

**Maryland is leading the way in improving oral health: *Untreated tooth decay in children declines by 41% from 2001 to 2011***

*"By setting goals, we've expanded access to health care for 453,000 more Marylanders, many of them children," said Governor Martin O'Malley. "We'll continue making progress and ensure that every child in Maryland receives the dental care they deserve."*

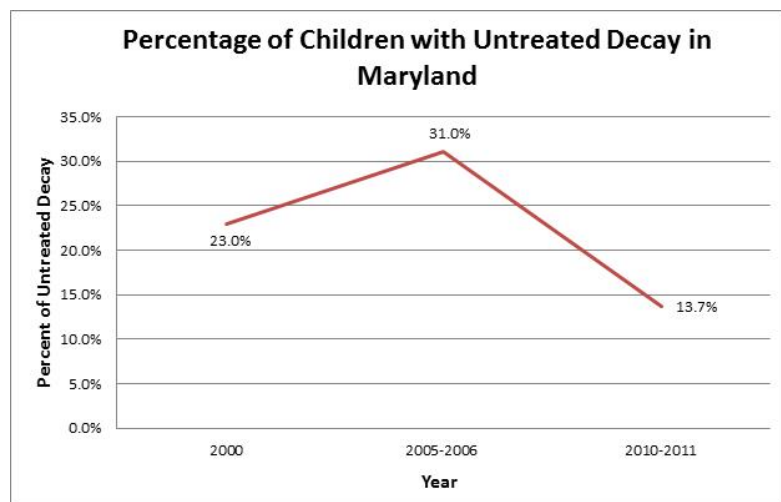
The *Oral Health Survey of Maryland School Children 2011-2012*, a statewide assessment of public school children in kindergarten and 3rd grade conducted by the University of Maryland School of Dentistry, shows Maryland exceeded Healthy People 2020 targets for (1) untreated decay, (2) dental sealants and (3) dental caries. In addition, *over 100,000* fluoride varnish applications have been applied by primary care medical providers through the state's fluoride varnish program.

This is promising progress in the fight to end dental disease in children and improve oral health across the lifespan. It shows the advancement Maryland has made in the last decade, moving from what the ADA once called the worst state for access to care for low income populations to the state that is celebrated (by Pew Center on States) as a national model for children's oral health.

The improvement is the result of reforms instituted after the death of a 12 year-old Maryland child due to an untreated dental infection in 2007. Never wanting that to happen again, a statewide Dental Action Committee (DAC) recommended changes to the Maryland Medical Assistance Program (Medicaid) and expansion of the public health dental infrastructure to create a system that works for all people, with more dentists and more consistent use of care. Actions included hiring a single statewide administrative services organization for dental services; increasing Medicaid payment rates and alternate delivery models; and improving oral health literacy through education and outreach for parents, consumers and healthcare providers.

DentaQuest, the statewide dental benefit administrator of the Maryland Healthy Smiles Program since 2009, has supported the State's mission to improve provider participation and access to care. Utilization rates have increased and provider networks have expanded.

- As of August 2013, enrolled dentists are up to 1,244 from 649 in August 2009.
- 391,000 children and adults in Medicaid received dental care in 2012, 24,000 more than in 2011.
- Maryland exceeds the national HEDIS™ average for children's dental services utilization (67.8%), more than 22 percentage points higher than the 2011 HEDIS™ average of 45.4%.
- Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) certified providers had administered over 100,000 fluoride varnish treatments.
- 882 dentists had received training in pediatric dentistry through various state-sponsored courses.



- In 2010, the DAC, with grant funding from the DentaQuest Foundation, transitioned from a Department-based committee to an independent, sustainable statewide oral health coalition, now called the Maryland Dental Action Coalition (MDAC).

The recent *Oral Health Survey of Maryland School Children* found Maryland continues to excel:

- 33% of school children had at least one dental sealant on permanent first molars, exceeding the HealthyPeople 2020 goal by 5%
- Untreated dental caries in schoolchildren *declined* to 14%, compared to 23% in 2000-2001, exceeding the HealthyPeople 2020 goal by 12%
- 75% of school children reported having a 'dental home', defined as an ongoing dentist-patient relationship that is inclusive of all aspects of oral health.

The MDAC, a DentaQuest Foundation Oral Health 2014 grantee, determined that low oral health literacy, cultural and social barriers, bureaucratic hurdles for eligibility, and the lack of dentists serving the Medicaid population were barriers to progress. In response, they launched a multiple-award-winning "Healthy Teeth, Healthy Kids (HTHK)" oral health literacy social marketing/media campaign featuring Lieutenant Governor Anthony Brown, Senator Ben Cardin, and Congressman Elijah Cummings. As a result, there has been a 13 percent uptick in awareness about oral health and a 7 percent increase in visits to the dentist. Of those reporting to have received an oral health kit, 100 percent said they use the contents. Thanks to this work and the support of the Governor of Maryland, oral health is now a mandated component of health education in Maryland public schools.

The University of Maryland School of Dentistry, also a DentaQuest Foundation grantee, is implementing an innovative dental case management model that links at-risk children to dental services and works with the community to increase utilization of treatment.

The DentaQuest Institute's Safety Net Solutions team has been working with local safety net dental care programs, including Family Health Centers of Baltimore and Choptank Community Health Center to expand the dental public health capacity for low-income, disabled, and Medicaid populations.

The State of Maryland is demonstrating what can be accomplished when communities have clear goals and are committed to working together. This collective impact is helping us reach our Oral Health 2020 goal of eliminating dental disease in children and improving oral health across the lifespan.

**Learn more about Oral Health 2020.**