

# Oral Health Improvement Plan for Connecticut 2019 - 2024

Office of Oral Health • March 2023

## About

The Oral Health Improvement Plan for Connecticut 2019 – 2024 guides efforts of state and community programs dedicated to ensuring access to oral health services for all residents, regardless of race, ethnicity, education, or class background. The five-year plan was developed using state data sources to inform work and measure progress and written with a “health equity lens” that addresses oral health disparities among Connecticut’s diverse populations. Public health advocates, and medical and dental practitioners from around the state contributed to the plan.



## Mission

Improve the oral health of all Connecticut residents as an integral part of overall health and well-being.

## Focus Area 1: Prevention

*Goal 1: Reduce the incidence of oral disease among Connecticut populations by use of evidence-based preventive interventions.*

Most oral health problems are preventable. Evidence-based interventions provide the best outcomes and are cost-effective. Connecticut residents are better able to improve and maintain their oral health status when they are educated about the importance of good oral health and given access to services.



Investment in oral health education and prevention services will reduce the future disease burden and contribute to the overall health of all Connecticut residents.

### Focus Areas:

- **Prevention**
- **Access and Utilization**
- **Medical and Dental Integration**
- **Data Collection and Analysis**

## Focus Area 2: Access and Utilization

*Goal 2: Ensure access to and utilization of quality, comprehensive, and continuous oral health care for all Connecticut residents, particularly at-risk populations.*

Connecticut ranks third for overall dental health in the nation, but there are still people at risk based on age, income, race, ethnicity, education, and other factors. Certain social determinants and



other barriers lead to a lack of access to, and underutilization of, oral health care necessary to maintain good health. Equitable access to quality oral health care must be assured to all populations.



## Focus Area 3: Medical – Dental Integration

*Goal 3: Increase the integration of dental and medical health care systems, policies, and programs.*

Oral health care has historically been separated from the rest of the health care delivery system. The health care community and the public do not always recognize the importance of oral health to overall health. Research has demonstrated the link between oral health conditions and heart disease, diabetes, lung disease, and stroke. To improve population health, oral health care must be integrated into health care systems, particularly primary care.

## Focus Area 4: Data Collection and Analysis

*Goal 4: Collect and analyze oral health data to measure outcomes and inform decisions to improve the health of Connecticut residents.*

The collection and analysis of oral health data is necessary for developing new and measuring existing systems to inform decisions to meet the needs of Connecticut’s diverse population. This can be achieved by having the resources to conduct research, collect and analyze quality data, and implement periodic assessments of existing programs.

To access the plan, go to [Oral Health Improvement Plan for Connecticut 2019 - 2024](#).