



CDPH

California Department of
Public Health

ORAL HEALTH BYTES

October 2024

The Office of Oral Health is pleased to present this edition, which includes information and resources for Local Oral Health Programs and partners on oral health care for individuals with disabilities, along with insights on health equity for this community. This aligns with Objective 5.3.a and Objective 7 in your work plan.

Disability

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines a disability as “any condition of the body or mind (impairment) that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities (activity limitation) and interact with the world around them (participation restrictions).”

[Read More](#)

SOME DISABILITIES LOOK LIKE THIS



OTHERS LOOK LIKE THIS



NOT ALL DISABILITIES ARE VISIBLE

National Disability Employment Awareness Month - NDEAM

The social determinants of health – the conditions that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks – lists employment as an economic stability component of wellness. Research has shown that hiring people with disabilities improves workplace morale and culture and decreases turnover.¹ However, people with disabilities have historically experienced unemployment at double the rate of non-disabled people. In 2023, the unemployment rate for people with a disability was 7.2 percent, about twice that of those with no disability (3.5 percent).²

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) is a national annual observance held in October. NDEAM is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor) it celebrates the value and talent workers with disabilities add to America's workplace and economy. NDEAM spotlights ideas to ensure inclusion in the workplace. In addition, NDEAM reaffirms their commitment to ensuring disabled workers have access to good jobs, every month of every year. This year's official theme is: "Access to Good Jobs for All."

¹ <https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbesbusinesscouncil/2021/12/03/seven-reasons-why-hiring-people-with-disabilities-is-good-for-business/>

² <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/disabl.nr0.htm>;
<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/research-evaluation/statistics>

Resources:

[Disability etiquette](#)

[Disability employment videos](#)

[Brush Up On Your Dental Care \(specialolympics.org\)](#)

[What is an Intellectual Disability?](#)

[How to Develop Communication Products for Adults with IDD](#)

[American Association on Health & Disability](#)

[Medicaid Medicare CHIP Services Dental Association](#)

[Pacific Dental Services Foundation](#)

Disability Employment Awareness Month



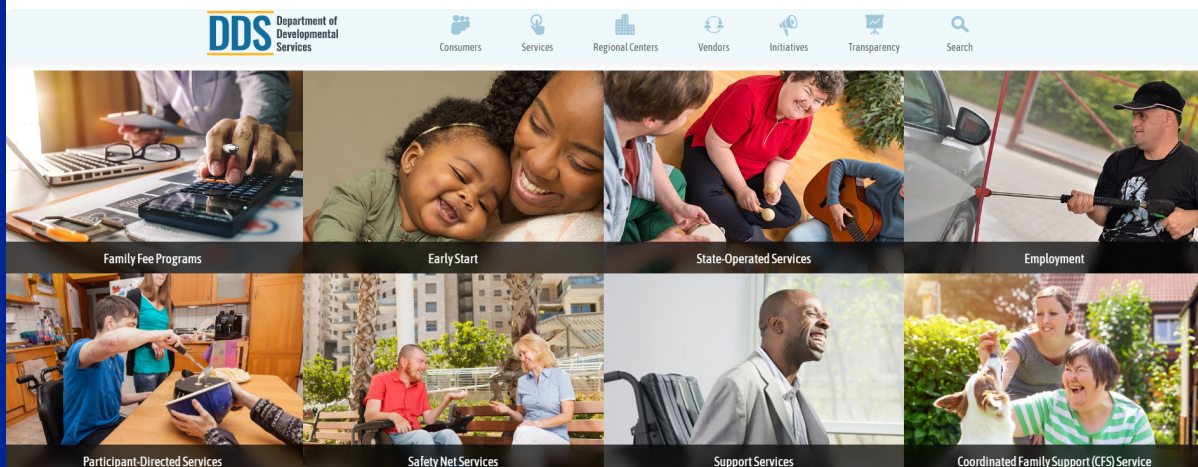
The California Department of Developmental Services (DDS) works to ensure Californians with intellectual and developmental disabilities live the lives they choose in their communities. DDS oversees the coordination and delivery of services through a statewide network of 21 community-based, non-profit agencies known as regional centers. Regional centers provide assessments, determine eligibility for services, and offer case management. Regional centers also develop and coordinate the services in each person's Individual Program Plan, which may include dental services.

Many regional centers have dedicated staff who serve as Dental Coordinators. Dental Coordinators link individuals served by regional centers to dental resources within their communities. They support:

- Assessment, triage, and referral
- Consultation with and technical assistance to dental providers
 - Development of community resources and dental services
- Promotion of preventive services through on-going education and training for individuals, families, caregivers, service coordinators, dental and other health professionals

Developmental services are person-centered and designed to meet the needs and reflect the choices of individuals and families. Additional services provided by DDS include the Early Start program, Family Fee programs, Safety Net services, Coordinated Career Pathways services, Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion programs, and many more.

Learn More



Upcoming Events

November 21 - Share and Learn: [Highlighting LOHP Care Coordination Models](#)

December 31 - Progress report period ends; PR 5 due Jan. 31, 2025

California Oral Health Technical Assistance Center (COHTAC)

Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities may face a variety of oral health issues alongside other health challenges, and they often have higher prevalence and severity of oral diseases compared to the general population. Given the California Oral Health Plan's emphasis on oral health equity, prioritizing children and adults with disabilities is essential in our efforts.

California Oral Health Technical Assistance Center (COHTAC) recommends the following resources/websites for more information on how to support people with disabilities:

Special Care Dentistry Association: an international organization of oral health professionals and others dedicated to promoting oral health and well-being for people with disabilities.



Some resources from Head Start to support children with disabilities:

- o Toothbrushing positions: English, Spanish
- o Tips on toothbrushing: English, Spanish

American Academy of Pediatrics' recent clinical report highlighting the oral health needs of children and youth with developmental disabilities

Several other resources that might be helpful, especially supporting children and youth with disabilities:

- o National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center resources
 - o Autism Speaks dental toolkit
 - o A Caregiver's Guide to Good Oral Health for Special Olympics Athletes: English, Spanish
- o Cavity Free SF's resources for oral hygiene for children and youth with special healthcare needs: English, Cantonese

Ways to Help Older Kids with Holding the Toothbrush



Reminders

We'd like to take this opportunity to remind you that the COHTAC website is frequently updated with new resources, news, and events. If you missed any of our recent Share & Learn webinars, you can catch up on past sessions.

Past Share and Learn Events

Don't miss our next Share & Learn session on November 21, 2024, 10 to 11:30 a.m., where we'll highlight LOHP Care Coordination Models. Registration is required in advance. As always, feel free to contact COHTAC with any questions or suggestions.

More Share and Learn Events



**Support Caregivers in Maintaining Healthy Smiles for All
with Medi-Cal Dental Benefits**



When individuals are dealing with other health challenges, oral health may sometimes take a backseat. It's important to remind caregivers that oral health is closely linked to overall well-being.

Regular dental check-ups and proper oral hygiene can help prevent serious issues like tooth loss and pain, which can exacerbate existing health conditions. Encourage your community to utilize their Medi-Cal benefits for free dental services, ensuring everyone can access the care they need.

For individuals with disabilities, maintaining good oral hygiene can be especially challenging. Caregivers play a critical role in supporting the oral and overall health of persons with disabilities. Encourage caregivers to:

1. Schedule at least one dental appointment a year for the person they are caring for.
2. Ensure they have an easy-to-handle toothbrush with intact bristles.
3. Find the best place and time for daily brushing and flossing, that works best for the individual, whether that is in the bathroom or another setting.
4. Explain and demonstrate each step before brushing to avoid surprises and confusion.

[Explore More](#)

Explore and share resources from SmileCalifornia.org to help your community maintain healthy smiles for all:

- Medi-Cal Covers Your Loved Ones Dental Needs Brochure:
[English](#) | [Spanish](#)
- Clean Routine Fotonovela: [English](#) | [Spanish](#)
- Brushing Techniques and Additional Resources: [English](#) | [Spanish](#)
 - Social Media Images:
 - o Special Healthcare Needs: [English](#) | [Spanish](#) | [Caption](#)
 - o Medi-Cal Keeps Smiles Healthy: [English](#) | [Caption](#)

Let's work together to ensure everyone gets the dental care they need!

Welcoming the New CA State Dental Director



Shkalpi Pendurkar, DDS, MPH has joined the Office of Oral Health as Governor Newsom's newly appointed State Dental Director. We are thrilled to welcome her to the team. Dr. Pendurkar brings extensive experience from her work as a provider at Federally Qualified Health Center and Local Health Jurisdictions in San Mateo and Alameda, as well as her role as Dental Director for the Health Plan of San Mateo. Additionally, she was an active member of the California Partnership for Oral Health Steering Committee and Chaired several Partnership Work Groups, giving her a strong understanding of the California Oral Health Plan and various oral health initiatives.

Read more about Dr. Pendurkar in these announcements:

[CDA Announcement](#)

[Champion Provider Announcement](#)

LOHP Spotlight

El Dorado and Alpine County:
Promoting Healthy Smiles

In 2022, El Dorado and Alpine County established a consortium in which El Dorado County operates the Local Oral Health Program (LOHP) for both counties. This program implements the activities and objectives outlined in the Moving California Oral Health Forward 2022-2027 grant.

The LOHP collaborates to improve oral health outcomes for both students and residents, aiming to offer a range of dental services and resources that ensure access to essential oral health care in the community.



A key initiative of the program is its school-based and school-linked services. This school year, the El Dorado dental van will offer services to students at 15 schools in El Dorado County, providing preventive dental care and follow-up treatments as needed.

These services follow a 6-month rotation, ensuring consistent care throughout the year.

Registered Dental Hygienists Alternative Practice conduct oral health assessments for kindergarteners in the classroom, identifying their oral health needs, and linking them to a dental home. In Alpine County, these services are provided through the Early Smiles program.



Alongside school-based services, the program helps families access essential dental care through partnerships with local organizations.

Key collaborators, such as the El Dorado Community Health Center and the El Dorado County Office of Education, play a vital role in delivering these services.

The program's outreach also extends beyond schools, with staff actively participating in community events to distribute dental supplies and provide educational resources to residents.

Whether at outreach events or school screenings, the team is dedicated to ensuring that both children and adults have the tools and knowledge needed to maintain their good oral health.



Through a commitment to providing oral health education, supporting families in both counties and focusing on prevention, the Local Oral Health Program is making a lasting impact on the well-being of the community.



OOH Team Member Spotlight

Dr. Lynn Walton-Haynes



Lynn Walton-Haynes, DDS, MPH is the Dental Program Consultant for the California Department of Public Health's Office of Oral Health (OOH). She is responsible for providing consultation on the development and implementation of evidenced-based dental policy and preventive programs aimed at reducing health disparities and improving oral health outcomes in California. She leads the OOH medical-dental integration efforts focused on pregnant people and young children. She also serves as the OOH liaison for health equity efforts within CDPH.

Prior to joining OOH, Dr. Walton-Haynes practiced general dentistry for over 15 years and served more than 20 years as a public health epidemiologist developing and disseminating data to a variety of audiences to inform public health and health policy. She enjoys mentoring others new to public health.

Dr. Walton-Haynes grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area and has fond memories of sailing the Bay and running in the annual Bay to Breakers race with her father. She loves camping with her family, train travel, and stargazing. She wishes she had her mother's "green thumb" but still enjoys being an amateur gardener!

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