



Sealants for Smiles!

WHAT WORKS IN MONTANA

PROJECT 6

GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

Since 2012, Sealants for Smiles (SFS) has helped children maintain good oral health while in school, since cavities and pain can be detrimental to learning. Nearly 60 percent of low- to moderate-income 3rd graders in Montana have not received dental sealants. In addition, 38 percent of Montana children have dental insurance through Medicaid, while 12 percent are uninsured.

Cavity prevention services are targeted to children in Montana, primarily ages 6 to 9. Local dentists, hygienists, and other volunteers teach children in schools about oral health practices and provide cavity prevention by applying dental sealants and fluoride varnish. Children receive free tooth brushes and toothpaste. SFS also provides assistance with follow-up care for children most in need and helps families apply for public insurance.

POPULATIONS SERVED

Schools in which 50 percent or more of the children qualify for Free or Reduced Lunch, as reported by the Office of Public Instruction. Most schools are in rural and frontier areas, with limited access to dental care.

MAJOR PARTNERS AND FUNDERS

Sprout Oral Health, Montana Public Schools, Montana Dental Association, Colleges of Nursing at Montana State University and University of Montana, Indian Health Services, Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, Montana Healthcare Foundation, Montana Office of Medicaid, Montana School Nurses Association, Montana Primary Care Association

MAJOR OUTCOMES

In 2016–2017, provided care to 10,453 children in 81 schools across Montana, expanded reach through American Indian services, and launched a school nurse fluoride varnish program.

SFS allows children to receive dental care and not miss school.

Established goal that children with dental abscesses receive treatment within 24 to 48 hours.

INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESS

Works with school leaders and nurses to bring SFS into their schools.

Uses local dental providers where possible to boost community support and establish continuing care and dental homes for children.

SFS has a custom-built electronic dental record which supports data quality and management.

Strong communication helps ensure partners know their respective roles.

Over 560 volunteers statewide allows program to employ only two staff.

ADVICE FOR OTHERS

“To be sustainable and successful, it is important to recognize and include all stakeholders. To improve community health it helps to involve all aspects of the community.”

— Caity Kirk, Sprout Oral Health

Montana Healthy Communities Conference

New Knowledge. New Partners. Better Solutions.

November 1–2, 2017