



Oral Health

Why is oral health important to Iowans?

Good oral health is more than a pretty smile. A healthy mouth is needed to speak clearly, be self-confident and eat nutritious food. The body's health is dependent on the mouth's health. This is especially true for individuals with diabetes, the elderly and pregnant women.

In 2016:

- One in six (16%) third graders had untreated decay.
- Almost half (46%) of third graders had no dental insurance or used public insurance for dental care.

In 2017:

- Nearly one in five (18%) older Iowans had untreated decay, one in three (29%) avoided certain food in the past year because of mouth problems, and more than one in five (21%) reported they needed care in the past year, but did not get it because they could not afford it.
- 44% of pregnant women did not see a dentist during their pregnancy.

In 2018:

- 70% of Iowans on a community water system had access to optimally fluoridated water.

Did you know?

Cavities are largely preventable, but tooth decay is the most common chronic disease among children and adults.

A focus on health equity

I-Smile™ assists Medicaid-enrolled, uninsured, and underinsured children and pregnant women. I-Smile™ @ School (sealant program) includes children at elementary and middle schools with 40% or greater free and reduced lunch rates, and the I-Smile™ Silver pilot project works with Iowa adults who have difficulty accessing dental care. These oral health programs focus on referrals to dentists and improved access to resources that address social determinants of health through individualized care coordination. Additionally, community water fluoridation benefits everyone, regardless of age, income or socio-economic status.

What does the department do?

- Operates the [I-Smile™ program](#), helping 23 local public health organizations promote the importance of oral health; provide preventive fluoride applications for infants, children and pregnant women; help families make appointments and find payment sources for dental care; work with dental offices to build referral networks; and provide oral health education for families and the public to build awareness about healthy behaviors. More than 55,000 children benefited from I-Smile™ in 2019.
- Manage the evidence-based [I-Smile™ @ School program](#) through local public health organizations to provide dental screenings, fluoride, dental sealants, and oral health education for children in grades 1-8. During school year 2018-2019, more than 16,000 children participated and 38,657 sealants were placed.
- Monitor fluoride levels throughout Iowa and provide education and outreach to the public about the benefits of [community water fluoridation](#).
- Oversee oral health [surveillance](#) through data analyses and distributing reports about Iowans' oral health status and ability to access and pay for care.



Oral Health

What does the department do? (cont.)

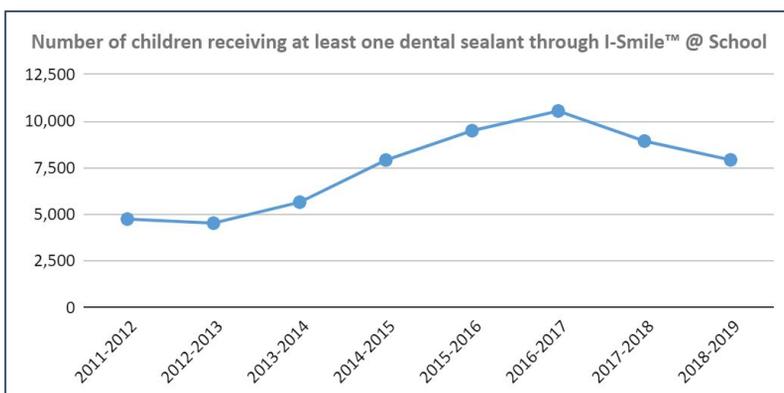
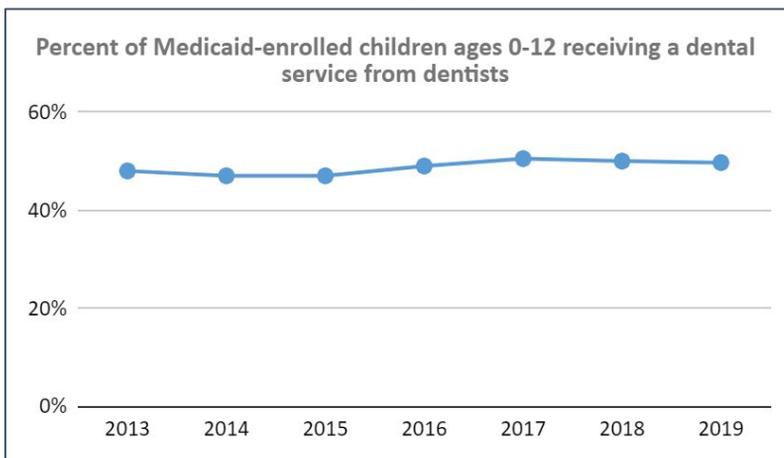
- Develops and administers the [I-Smile™ Silver](#) pilot project through contracts with three county health departments, to improve Iowa adults' ability to achieve optimal oral health.
- Partner with Department on Aging, Department of Education and Department of Human Services to align program goals, leverage funding and seek optimal oral health outcomes.

Why is oral health important to Iowans? (cont.)

In 2018:

- Just one in five (21%) Medicaid-enrolled children ages 0-2 years saw a dentist. In comparison, nearly two in three (61%) Medicaid-enrolled children ages 3-12 years saw a dentist.
- One in three (34%) I-Smile Silver participants had untreated decay, and nearly one in two (47%) avoided certain food in the past year because of mouth problems
- More than three in five (62%) I-Smile Silver participants had not seen a dentist in over a year, and one in two (49%) had not seen a dentist in over two years.

How do we measure our progress?



What can Iowans do to help?

- Learn about the importance of good oral health and how to keep your mouth healthy.
- Use the department's oral health staff and programs as trusted sources of oral health information and policy development.
- Advocate for community water fluoridation to reduce tooth decay.

Resources

	SFY 2018 Actual	SFY 2019 Actual	SFY 2020 Estimate
State Funds	\$266,419	\$274,658	\$274,592
Federal Funds	\$1,204,502	\$1,176,718	\$1,251,697
Other Funds	\$2,388,951	\$2,287,149	\$2,314,227
Total Funds	\$3,859,872	\$3,738,524	\$3,840,516
FTEs	9.41	8.99	9.25