

COMMUNITY-BASED CHILDREN'S ORAL HEALTH TASK FORCES

BACKGROUND

Tooth decay (dental caries) is a silent epidemic affecting our children across all ages. Although almost entirely preventable, tooth decay continues to be the most common chronic childhood disease in the United States. Children's oral health is fundamental for future health, success, and quality of life. Healthy teeth are critical for speaking, eating, focusing in school, and positive self-esteem.

In San Francisco, rates of dental caries from kindergarten screenings range from 40% to almost 60% in certain neighborhoods among African American, Latino and Asian American children, with Asian American children experiencing the highest rates of dental decay. The communities at highest risk include linguistically isolated families (first language is not English), immigrant families, Medi-Cal eligible or enrolled children, and children with special health care needs (CSHCN).

Tooth decay if left untreated, at an early age, leads to:

- Pain that interferes with daily life
- School absences that undermine learning key skills
- Lifelong dental problems that compromise overall health



CavityFree SF, previously known as the San Francisco Children's Oral Health Collaborative, coordinates a city-wide effort which seeks to reduce disparities and improve the oral health of children in San Francisco by increasing access to quality care and services, integrating oral health into overall health, and promoting oral health among high-need communities and neighborhoods.

RATIONALE AND VISION


CavityFree SF invited community organizations to join in a unique opportunity to organize and form sustainable oral health task forces to implement the Children's Oral Health Strategic Plan for San Francisco by: improving access to culturally competent care and appropriate utilization of services, determining best practices of community-level oral health behavior practices based on community-identified needs and preferences, and implementing those findings to promote and encourage adoption of healthier oral health behaviors.

The **VISION** of the community-based children's oral health task forces is to comprehensively enable communities to strategize and promote the importance of oral health in a way that is most acceptable, appropriate, and effective for the communities experiencing the greatest disease burden.

THREE TASK FORCES


District 3

Chinatown




District 9

Mission District



District 10

Visitacion Valley
Bayview/ Hunter's
Point



FOUR OVERARCHING GOALS



Goal 1: Community Infrastructure

- **Establish a Community-Based Children's Oral Health Taskforce** within each high-risk community in order to effectively utilize and coordinate school and community resources

Goal 2: Implementation

- **Improve access to, awareness of, and understanding of early preventative oral health services**
 - Increase access to care by engaging Dental providers
 - Increase Oral Hygiene Promotion, Outreach, & Engagement

Goal 3: SF Dental Transformation Initiative- Culturally Appropriate Messaging Development

- **Develop culturally appropriate messages that promote children's oral health and address appointment compliance** in a culturally sensitive manner
 - Train 3 Health Workers and Technical Assistance Integration Lead
 - Perform Community Assessment

Goal 4: Communication and Coordination

- **Communicate and coordinate with CavityFree SF** and other community programs regarding all activities, accomplishments, and challenges

FUNDING

Funding needed to ensure these vital programs continue and expand, to hire and support culturally sensitive staff. Additional funding would also allow for fluoride varnish and screening supplies, provider education, "backbone" staffing, community assessment which includes focus groups and incentives, community events, culturally sensitive parent education and outreach, and other media campaigns. Ongoing giving is essential to the task forces' ability to further the dental and overall health of underserved groups in San Francisco.

Funding secured: CavityFree SF Children's Oral Health Task Forces received General County funding through the Office of the Mayor for a one-year infrastructure support of approximately \$80,000 each. This funding allows for part-time staffing of the Children's Oral Health Task Forces in the three identified high-risk neighborhoods for one year. Additional funding for 4 years was recently provided by California Dept. of Public Health-Oral Health Program.

Funding pending: On March 9, 2018, the San Francisco Sugary Drink Distributors Tax Advisory Committee (SDDTAC) voted to make the following funding recommendation to the Office of the Mayor and Board of Supervisors: Oral Health to receive \$1,000,000 (10.0%) each year for FY 18-20. If approved, \$450,000 would go to the three children's oral health task forces, \$350,000 to School-based and School-linked preventative programs, and \$200,000 to SFUSD dedicated oral health staffing.

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