



The New Hampshire Dental Society's **Plan for Better Oral Health 2014**



MORE to
SMILE
ABOUT
2014



AN UPDATE OF
*“Something to
Smile About
2010”*

RECAP

I. “SOMETHING TO SMILE ABOUT” RECAP

Working with stakeholders and other providers, the NH Dental Society’s mission is to “assist its members in providing and promoting the highest levels of oral health care and to disseminate information which will advance the dental profession and the health of the public.” To that end, the NH Dental Society published “Something to Smile About” in 2010, a report analyzing the current state of oral health in New Hampshire and providing a framework for the Society’s future initiatives.



To improve oral health in New Hampshire, the Society outlined the following main goals:

- To educate and demonstrate the importance of prevention.
- To educate all about the link between oral health and overall health.
- To initiate new and to support current public/private partnerships to improve access and utilization of oral health care.
- To remove barriers to oral health care.
- To enhance the oral health workforce.

These goals comprise the efforts needed to ensure all NH residents have the necessary tools to practice good oral health. Learning and understanding why oral health is so important, taking good care of teeth and gums, having access to appropriate providers as needed, and taking the initiative to receive care are all components of a framework for healthy mouths.

“Something to Smile About” assessed where New Hampshire stood in relation to many of these goals, and outlined steps that could be taken to improve oral health.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF UPDATE

Since 2010, many facets of dentistry in New Hampshire have changed. New laws were passed and implemented, new providers were licensed and began practicing in the state, additional dental practices and clinics have opened to treat more patients and the influx of dental professionals into the state has continued. How have these changes impacted oral health in the Granite State?

To determine if our initial efforts at improving oral health have been successful, it is helpful to look back at the framework provided by “Something to Smile About” and analyze where changes have occurred over the past four years. Through a combination of self-assessment and an analysis of national oral health statistics, it is evident that New Hampshire is a leader when it comes to oral health.

Rankings show that the work the Society has promoted over the past four years has been largely successful. Both New Hampshire children and adults rank higher than individuals of most other states in categories such as dental visits over a one-year period and access to dental care for low-income or Medicaid recipients. NH individuals also have less untreated decay than do individuals in other states. And in areas where New Hampshire receives mediocre rankings, improvements have been made and new initiatives are under way to help continue the upward trend. The Society is committed to ensuring that all New Hampshire residents stay mouth-healthy for life.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

*Authored by the
New Hampshire Dental Society
in collaboration with the
Bianco Professional Association.*

“Something to Smile About” Recap.....	i
Executive Summary	i
GOAL ONE:	
<i>To educate and demonstrate the importance of prevention.....</i>	<i>1</i>
GOAL TWO:	
<i>To educate all about the link between oral health and overall health....</i>	<i>7</i>
GOAL THREE:	
<i>To initiate new and to support current public/private partnerships to improve access and utilization of oral health care.</i>	<i>11</i>
GOAL FOUR:	
<i>To remove barriers to oral health care</i>	<i>15</i>
GOAL FIVE:	
<i>To enhance the oral health workforce.....</i>	<i>21</i>
CONCLUSION.....	26





www.nhds.org

ORAL HEALTH & OVERALL HEALTH

Studies show there is a close connection between one's oral health and overall body health. To emphasize this link and promote proactive oral health care, the NH Dental Society set two main goals: prevention and education. Preventive goals aim to stop dental decay and oral disease before it begins. Educational goals help to heighten the public's awareness of the importance of oral health by reinforcing the link between oral health and overall health.

GOAL ONE: *To educate and demonstrate the importance of prevention.*

Unlike many other illnesses and diseases, most oral health problems can be prevented. By following a preventive oral health care routine combining individual home care and routine dental visits, both adults and children can be mouth-healthy for life. The NH Dental Society advocates for prevention as one of the most important components of good oral health, and promotes preventive initiatives such as sealants, the use of school-based programs to screen young children early in life, and water fluoridation. Since 2010, these initiatives have been largely successful. New studies show New Hampshire children and adults continue to rank near the top of many oral health indicators.

Sealants

In young children, dental sealants are one of the most effective ways to prevent tooth decay. By coating the tooth with a clear plastic barrier, it is protected from decay in areas that normal brushing can't always reach. Sealants are placed on biting surfaces which are not affected by flossing. In the long term, sealants are cost-effective and help save money on oral health care, by preventing the need for fillings or other extensive dental procedures.

New Hampshire was one of only five states to earn an "A" grade regarding the use of sealants in preventive oral health care for children in a 2013 report by the Pew Center on the States. In "Falling Short: Most States Lag on Dental Sealants," the Pew Center assessed states based on four indicators:

- Having sealant programs in high-need schools
- Allowing hygienists to place sealants in school-based programs without requiring a dentist's exam
- Collecting data regularly about the dental health of school-children and submitting it to a national oral health database
- Meeting a national health objective on sealants

Not only did NH receive the highest grade, but it was also one of two states, alongside Maine, to receive the maximum number of points possible on the assessment. Forty percent of all states earned a D or F on their achievement of the established benchmarks.

STATE	Overall State Grade
New Hampshire	A
Alaska	A
Maine	A
North Dakota	A
Wisconsin	A
Colorado	B
Connecticut	B
Idaho	B
Maryland	B
Massachusetts	B
Minnesota	B
Oregon	B
Washington	B



NH has sealant programs in over 75% of its high-risk schools. These are schools where more than 50 percent of students participate in federal free- and reduced-price lunch programs, and are thus considered to have some of the most at-risk children

Additionally, New Hampshire was one of only 10 states to meet the Healthy People 2010 goal for sealants, in which sealants were applied to molars of at least 50% of children. At 60.4%, the Granite State ranks third in the nation for the number of third-grade students with sealants. This shows that not only are adults receiving the message that sealants are an important part of children's preventive oral health, but also that the various channels in which students receive sealants are effective. Whether it is through school-based programs, public health clinics, or private dental practices, NH children receive this important measure of preventive care more than the children in 47 states in the country.

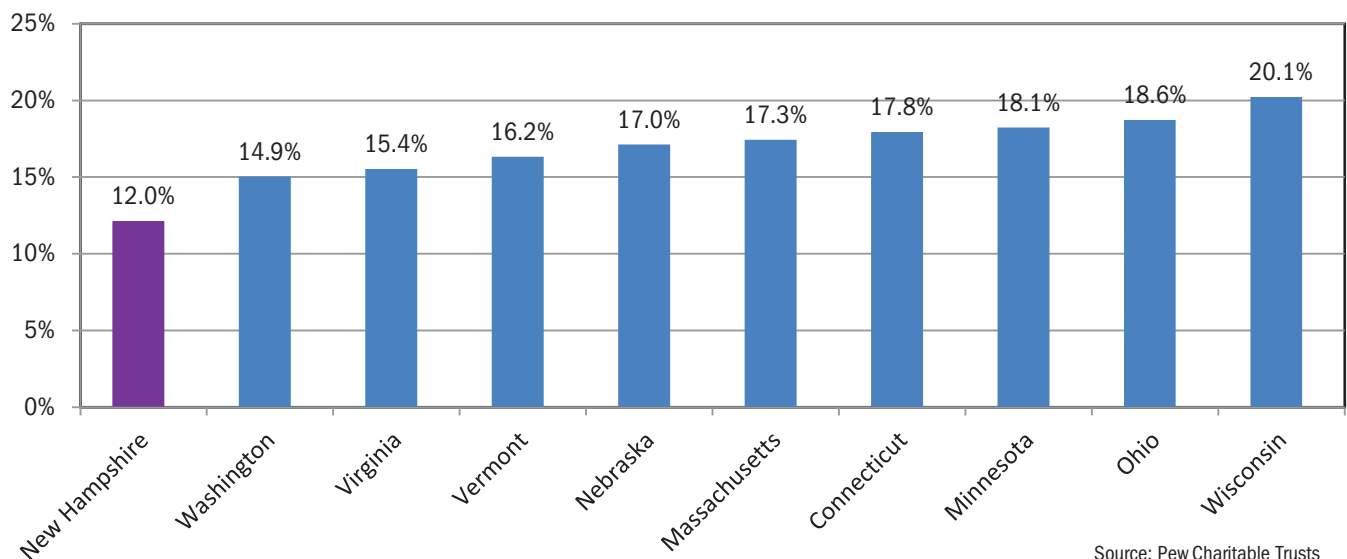
RANK	STATE	% of 3rd Graders w/Sealants
1	Vermont	66.1%
2	Minnesota	64.1%
3	New Hampshire	60.4%
4	North Dakota	60.4%
5	Idaho	57.1%
6	Alaska	55.3%
7	South Dakota	54.8%
8	Washington	51.2%
9	Wisconsin	50.8%
10	Ohio	50.4%

STATE	Percentage of High-Need Schools with Sealant Programs
New Hampshire	>75%
Alaska	>75%
Delaware	>75%
Maine	>75%
Rhode Island	>75%
Connecticut	50-74%
Illinois	50-74%
Indiana	50-74%
Maryland	50-74%
Massachusetts	50-74%
North Dakota	50-74%
Ohio	50-74%
Oregon	50-74%
Vermont	50-74%
Wisconsin	50-74%

The combination of good preventive care and the ability to reach so many children in the state has been successful. New Hampshire has the lowest percentage of third graders with untreated tooth decay in the country. While some states have as high as 42% of third graders with untreated decay, at 12%, the Granite State is leading the nation in care of young teeth.



Percentage of 3rd Graders with Untreated Tooth Decay - Top 10 States



Source: Pew Charitable Trusts

School-Based Dental Programs

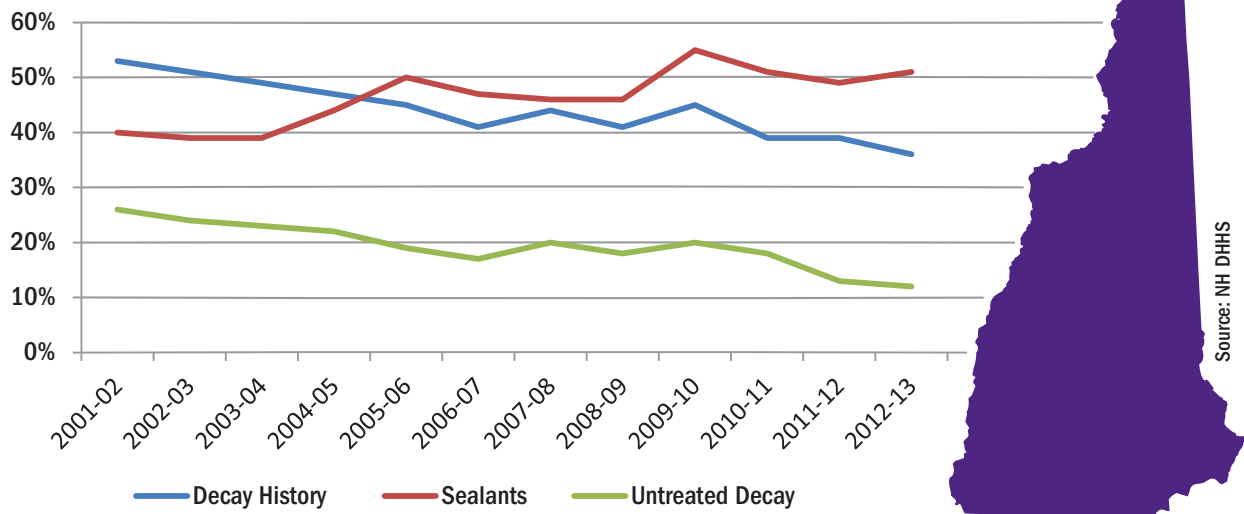
An emphasis on school-based programs has been particularly effective in NH. According to the NH Oral Health Data 2010 report, the number of students screened or treated by one of the 21 school-based programs steadily increased between 2006 and 2010.

In the most recent evaluation, 13,501 children received dental care in school-based programs during the 2012-2013 school year. The decline in numbers since 2010 is likely due to the change in population numbers of students in New Hampshire schools.

School-based dental programs continue to expand as needed, including the establishment of a new dental clinic at Laconia Middle School where students can receive expanded dental services on site.

SCHOOL YEAR	NUMBER OF CHILDREN SERVED
2006-2007	13,952
2007-2008	15,270
2008-2009	16,365
2009-2010	18,255
2010-2011	17,629
2011-2012	14,403
2012-2013	13,501

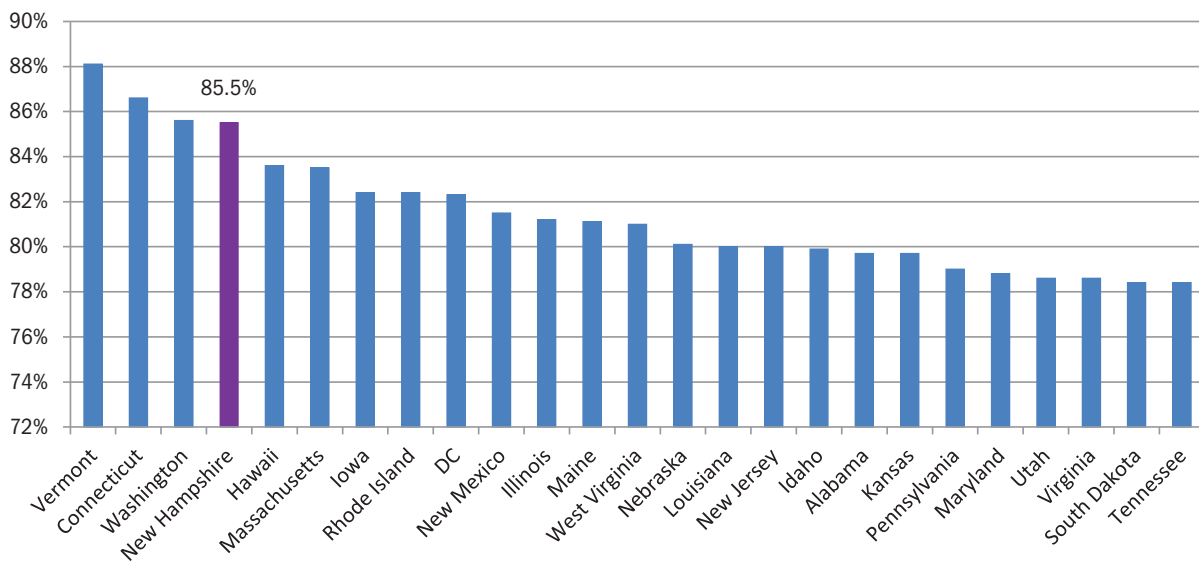
Summary of Results of NH School-Based Programs



Since 2001, data shows the positive effect school-based dental programs have had on children's oral health in New Hampshire. While the number of children with sealants has increased, both the percentage of children with decay history and the percentage of children with untreated decay have markedly decreased. Currently, the percentage of NH children who have sealants surpasses the number of children with any sort of decay history, showing that preventive programs, such as sealants, are effective at preventing decay.

School-based dental programs have the ability to reach many children, especially those who may not receive dental care through other means for a variety of factors. In a recent survey of children's oral health, over 85% of New Hampshire children received some type of dental care over a one-year span – the fourth-highest percentage in the country. This high number of NH children receiving dental care is a testament to the success and the broad reach of NH's school-based programs.

Percentage of Children Receiving Any Type of Dental Care in Past 12 Months - Top 25 States

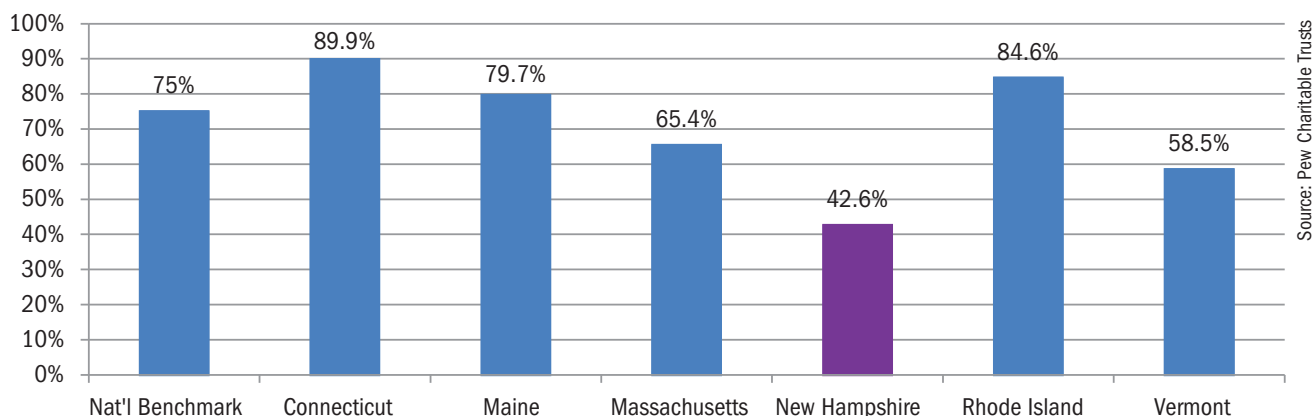


Source: National Survey of Children's Health

Fluoridation

Fluoridated water is deemed as one of the easiest and most effective ways to prevent tooth decay. Currently, over 42% of NH residents who receive water from a public water system receive fluoride-treated water. This issue continues to be addressed by the NH Dental Society.

Percentage of New England Residents on Community Water Systems Receiving Fluoridated Water



New Hampshire, like many other rural states, is unique in the way water is supplied to residents. Instead of city or public water supplies, many NH residents receive their water from private wells or other means not controlled by towns or municipalities. Infusing private water supplies with fluoride would be an impossible task. And because a majority of NH residents simply do not live within a public water supply, the limited infrastructure prohibits comprehensive water fluoridation.

However, other effective strategies exist including fluoride varnish applications. Essentially, fluoride varnishes provide similar benefits as water fluoridation, but are applied by an oral health provider, instead of being accessed through a water supply. Fluoride varnishes were developed to compensate for shortcomings of other applications of fluoride – such as toothpastes and mouthwashes – that did not provide benefits if used incorrectly by not remaining on the teeth for a long enough period of time. Fluoride varnishes are safe, easily applied, and set quickly on the teeth – all important qualities of a dental product when treating young children or those with special needs.

Oral Health America, a national non-profit organization working to educate Americans about the importance of oral health, has established a donation program where they supply school and community-based dental programs with fluoride varnish. Several programs in New Hampshire take advantage of this program and therefore are able to treat their patients with fluoride they may not be able to get elsewhere.

In New Hampshire, fluoride often naturally occurs in well water. Residents with private wells are encouraged to have their water checked for the presence of fluoride, as the amount found in well water is often comparable to that in towns and cities that fluoridate public water supplies.

Additionally, the NH Dental Society has established a website specific to the benefits of fluoride use. FluorideFactsNH.com includes information about the history of fluoride in dentistry, the “top 10 facts” outlining why fluoride is helpful, and a resource guide for individuals who want to learn more about fluoride. Understanding how and why fluoride is beneficial to teeth is important when looking to increase the use of fluoride varnish, or potentially expand the fluoridated water supply in New Hampshire.

“The CDC has recognized water fluoridation as one of 10 great public health achievements of the 20th century”



Going Forward

To reassess children's oral health in New Hampshire, a new survey of third graders is underway for the 2013-14 school year. Results of this assessment are anticipated in mid-2014.

Additionally, a database of dentists outlining the age they begin seeing children is being created through funding by the NH Dental Society Foundation. This database will help better serve the oral health needs of young children between ages 0-3. It will be made public to physicians, enabling doctors a better ability to refer patients seeking dentists who care for young children.

GOAL TWO: *To educate all about the link between oral health and overall health.*

While most people understand the importance of having a family doctor to call for the common cold, the flu, or major health issues, there are still many people who do not consider having a dentist as important. And even fewer people may understand the key link between oral health and overall health. Increasing public awareness through the media, promotional campaigns, and other strategic initiatives, as well as continuing to work with key partners to promote oral health is essential to educating individuals about the importance of oral health.

Promotional Programs

Give Kids a Smile Day

Traditionally, “Give Kids a Smile Day” has served as a way to promote dentistry by offering free care to children who may not otherwise receive oral health treatment. This national event typically occurs in February of each year and has become very popular among Granite State dentists.



ADA American Dental Association®

In 2013, more than 45 NH dentists participated in the Give Kids a Smile Day program, providing care and treatment to over 800 kids. A dental practice in the Concord area provided various exams, cleanings, x-rays, and other treatments to children at a value of almost \$9,000. On the Seacoast, Goodwin Community Health Center performed cleanings, fillings, and provided educational screenings to patients at a value of just over \$10,000.

Not only are dentists providing preventive care and treatment in the dental chair – but they’re also giving children the tools needed to focus on good oral health at home. As a part of Give Kids a Smile, Manchester-area dentists produced “oral health care packages” for children participating in local Boys & Girls Clubs. The packets included toothbrushes, toothpaste, and floss to ensure that these young people have the necessary and essential tools to take good care of their teeth and gums. Additionally, a group of dentists in the Lakes Region presented “Smile School Educational Programs” in local schools to teach children the importance of good oral health.

New Hampshire dentists have gone one step beyond giving care on just one day. Many not only provide free care during the month of February, but they also continue to donate their services throughout the year as needed.

“Dentists With a Heart Day” is celebrated annually in February on the Seacoast and in a few other areas of the state. Many dental practices open their doors on that day to serve any adult that comes. This has been a very successful event for many, many years.

Other Promotional Events



Throughout the year, dentists take advantage of other opportunities to encourage young people to practice good oral health. The “Treats for Troops” initiative is both promotional and preventive and encourages children to donate their Halloween candy to their dentist, who will in turn send the candy to US military members overseas. Many local New Hampshire dentists participate in this program and reward patients who take part by offering prizes and recognition. Many other dentists also schedule similar programs in their offices around Halloween.

Immediately following Halloween is “National Brush Day,” on November 1st. Beginning in 2013, National Brush Day is a joint effort between The Partnership for Healthy Mouths, Healthy Lives, and the Ad Council. It encourages parents to instill in their children the importance of brushing teeth correctly twice a day, for two minutes. Information about National Brush Day is promoted on the NH Dental Society’s Facebook page.

National Brush Day features a fun, interactive website for children called 2min2x.org. The site includes several two minute videos and cartoons that kids can watch while brushing to make time pass quickly and enjoyably. The site also contains easy-to-understand graphics showing which ages children should start brushing, flossing, and seeing a dentist.



Media Outreach & Online Presence

Another effective tool in promoting the importance of oral health is use of various forms of media. Many private dentists have caught onto this trend, and are using paid advertising in local newspapers and other publications to not only promote their practices, but also to share information with the public about various oral health matters and issues. Short “PSA-type” advertising helps increase awareness of oral health questions and topics.

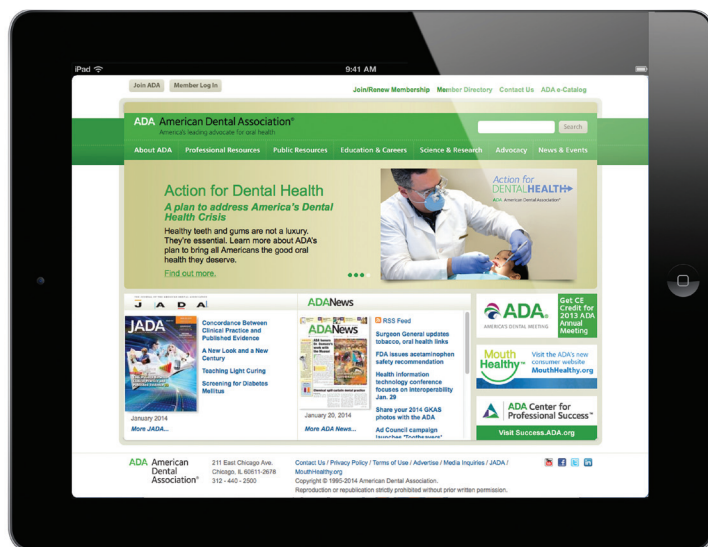
Additionally, as more people – both young and old – become savvy in the realm of social media, online resources are good ways to promote oral health to the public. The NH Dental Society’s Facebook page “Smile NH” continues to build a solid core of followers by promoting links to articles related to oral health, photographs to attract both young people and parents, announcements about new dental providers, and national dental news, among other topics. Additionally,

many private dental practices are establishing their own Facebook pages to encourage their patients to “like” their practice and become more involved. A parent whose child is featured in a photo of the “no cavity club” can in turn “share” this photo with their friends, gradually spreading this information until it reaches hundreds of other friends, fans, and followers.

Currently, the NH Dental society’s website offers a tool for providers to find information on oral health in NH and across the country. Dental professionals can access information about continuing education courses, read about changes in dentistry impacted by national legislation, among other topics, and future



dentists can learn about educational programs and various careers in dentistry. Additionally, the website contains information of interest to patients and consumers. Links allow individuals to search for dentists in the state according to geographic area and specialty, and review a detailed list of oral health topics on the “Oral Health A-Z” page.



Partnership with Stakeholders

The NH Dental society also benefits from partnerships with state-based organizations, including the NH Oral Health Coalition, NH Kids Count, and the Northeast Delta Dental Foundation. All three groups are committed to improving the oral health and overall health of New Hampshire’s residents.

Additionally, the American Dental Association recently launched a new website specifically designed for patients and consumers. This site, mouthhealthy.org, contains a wealth of information that consumers can use, such as oral health information for various age groups, a “symptom checker” to help determine the possible cause and treatment of an individual’s mouth ailment, lists of products that are ADA-approved, a search tool to locate a nearby dentist, and much, much more. The site is a spin-off from the ADA’s website for providers – ada.org. By creating two separate places to locate information, the ADA has made their websites much more user-friendly for both consumers and providers. The NH Dental Society partners with the ADA in promoting this site.



How is oral health provided in New Hampshire?
There are many facets of the dental provider infrastructure that combine to form a comprehensive oral health network.

GOAL THREE: *To initiate new and to support current public/private partnerships to improve access and utilization of oral health care.*

Public Health Dental Clinics

In 2010's "Something to Smile About," there were 15 public health dental clinics serving NH residents. In just the past four years, this has grown to 17 clinics operating across the state, with an additional two new clinics currently under development. Many of these dental clinics report having excess capacity – meaning open chair time is available for patients. However, the expansion of new clinics fills a void in geographic segments of the state where a new facility may allow easier access for patients. Additionally, they may help more concentrated areas of the state in which clinics may be growing closer to reaching capacity or receive more than average numbers of patients because of the population size.

CLINIC/PROGRAM NAME	CITY
Capital Region Family Health Center	Concord
CMC/Poisson Dental Center	Manchester
Community Dental Care of Claremont	Claremont
Dental Health Works	Keene
Dental Resource Center	Laconia
Easter Seals	Manchester
Families First	Portsmouth
Goodwin Community Health	Somersworth
Greater Nashua Dental Connection	Nashua
Health Reach for Children - Exeter Health Resources	Exeter
Manchester Health Dept.	Manchester
Molar Express	Littleton
Red Logan Dental Center	Hanover/Lebanon area
Saving People's Smiles	Concord
Tamworth Dental Clinic	Tamworth
Wentworth Douglass Community Center	Dover
White Mountain Community Health Center	Conway

A Clinic with Capacity to Spare: Goodwin Community Health

Somersworth's Goodwin Community Health features a unique method to facilitate patient scheduling: "standby" appointments. Individuals without a scheduled appointment are able to come to the clinic and wait on a "standby" basis to see a dentist – and can often receive treatment within just a few hours. The clinic utilizes this method to mitigate the effect broken appointments have on open chair time. Many patients cancel last-minute, or simply don't show up for scheduled appointments. By creating a more flexible method of appointment "scheduling,"

patients are able to receive treatment when it is most convenient for them.



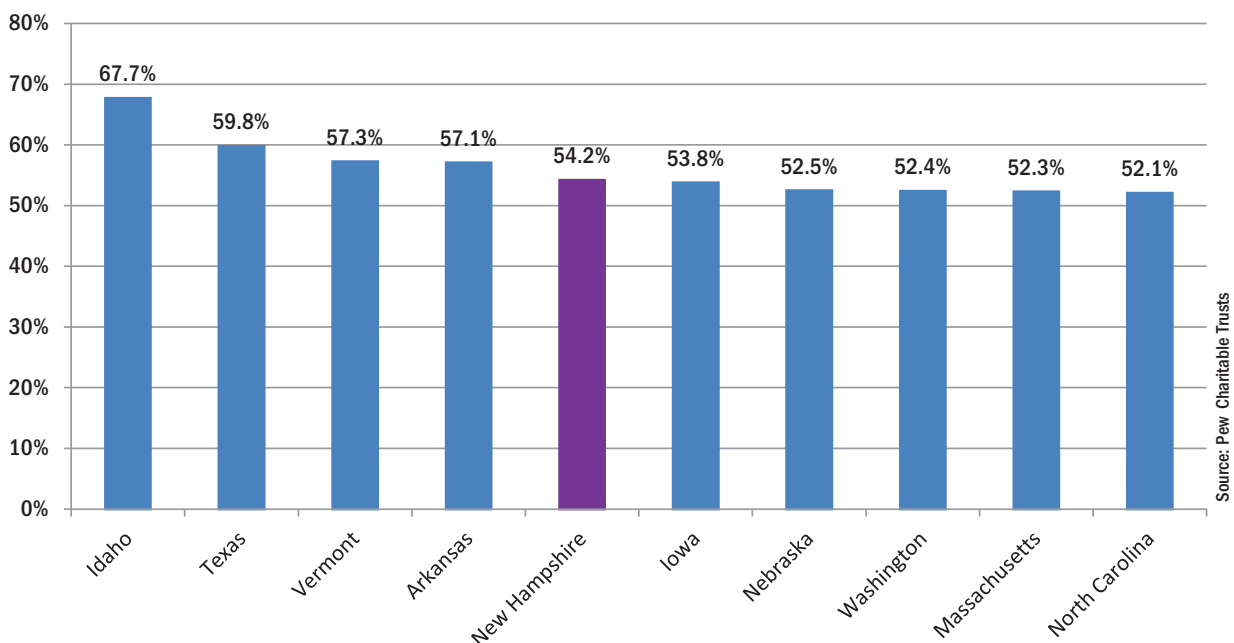
A Crusade to Save People's Smiles

Whether it's in a community dental clinic in one of the state's largest cities, or traveling by truck to a patient in need, Dr. Earle Simpson has a passion for providing public health dental care. After working in private practice and then at the Easter Seals community dental clinic in Manchester, Dr. Simpson helped establish Saving People's Smile Dental Center in Concord, which opened in March of 2012. He relies on assistance from his former classmates from St. Paul's School – who worked with him to establish the center – to provide funding and needed supplies. While some patients volunteer to help clean the clinic or donate office supplies and bake cookies in lieu of payment, others cannot afford to pay anything for treatment, and that's ok with Dr. Simpson. Regardless of their financial situation – or location – Dr. Simpson ensures that people who need dental care can receive it – even if he has to drive across the state himself to reach them.

Providers

Geographically, New Hampshire is a small state. Many regions within the state are considered rural and may not provide easy access to resources such as healthcare or other needs. However, New Hampshire's oral health network of providers shows patients have access to a comprehensive network of care. A review of the various ways one can access dental care shows that almost all of the 234 towns and cities in New Hampshire are covered by a community-based clinic, a school-based program, and/or a private dental practice. And if an individual town lacks some form of dental coverage, it is often the case that a provider is located just one town away.

Children Ages 1-18 on Medicaid Receiving Dental Services - Top 10 States



Medicaid Coverage

In 2010, Something to Smile About reported that 40% of NH dentists were treating Medicaid claims. That number has increased to 50%. However, many providers still report not accepting Medicaid for a variety of reasons. The NH Dental Society continues to work with the NH Department of Health & Human Services to overcome the barriers that prevent some of the member dentists from Medicaid participation.

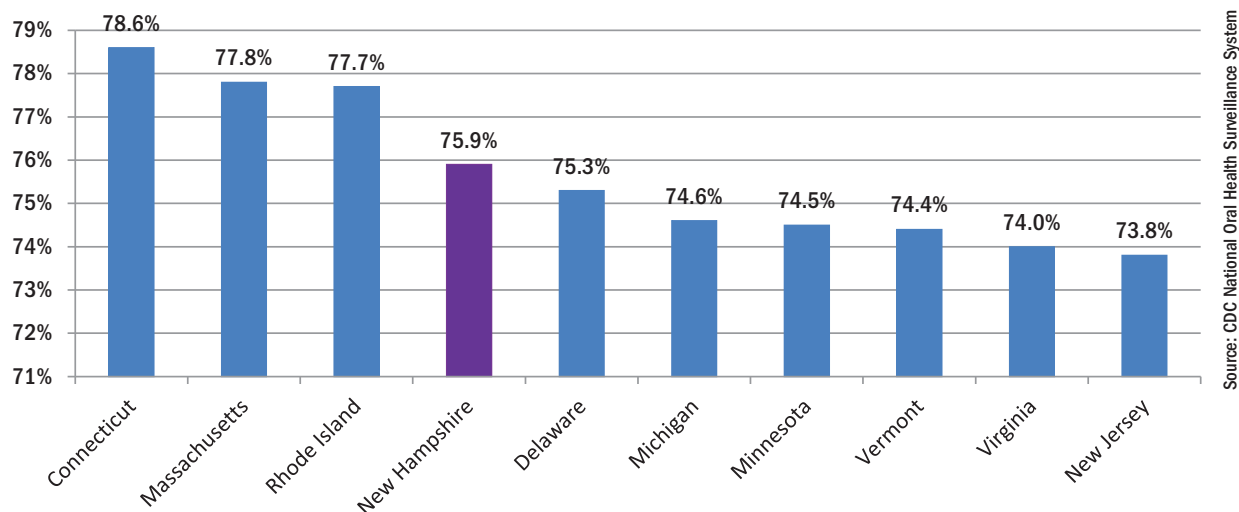
The Granite State is ranked fifth in the country for the number of children on Medicaid receiving dental services. According to data from the Pew Charitable Trusts, over 54% of children on Medicaid were able to receive oral health care in their most recent year of analysis. Between the years 2003 and 2011, New Hampshire increased the percentage of Medicaid-eligible children receiving preventive dental services from approximately 26% to 60%. These improvements come largely through efforts such as an increase in rates for many services, a reduction of administrative barriers, and the availability of support services such as transportation and assistance with language barriers.

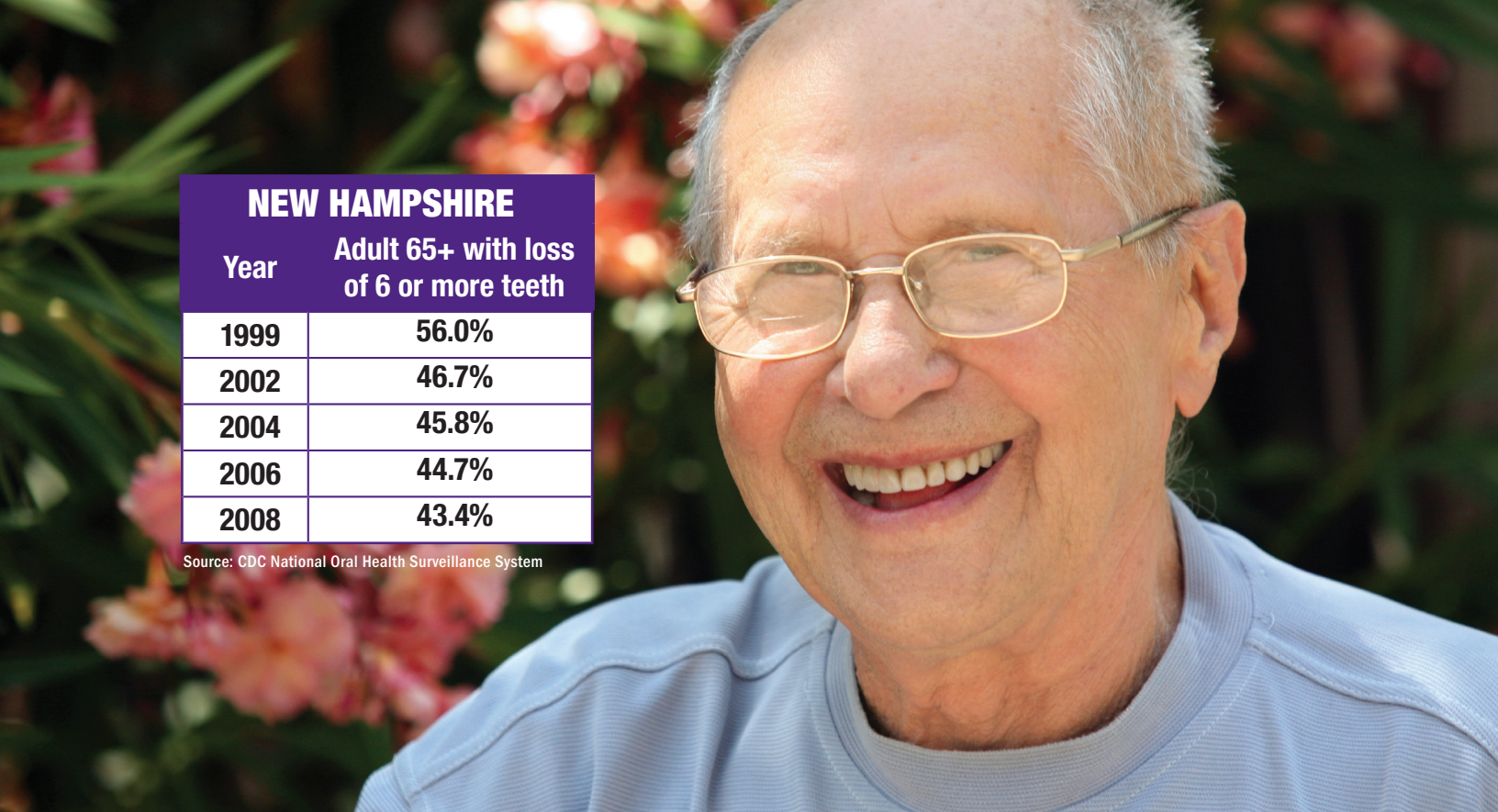
Adult Medicaid Coverage

New Hampshire does not currently have a comprehensive adult Medicaid benefit for dental care. NH's coverage is limited to extractions and procedures that provide relief from dental pain. While this issue is often set aside in light of other important initiatives, it is a topic that deserves significant consideration in the future. Mouths, teeth, and gums are just as important as other parts of the body. As it is, adults in New Hampshire are very cognizant of their oral health. Over 75% of NH adults reported visiting a dentist in a one-year period, ranking NH 4th in the country for this criteria. An adult Medicaid benefit in the state would likely increase this percentage even more.

When looking specifically at adults over age 65, NH ranks fairly average - 26th in the nation – for older adults who have suffered tooth loss. Just over 43% of adults over the age of 65 in NH have lost six or more teeth due to decay or gum disease, while the national average is 43.1%. While this number is not ideal, it may be reflective of the change in attitude and education level of the younger generations and the trend towards better preventive care and understanding the importance of care.

Adults Ages 18+ Who Have Visited a Dentist or Dental Clinic in the Past Year - Top 10 States





NEW HAMPSHIRE	
Year	Adult 65+ with loss of 6 or more teeth
1999	56.0%
2002	46.7%
2004	45.8%
2006	44.7%
2008	43.4%

Source: CDC National Oral Health Surveillance System

Although this percentage is high, New Hampshire has shown marked improvement in this data point over the past 15 years. Since 1999, the number of NH adults over 65 who have lost six or more teeth has decreased at each two-year data interval measured by the CDC. The chart above shows the improvement in this oral health indicator over the years.

Individuals under 65 may have increased awareness and education regarding the importance of oral health care, and this may impact the progressive improvement in this statistic over the years.

Public Health Grants

Recently, the NH Oral Health Coalition was awarded a planning grant to help improve the oral health delivery system. This \$100,000 planning grant from the DentaQuest Foundation will be used to plan how to best utilize certified public health dental hygienists throughout the state's current dental care structure for community-based care. The Coalition is currently applying for an implementation grant to carry out the plan.

Additionally, the NH Division of Public Health Services was one of 21 recipients of a "State Oral Disease Prevention Programs" grant from the CDC. The funding will be used to help improve state oral health services, such as monitoring oral disease levels and risk factors, educating residents on prevention, and addressing barriers to the achievement of good oral health. This \$230,000 grant is renewable for up to five years.

Another recent grant was awarded to the Bi-State Primary Care Association by the Health Resources and Services Administration. The grant will be used for three main goals: to establish two new Federally Qualified Health Centers in the state; to create a fixed dental clinic at Laconia's middle school; and to formalize a program encouraging NH college students to attend the new College of Dental Medicine at the University of New England in Portland, Maine.

The NH Dental Society is partnering with all these groups to improve oral health in our state.

DEFINING ACCESS & UTILIZATION

The access vs. utilization comparison is of utmost importance when discussing how to improve oral health care. The mission of the NH Dental Society is to improve both access to care and utilization of the providers and services that offer care. Access to providers can be improved, but if the reasons for underutilization are not recognized and addressed, oral health won't be improved. Many private dentists and dental clinics in NH report having an abundance of open chair time in which they could treat more patients if barriers to care were better mitigated. What do these barriers continue to be? And how can the Society work to remove or negate these barriers to enable more patients to receive dental care when needed?

GOAL FOUR: *To remove barriers to oral health care.*

What are barriers to care? Barriers are any obstacle that prevents a patient from attaining care. They can be in the form of educational and societal barriers – such as not understanding the importance of oral health care, or speaking a different language than a provider. They could be because someone doesn't have a vehicle or is unable to take time off from work to see a dentist. Barriers to care can also be financial obstacles – if a patient cannot afford care, is not covered by insurance or Medicaid and doesn't understand how to get covered. Barriers to care are often complicated and challenging and are not solved simply by opening more dental offices or adding more dental providers to the state. Barriers are overcome through educational efforts and financial assistance when necessary.

Barriers may affect both access and utilization of care – either because a patient *cannot receive care* or because they *do not seek care*.

Educational, Cultural & Societal Barriers

Much of our society is pain-driven. Most people only see a doctor when they have a pressing need for medical care, such as a cold, the flu, back pain, or a broken leg. People seek care when they physically feel it is needed. Likewise, if their mouth isn't in pain or if their teeth don't hurt, many people either put off regular dental care, or don't feel it is necessary.

Oftentimes, attitudes about oral health are passed down from generation to generation. If your parents and grandparents didn't often see a dentist, would you? Likewise, if you don't have a car, how do you get to your dentist appointment, and how do you bring your children to the dentist as well? Educational efforts must continue to teach the importance of oral health, and assistance with overcoming barriers must be better implemented.

Financial Barriers

Ensuring individuals can afford dental care will help eliminate financial barriers that prevent people from seeking care. In a difficult economy, people struggling to pay a mortgage, utility bills, child care, and car payments may put off dental care because they don't consider it as important as other necessities. Whether it's through insurance, free or reduced care at clinics, or Medicaid coverage, making care affordable enables more patients to seek dental care.

A review of access to care is important, but it is also imperative to understand if NH dentists and the oral health workforce are doing well at overcoming other obstacles to care.

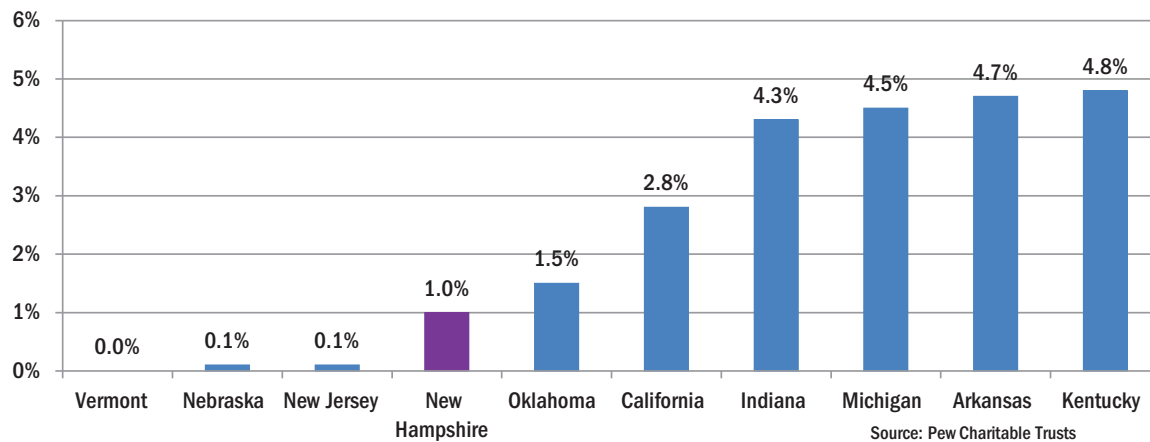
Geographic Updates

As with the public-health dental clinics, the geographic distribution of private dentists throughout the

state is important. The issue of access is one that is often discussed when analyzing whether the number of dental providers is adequate to serve the population. Over the past six years, the areas of the state considered shortage areas have decreased steadily.

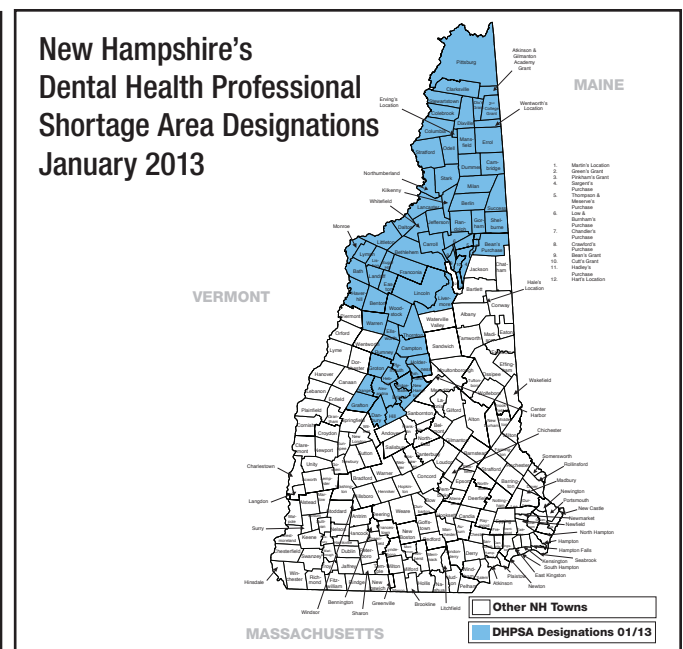
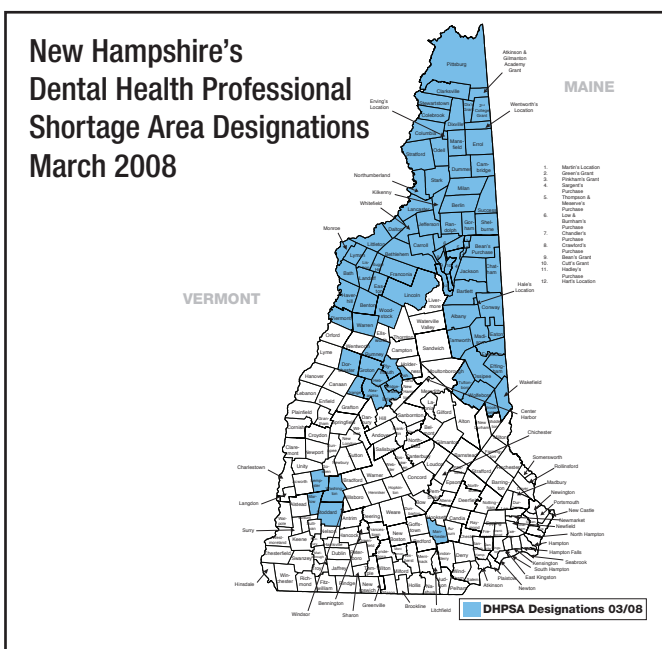
A recent report by the Pew Center on the States shows that as of 2013, only 1% of NH's population is considered "underserved" and living in a dental shortage area. This percentage decreased from 4.6% in a 2011 Pew study. This ranks NH 4th in the country for the least amount of a state's population living in a shortage area.

Percentage of Population that is Underserved and Living in a Dental Shortage Area



The 2011 report indicated that only six new dentists were needed in New Hampshire to remove the shortage designation. New information from the Health Resources and Services Administration shows that as of October, 2013, NH needs to add only five new dentists to eliminate the shortage classification.

The maps below show the decrease in NH's Dental Health Professional Shortage areas over the past six years.



During the years 2012 and 2013, a total of 133 new dentists were licensed in New Hampshire. The 78 dentists licensed in 2012 currently practice in 19 different towns across the state, representing nine of New Hampshire's 10 counties. The 55 newly licensed dentists in 2013 practice in 21 towns, comprising nine New Hampshire counties.

New Providers

The NH Dental Society continually looks at the role that different types of providers can play in oral health care. Recently, NH passed legislation and regulations to establish two new dental workforce providers: Expanded Function Dental Auxiliaries (EFDA) and Certified Public Health Dental Hygienists. An EFDA, already used in 30 states, will receive additional training to provide assistance and additional efficiencies at dental practices and public health clinics. And a certified public health hygienist will be able to provide additional treatments to patients – such as temporary fillings, nutritional counseling, and some x-rays – after undergoing additional training. Their services may be especially helpful in school-based clinics, providing children with temporary care to treat cavities until they are able to see a dentist.

A Community Dental Health Coordinator is another type of provider who could help improve the oral health delivery system. CDHC's are trained to help educate individuals about the importance of oral health, and help link patients with dentists when the need for care arises. They also often assist with coordinating transportation or other needs, such as child care, which may serve as barriers for individuals to receive care. CDHC's are often recruited from communities they serve and often share cultural backgrounds with residents – ensuring trust between the coordinator and the patient, and compensating for issues such as language barriers that may prevent care.

Several states currently use a form of CDHC. It is worthwhile to analyze these states to determine how they utilize care coordination and case management for patients. Additionally, the ADA recently released a model for CDHC that could be helpful as New Hampshire navigates the possibility of introducing this type of provider.

Legislation has been introduced to bring a mid-level provider to New Hampshire. The Society does not feel this additional type of provider is necessary, given all the positive changes that have recently occurred to increase access to dental care.

Donated Dental Services Program – the Dental Lifeline Network

Over ten years ago, the New Hampshire Donated Dental Services Program, now called the Dental Lifeline Network, was established. The program was developed in hopes of providing dental care to New Hampshire residents who are elderly or have disabilities or other medical issues and are unable to afford dental treatment. Participating dentists donate time and care to treat the oral health issues – some of which are quite significant – of these individuals.

During State Fiscal Year 2012-2013, 216 NH dentists volunteered with the Donated Dental Services Program. A total of 94 patients received treatment, resulting in a value of over \$336,900 worth of dental care. Patients from nine out of New Hampshire's 10 counties received care from the Donated Dental Services Program.

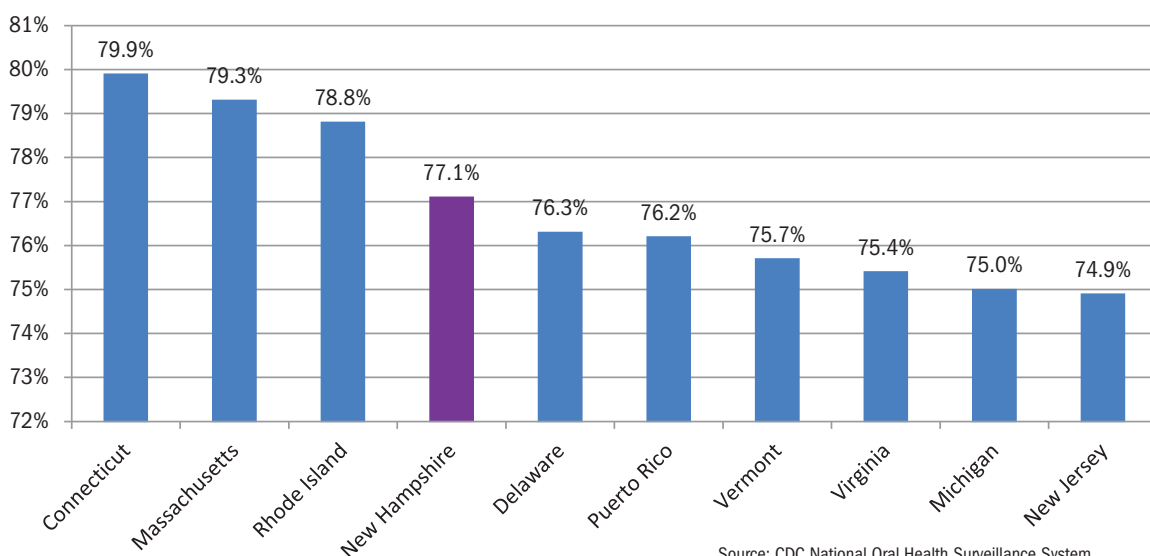
Since the program's beginning, Donated Dental Services has provided over \$2.3 million dollars worth of dental care to 596 of New Hampshire's most vulnerable citizens. While this is a significant achievement, there is still work to be done. Currently, over 200 individuals remain waitlisted to receive care from this program due to limited administrative support. The Dental Society will continue to work at improving these numbers to ensure as many residents are treated as possible.



Access and Utilization

As mentioned above, having access to a dentist may not necessarily mean that an individual will actually use those services. Geographically, oral health care may be readily accessible to people in abundance. However, how many of these people use the services that are available? Statistics indicate both adults and children in New Hampshire take advantage of available oral health care more than most states in the country. Over 77% of NH adults over age 18 had their teeth cleaned in a one-year period, according to data from the CDC. This ranked the Granite State fourth in the nation.

Adults Ages 18+ Who Have Had Their Teeth Cleaned in The Past Year - Top 10 States



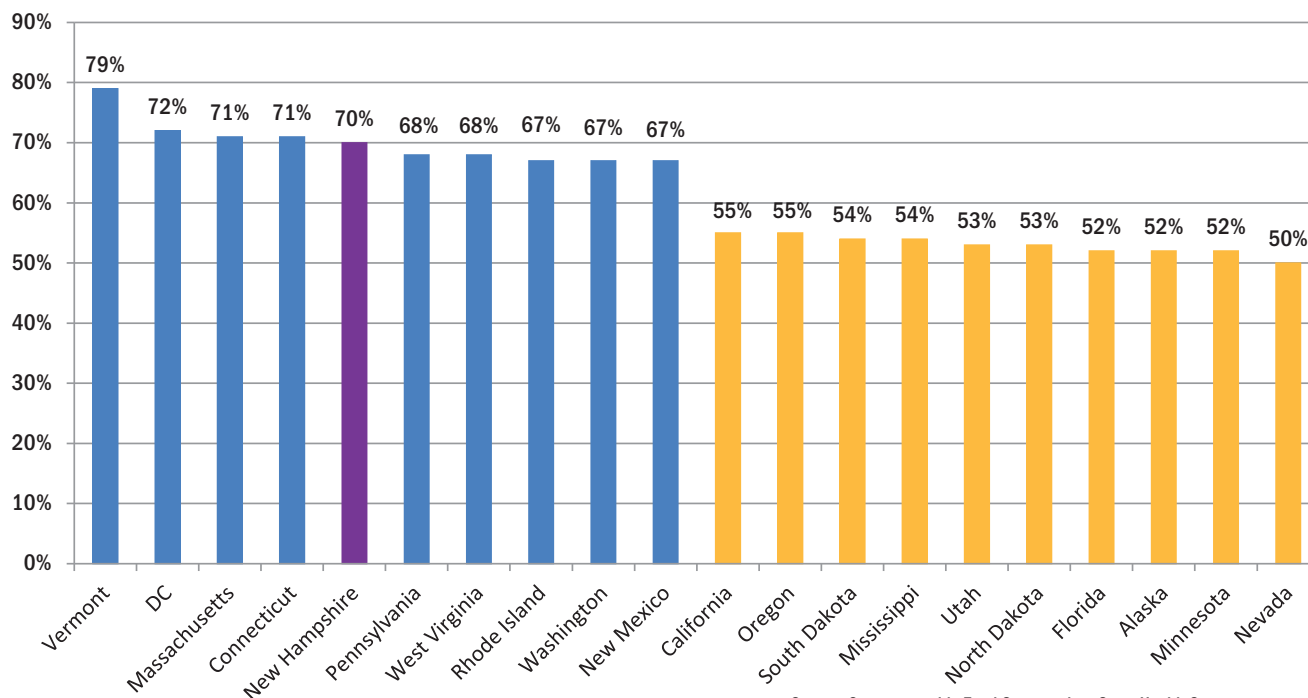
While adult preventive care may be perceived as one of the easiest types of oral health care to access, it is important to also look at low-income individuals who receive care when determining whether or not the

*“Once again, NH is ranked
in the top five
nationally”*



oral health network is as comprehensive as possible, and is serving the needs of all people - regardless of age or income level. In 2013, the Commonwealth Fund examined the percentage of children living at or below 200% of the federal poverty level who received both preventive dental and medical care in a one year period. New Hampshire was ranked 5th best in the country, with 70% of low-income children receiving preventive care.

Children Under 200% of FPL who Received Both Preventive Dental & Medical Care Top 10 and Bottom 10 States



Source: Commonwealth Fund Scorecard on State Health System

NEW HAMPSHIRE'S ORAL HEALTH WORKFORCE

After we've focused on oral health care and who provides it, it is essential to review the current workforce and analyze any changes in the oral health provider structure, and discuss whether or not it is adequate for the population and the facilities that provide care. Additionally, how can NH become more welcoming to new providers and attract a new base of dentists to the state?



GOAL FIVE: *To enhance the oral health workforce.*

Recruitment of New Dentists to NH

Year after year, the Granite State is continually ranked one of the healthiest states in the nation, one of the best places to raise a family, and one of the safest states in the country. With beautiful lakes, mountains, rivers, and seacoast areas, and abundant activities any time of year, New Hampshire should easily attract young dentists looking to set down roots and raise families in one of the most desirable states in the country.

Each year, the Bi-State Primary Care Association's Recruitment Center reaches out to providers across the country in hopes of placing them in New Hampshire and Vermont communities that need medical professionals. Over the past eight years, Bi-State has recruited 73 dentists to NH through efforts such as interviews with undergraduate NH college students, presentations to dental school residents, and advertising in journals and publications to dental professionals. Additionally, Bi-State is assisted by 25 dental "ambassadors" who help with outreach and recruitment to dentists interested in practicing in New Hampshire.

University of New England Dental School

New Hampshire is one of 13 states in the country without a dental school. Without a local program educating future oral health professionals, the state lacks the luxury of having a "feeder" program available to allow students to develop roots in the state thus creating the desire to remain here to practice after graduation.

In the fall of 2013, 64 students – five of whom are New Hampshire residents – began their education as dental students at the University of New England College of Dental Medicine in Portland, Maine, with an expected graduation date of 2017. This new program will train future dentists at the first dental school in Northern New England in hopes that many students will stay in the area after graduation.

Currently, two New Hampshire dentists serve on the faculty at UNE Dental. As the teaching staff grows over the next few years, that number is likely to increase, giving NH dentists the opportunity to further connect with new, young dentists and share with them the benefits of practicing in New Hampshire.

Additionally, UNE dental students will have the opportunity to work in satellite clinics across Northern New England while they are undergoing training. Not only will this allow students to familiarize themselves with communities who may need new providers, but they will also be able to provide additional access for dental care.

University of New Hampshire Pre-Dental Society

The University of New Hampshire, the state's largest university, has an active Pre-Dental Society for its students. According to its description, the UNH Pre-Dental Society "aims to unite students with an interest in dental medicine to become more aware of opportunities pertaining to and the process of becoming a dental professional. Members of the group will have exposure to community service opportunities, informational meetings, and students with an interest in bettering the future of dentistry." There were 42 student members of the UNH Pre-Dental Society as of 2013.

Retirees/Dentists Still Practicing

According to a 2009 Pew Center on the States report, NH has a high percentage of dentists over the age of 55. The Granite State has 42.8% of dentists over the age of 55, ranking the state 40th in the country. While this may seem high, we should consider that nationally, the average hovers around 40%. While the Granite State is a bit higher than average, it is not widely out of comparison.



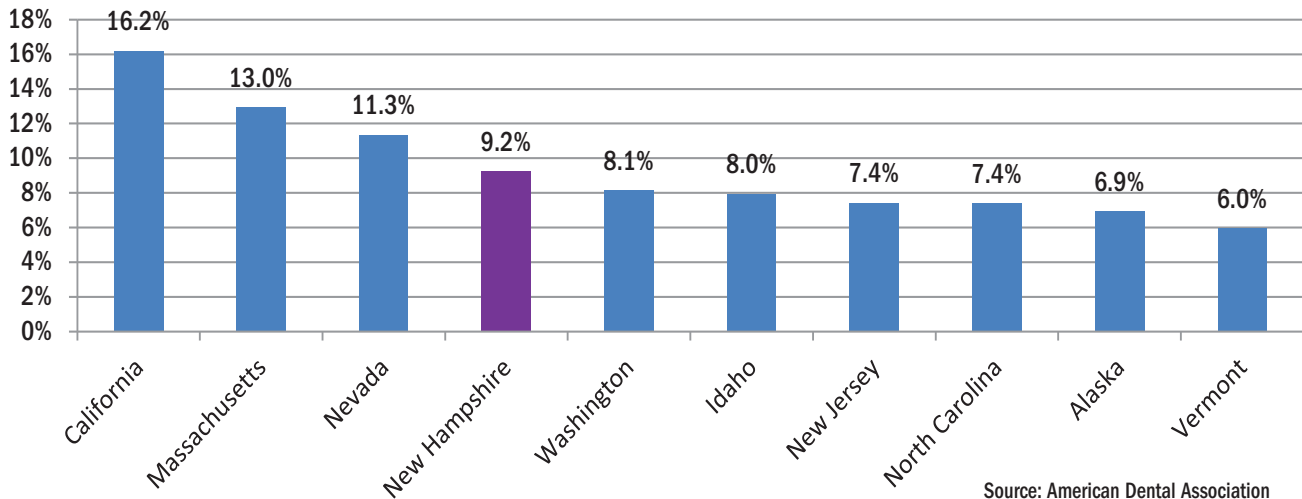
Although current practicing dentists are getting older, the average age of retirement is also rising. ADA data from 2013 shows that over the past 20 years, the average retirement age has increased from 64.5 years to 67.1 years. For many reasons, people in all professions – not just dentists – are working longer. In a profession like dentistry where mentoring young professionals and volunteering time is so essential, the fact that dentists are working later in life could be extremely helpful to plugging any gaps in the workforce where they are needed.

Newly Licensed Providers

Additionally, ADA data finds that NH has increased its number of dentists at a rate of 9.23% over the past 20 years. The change in providers over the past 20 years shows that NH is doing an excellent job of recruiting new dentists to the state to fill the void created by older dentists who will begin to retire in the future. The most recent 2013 data shows that there are a total of 1120 dentists who hold active licenses in New Hampshire.

In 2010, New Hampshire had 64.4 dentists per 100,000 residents. This was higher than the national average of approximately 59 dentists per 100,000 people, and ranked the state 15th in the country for ratio of provider to population.

New Dentist Growth 1991-2010 Top 10 States



When looking at the age of dentists currently practicing in New Hampshire, and analyzing the location of newly licensed younger dentists, we can compare those providers in shortage areas and determine if the younger dentists are filling a potential gap in services. For example, in Littleton, there are currently four active dentists nearing retirement age. However, between the years 2000 and 2013, four newly-licensed dentists began treating patients and practicing in the same town. Continuing to review data such as this will allow the society to pinpoint future shortage areas, and direct younger dentists to those locations.

Some older dentists continue to volunteer time as needed at dental clinics across the state. Dentists are able to receive a volunteer license at a reduced rate from an active NH dental license. While they may pay less for a volunteer license, the particular license prohibits these dentists from receiving payment for their services.

TOWN	Dentists Licensed 1955-1980	Dentists Licensed 2002-2012
Littleton	4	4
Bethlehem	1	0
Lancaster	1	1
Whitefield	1	1
Berlin	2	1
Colebrook	2	0
Conway	1	2
North Conway	0	5
Lincoln	0	2
Gorham	0	4
TOTAL	12	20

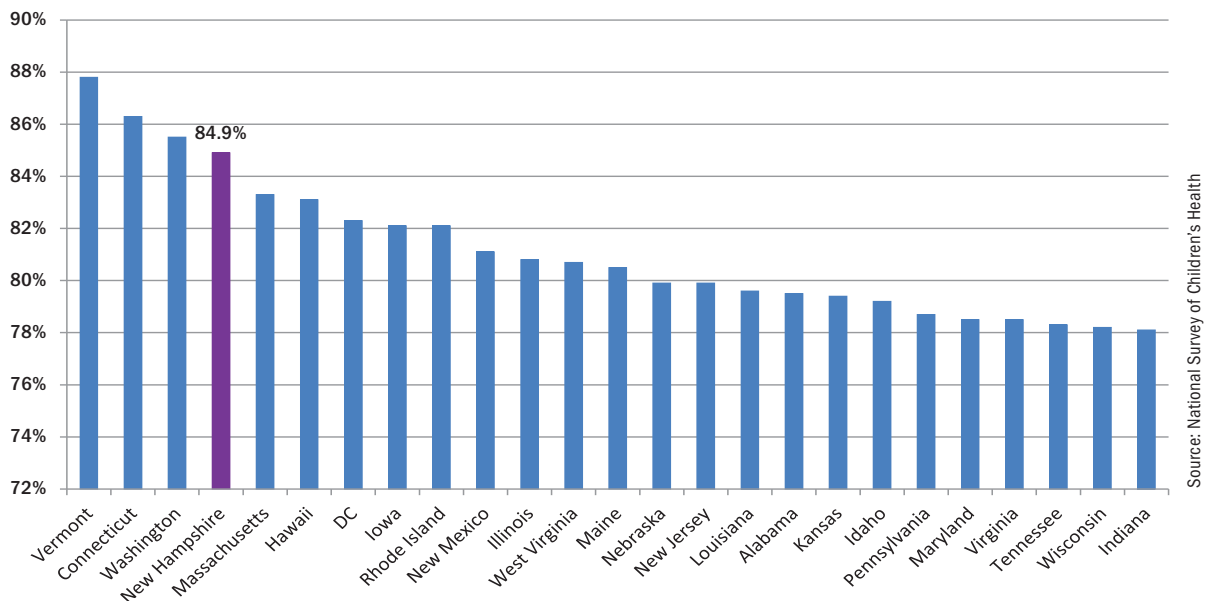


Overall Results

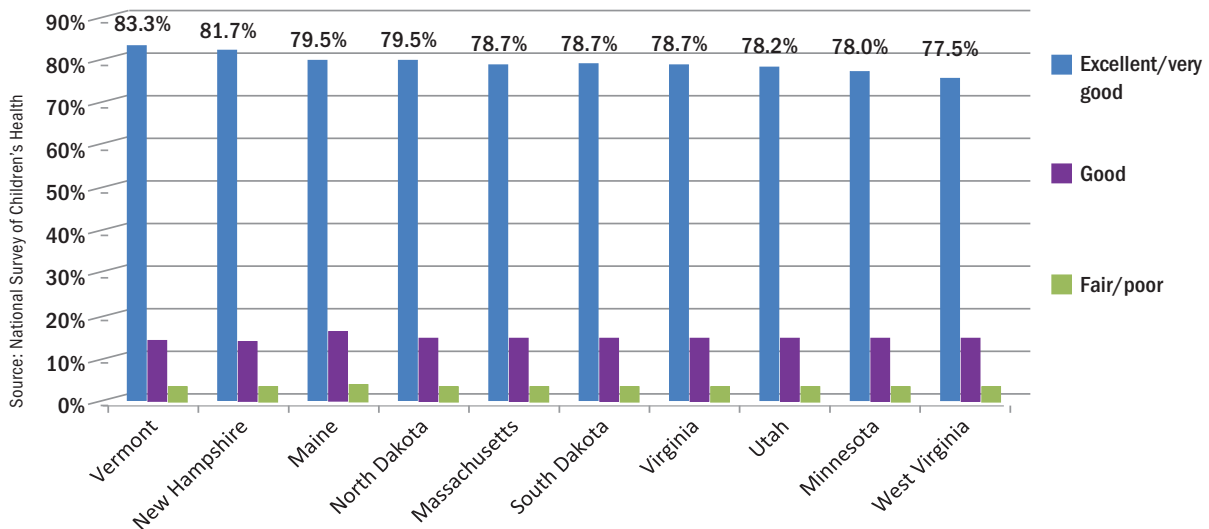
Overall, the initiatives outlined by the Society seem to be having a positive impact on the state of NH's oral health.

New Hampshire ranks fourth in the nation for the percentage of children receiving preventive care in a one-year period. With just about 85% of children receiving preventive dental care, it is evident that New Hampshire has a comprehensive oral care network available to patients, and that providers, parents, and other stakeholders are able to coordinate the receipt of this care to ensure young people form good oral health habits early in life.

Percentage of Children Receiving One or More Preventive Dental Care Visits in Past 12 Months - Top 25 States



How Would You Describe the Condition of Your Child's Teeth? - Top 10 States

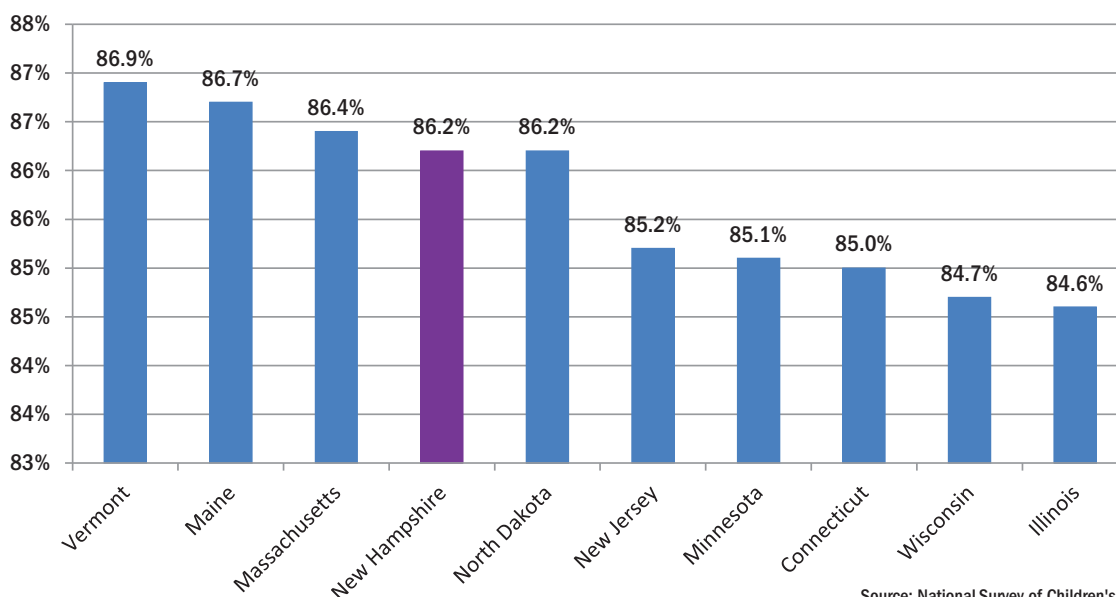


Additionally, a recent report by the American Dental Association found that New Hampshire ranked third in the country for the percentage of children covered by a commercial dental insurance plan who had seen a dentist in a one-year period. Over 71% of children in the state received a dental visit, much higher than the national average of 58.1%. This same report also ranked New Hampshire third nationally for the percentage of Medicaid-enrolled children who had received a dental visit in a one-year period. While the national average for Medicaid enrollees visiting a dentist is 44.4%, New Hampshire's percentage is 57.4%.

Preventive care and the development and practice of good at-home techniques lead to healthy teeth. When parents were asked to describe the condition of their children's teeth, over 81% of New Hampshire parents stated that their children's teeth are in "excellent or very good" condition, higher than every state in the country aside from Vermont.

Of course, the most ideal oral health problem is having no problems at all. Over a one-year period, over 86% of New Hampshire children reported having no oral health issues.

Percentage of Children With No Oral Health Problems in Past 12 Months - Top 10 States



Source: National Survey of Children's Health

Conclusion

In 2010, five goals were initially outlined in "Something to Smile About." These goals served as a framework for what the Society aimed to achieve in the future in order to improve oral health in New Hampshire. Over the past few years, significant progress has been made in areas such as education, prevention, and treatment. But our job is not done. We continue to work with many stakeholders to improve the oral health of the people of New Hampshire. While the statistics in this book show that New Hampshire has made great progress, we do not plan to rest on our laurels. The NH Dental Society will continue to work with all interested partners to build towards the year 2020 when we plan to have even more to smile about.





References & Resources

American Dental Association, www.ada.org

Bi-State Primary Care Association

Centers for Disease Control, National Oral Health Surveillance System

The Commonwealth Fund, *"Healthcare in the Two Americas: Findings from the Scorecard on State Health System Performance for Low-Income Populations,"* 2013

Data Resource Center for Child & Adolescent Health, *"National Survey of Children's Health – 2011,"* <http://childhealthdata.org>

FluorideFactsNH.com

Health Resources & Services Administration, *"Building Oral Health Capacity in Rural New Hampshire,"* Grant Announcement, 2013

Health Resources & Services Administration, www.hpsafind.hrsa.gov

Health Policy Resources Center Research Brief, American Dental Association, *"Dental Care Use Among Children Varies Widely Across States and Between Medicaid and Commercial Plans Within a State,"* October, 2013

MouthHealthy.org

National Brush Day, www.2min2x.org

National Maternal & Child Oral Health Resource Center, *"Fluoride Varnish: An Effective Tool for Preventing Dental Caries,"* 2010

New Hampshire Board of Dental Examiners

New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies, *"Dental Services and Workforce in New Hampshire,"* January, 2010

New Hampshire Dental Society, <http://www.nhds.org>

New Hampshire Dental Society Facebook Page, www.facebook.com/SmileNH

New Hampshire Dental Society, *"Something to Smile About,"* 2010

New Hampshire Department of Health & Human Services – Division of Public Health Services

New Hampshire Department of Health & Human Services Oral Health Program, <http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/bchs/rhpc/oral/index.htm>

New Hampshire Donated Dental Services Program Annual Report, 2013 and 2012

New Hampshire Oral Health Coalition, <http://www.nhoralhealth.org>

New Hampshire State Oral Health Action Plan

The Pew Charitable Trusts, *"In Search of Dental Care,"* June, 2013

The Pew Center on the States, *"Falling Short: Most States Lag on Dental Sealants,"* January, 2013

The Pew Center on the States, *"The State of Children's Dental Health: Making Coverage Matter,"* May, 2011

University of New Hampshire Pre-Dental Society, www.wildcatlink.unh.edu/organization/predentalsociety/about



The New Hampshire Dental Society's Plan for Better Oral Health **2014**

New Hampshire Dental Society

23 South State Street

Concord, NH 03301

Phone: 603-225-5961

Toll Free: 800-244-5961

Fax: 603-226-4880

www.nhds.org