) adolescents aged 12 to 19 years have at least one untreated decayed tooth.
- Children aged 5 to 19 years from low-income families are twice as likely (25%) to have cavities, compared with children from higher-income households (11%).
- If dental sealants were used in combination with the optimal amount of fluoride, most tooth decay in children could be prevented.
- More than 1 in 4 (27%) adults in the United States have untreated tooth decay.
- Nearly half (46%) of all adults aged 30 years or older show signs of gum disease; severe gum disease affects about 9% of adults.
- Nationally, almost 100 million people, particularly older Americans, do not have dental insurance.
- On average, the nation spends more than \$124 billion a year on costs related to dental care.
- More than \$6 billion of productivity is lost each year because people miss work to get dental care.
- Oral health has been linked with other chronic diseases, like diabetes and heart disease. It is also linked with risk behaviors like using tobacco and eating and drinking foods and beverages high in sugar.
- Oral cancer accounts for a greater percentage of U.S. cases of cancer than ovarian, cervical, thyroid, or brain cancer.

State Oral Health Programs target long term reductions in population rates of dental caries, periodontal disease, and oral cancer and their related costs, and related increases in productivity and independence.

**Supporting organizations:** American Association of Public Health Dentistry, American Dental Hygienists' Association, American Network of Oral Health Coalitions, Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors, DentaQuest Partnership for Oral Health Advancement, Families USA, Hispanic Dental Association, Justice in Aging, Medicaid-CHIP State Dental Association, National Dental Association, National Network for Oral Health Access, Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, Special Care Dentistry Association

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