



Oral Health Awareness Colorado!

Oral Health Awareness Colorado! (OHAC!) is a coalition of professionals representing a wide range of public, private and non-profit organizations interested in advancing oral health care in Colorado. Its **mission** is to develop and promote strategies that achieve optimal oral health for all Coloradans.

**History:** One of OHAC!'s first tasks was to create a formal action plan for Colorado, designed to improve the oral health of Coloradans and provide strategic guidance to government, health professions, education, business and communities to ease the burden of oral disease in the state. In the Fall of 2004, the coalition convened a statewide summit of key stakeholders. *"Smart Mouths, Healthy Bodies: An Oral Health Action Summit"* evaluated the impact of oral disease on the general health of Coloradans. During the summit, participants prioritized oral health needs and desired outcomes. A steering committee completed the work by adding strategies. As a result of the work of the summit participants and the steering committee, *"Smart Mouths, Healthy Bodies: An Action Plan to Improve the Oral Health of Coloradans"* was developed. The plan focuses on six major topic areas. These topic areas, and the related outcomes and strategies, will help guide and direct a strong, unified statewide movement in support of achieving accessible and affordable oral health for all.

- The **Financing** topic area includes outcomes which address effective financing of both the system of oral health care and the activities of the state oral health plan. Priorities include: increasing, proportionally, the amount of dollars spent on oral health care relative to overall health care, and increasing the number of Coloradans who have access to dental insurance coverage, including the addition of a dental benefit for adults to Medicaid and for pregnant women covered by CHP+.
- The **Health Promotion** topic area includes outcomes directed at educating the public on the relationship between oral health and general health. It also emphasizes individuals' roles and responsibilities for their own oral health.
- The **Policy and Advocacy** topic area includes outcomes directed at public or private policies that need to be established or advocated for in order to positively impact access to or delivery of oral health care services. Priorities include: advocating for changing the Dental Practice Act regarding licensing Registered Dental Hygienists and foreign-trained dentists, improving reimbursement to oral health care providers, from private and public-funded sectors, for all services, and coordinating dental insurance plans with health insurance plans.
- The **Promising Practices** topic area includes outcomes directed at successful, evidence-based and research-based strategies, decision-making practices, and activities that can be replicated and applied to oral health problems in Colorado.
- The **Systems of Care** topic area includes outcomes directed at coordinating systems of care for more efficient and effective application to oral health.
- The **Workforce** topic area includes outcomes directed at the development of a diverse workforce to ensure both access to oral health care and a workforce that is competent and representative of the populations it serves.

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