Comprehensive Community Oral Health Plan

Good oral health is necessary to maintaining good overall health. In Pierce County, our oral health needs improvement. Therefore, oral health continues to be an important effort for the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department.

- Dental decay, though preventable, continues to impact disproportionately high-risk subgroups of children, especially those who are low income and who have special healthcare needs.
- The most recent Smile Survey of 2010 in Pierce County found that low-income children were more likely to have untreated decay and less likely to have sealants than other children.
- In Pierce County, more than half of third graders have experienced dental caries on a permanent tooth.
- The most recent Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance Survey (BRFSS) of Pierce County for 2010 revealed that 37.8 percent of Pierce County adults have had permanent teeth removed because of tooth decay or gum disease.
- The Comprehensive Community Oral Health Plan (CCOHP) represents a systemic approach to develop and implement county-wide efforts to increase access to preventive oral health disease services and improve oral health outcomes.

Plan objectives:
- Promote community partnerships to assess, plan, develop, and support a comprehensive community-wide oral health plan;
- Provide leadership to develop policies that effect positive oral health outcomes;
- Integrate all county-wide efforts that seek to reduce chronic disease and promote child and maternal health through collaborations that improve oral health outcomes for all Pierce County residents; and
- Extend current programs that help babies and school age children receive dental services through school-based dental sealant activities and the Access to Baby and Child Dentistry (ABCD) program.

Community engagement:
- The Department, through September 2013, is seeking to assess health needs and recommend strategies for improvement through the CCOHP.
- The CCOHP will provide many opportunities for community collaboration. The goal is to improve oral health for as many people as possible while leveraging current resources.
- Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department works with private oral health providers to offer this program. School and community libraries also provide education to students.
Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department:

- The Department’s Oral Health Program monitors and encourages dental health education in schools and early childhood centers; Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); and offers adult dental care programs.
- The Department also provides referrals and select services for residents who have limited access to care. For more information, call (253) 798-6044 or visit www.tpchd.org/dental.

For more information on Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department’s efforts to improve Pierce County’s oral health, write to oralhealth@tpchd.org.