

# Oral Health Improvement Plan for Connecticut

## 2013-2018



# Vision

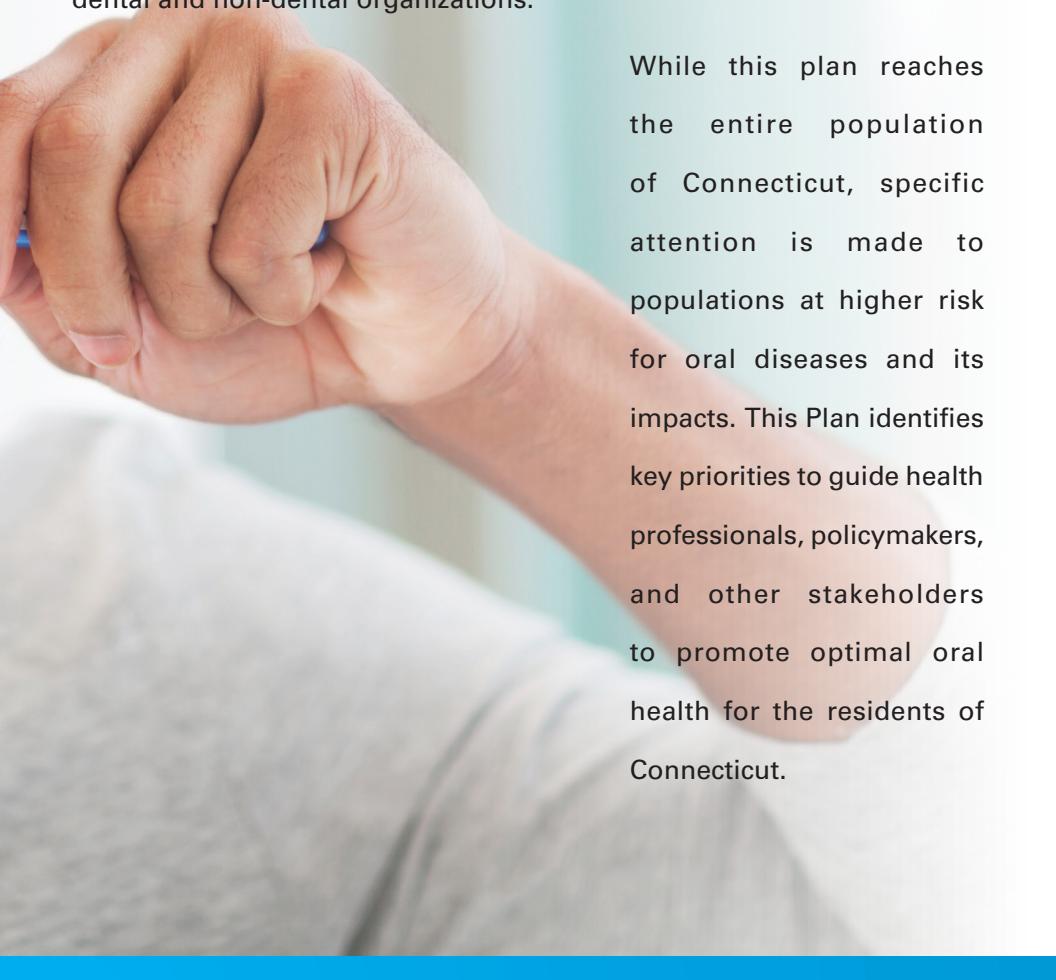
**Connecticut's residents will have oral health as part of their overall health and well-being.**

# Intent

**This oral health plan is intended to set priorities, organize efforts and guide resource allocations for the public and private sectors to improve the oral health of Connecticut's children and adults, with special emphasis on the vulnerable populations.**

# The Connecticut Oral Health Improvement Plan 2013-2018

contains overarching goals to decrease oral health disparities, promote a culturally competent oral health workforce, increase engagement of non-dental health and human services providers in promoting and integrating oral health into their practices and improve the oral health literacy of CT residents. The purpose of this Plan is to be the guiding tool in implementing strategies that will improve the oral health of all Connecticut residents. It is the result of the nearly yearlong efforts of a diverse group of dedicated individuals representing both dental and non-dental organizations.



While this plan reaches the entire population of Connecticut, specific attention is made to populations at higher risk for oral diseases and its impacts. This Plan identifies key priorities to guide health professionals, policymakers, and other stakeholders to promote optimal oral health for the residents of Connecticut.



## GOAL 1

### Increase oral health literacy and promote the value of good oral health for all Connecticut residents

**Objective 1: By 2015, increase the utilization of oral health curricula, which is culturally and linguistically appropriate.**

Strategy 1: Collaborate with the State Department of Education (SDE) and other stakeholders to establish a SDE-endorsed K -12 oral health curriculum.

Strategy 2: Incorporate early oral health education in programs serving young children and their families, such as WIC, Head Start and other early childhood programs.

**Objective 2: By 2018, increase awareness of the importance of oral health through public campaigns that utilize culturally and linguistically appropriate messaging.**

Strategy 1: Develop culturally and linguistically appropriate media and marketing campaigns that target the public and policy makers.

**Objective 3: By 2018, increase awareness of the importance of oral health through campaigns to health and human service providers that address oral health across the lifespan.**

Strategy 1: Develop appropriate media and marketing campaigns to health and human service providers that focus on the oral health of the general population, as well as targeted populations, such as older adults and pregnant women.

## **GOAL 2**

### **Ensure that the oral health needs of Connecticut residents are met by a competent workforce.**

**Objective 1: By 2016, increase the integration of oral health into health and human services provider training and practice.**

Strategy 1: Integrate oral health education into healthcare and human services professional curricula.

Strategy 2: Promote inter-professional learning experiences for medical and dental students, including, but not limited to, physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, pharmacists, dentists and dental hygienists.

Strategy 3: Investigate opportunities to integrate oral health education into human services provider training and practice.

**Objective 2: By 2017, enhance and support a diverse oral health workforce that adequately addresses oral health needs and disparities.**

Strategy 1: Establish a system to track dental workforce patterns.

Strategy 2: Develop and implement continuing educational opportunities in cultural competencies for all licensed oral health professionals.

Strategy 3: Support structured oral health career awareness programs for K-12 students to encourage a more diverse and “home grown” dental workforce.



## **GOAL 3**

# **Ensure a strong and sustainable oral health infrastructure to meet and anticipate the oral health needs of all Connecticut residents**

### **Objective 1: Annually advance the systematic collection, analysis, and dissemination of oral health data.**

Strategy 1: Identify, collect, analyze and disseminate quantitative and qualitative data to monitor the oral health status, needs and access to dental services of Connecticut residents.

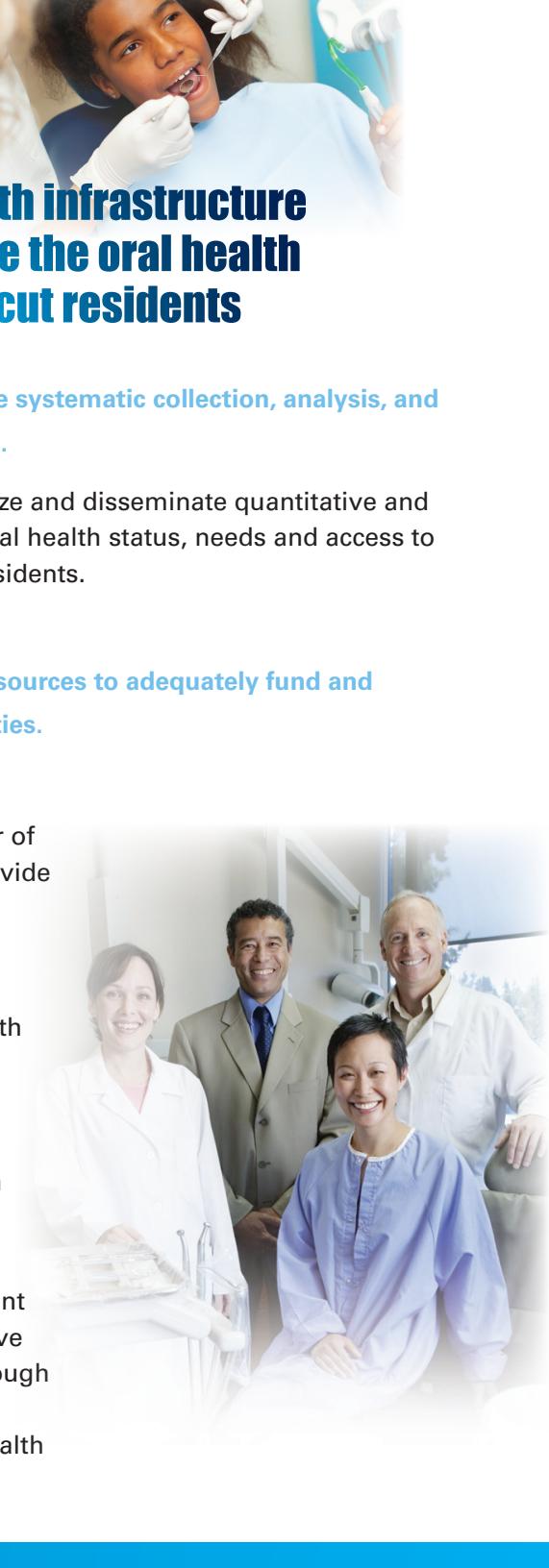
### **Objective 2: Annually leverage resources to adequately fund and evaluate oral public health activities.**

Strategy 1: Identify and secure resources to increase the number of local health departments that provide oral health promotion, screening activities and services.

Strategy 2: Identify and secure resources to implement oral health care coordination throughout the state.

Strategy 3: Identify and secure funding to expand the oral health safety-net system.

Strategy 4: Identify and secure funding to ensure the development and financial stability of preventive oral health programs offered through the Connecticut Department of Public Health and other public health entities.



# **GOAL 4**

## **Raise awareness and educate the public and decision makers regarding the science and efficacy of policies that may improve the oral health of Connecticut residents and implement or enforce existing policies**

### **Objective 1: Annually conduct effective oral health policy education and engagement of the public and decision makers at the State level.**

Strategy 1: Educate and engage the public and decision makers on the benefits of mandating oral health screenings of children by a licensed dental professional or a licensed medical professional with specified oral health education.

Strategy 2: Educate and engage decision makers and the public on the value of mandating oral health parity similar to mental health.

Strategy 3: Educate and engage decision makers and the public on the benefits of expanding the person centered medical home (PCMH) standard in Medicaid to include oral health assessment beyond age three.

Strategy 4: Educate and engage decision makers and the public on the importance of mandated periodic statewide oral health surveillance of children and adults every three to five years.

Strategy 5: Educate and engage decision makers and the public on the need for adequate Medicaid reimbursement rates and policies for children and bring adult reimbursement to a similar level.

Strategy 6: Ensure adequate access to oral health services through Access Health CT (the Exchange/Marketplace) and other private insurance offerings.

Strategy 7: Educate and engage the public and decision makers on the importance of maintaining statutory authority for community water fluoridation.

Strategy 8: Educate and engage decision makers and the public on the need for increased access and reduced barriers in oral health safety nets.

### **Objective 2: By 2015, establish effective oral health policy education and engagement of the public and decision makers at the federal level.**

Strategy 1: Utilize established oral health networks to inform and disseminate information on oral health issues at the federal level.

### **Objective 3: By 2018, conduct effective oral health policy education and engagement of the public and decision makers at the local level.**

Strategy 1: Monitor and take appropriate actions on oral health issues on a local level.

Strategy 2: Develop a structure which enhances the flow of communication between state and local oral health advocates.

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