

American Academy of Pediatrics

SDF is Coming to the Pediatric Medical Setting: Networking Now to Prepare for Success!



Executive Summary
November 21 & December 5, 2024

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Prepared for
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Pediatricians see too many kids who need treatment for dental disease but aren't getting it. The recent introduction of silver diamine fluoride (SDF), an easily administered minimally invasive liquid medication, has the potential to equip physicians with a way to treat children's dental caries.

Thanks to the assignment of a Category III current procedural terminology (CPT) code and newly available [AAP guidance](#), SDF is coming to pediatric medical settings. Already in use by a small number of early-adopting oral health champions, uptake of SDF by pediatricians intensifies the urgent need for deeper medical-dental integration (MDI).

In fall 2024, the AAP convened **SDF is Coming to the Pediatric Medical Setting: Networking Now to Prepare for Success!** (referred to as **SDF is Coming** throughout this summary). In 3-hour sessions held on November 21st and December 5th, the meeting brought together 34 like-minded professionals representing 24 organizations for in-depth discussions and resource exchange using the introduction of SDF as a catalyst to promote further action on MDI.

Building on the Academy's 2023 SDF workshop series, **SDF is Coming** premised that a myriad of educational and promotional resources already exist on SDF and MDI, but effective interprofessional relationships are lagging, leaving pediatric providers without a clear pathway to the dental care children need.

Designed to create a space for people seeking to make change with the help of others, **SDF is Coming** prioritized *relationship building* and centered *deeper conversations between professionals* representing organizations key to promoting and fostering MDI.

Day 1 activities centered on two "Who Are The People In Your Neighborhood?" small group breakout sessions, meant to simulate on a micro scale the need to bring pediatric and oral health professionals together. Guided by discussion questions, participants were encouraged to think about how, individually and collectively, to apply insights with their own "neighbors" (eg, members, constituent audiences) to raise awareness and promote information-sharing on SDF and MDI.

At the conclusion of both rounds, participants recorded their reflections on community whiteboards. Their comments demonstrate that participants gained a renewed appreciation for the work underway among the partner organizations represented. In large group discussions, attendees identified opportunities to collaborate and suggested post-meeting follow up conversations with other participants.

Day 2 prioritized collective action planning and began with a discussion between Chevon Brooks, MD, FAAP, and Amr Moursi, DDS, PHD, oral health champions who offered their own examples of MDI in action. Attendees spent the remainder of the meeting in two of four self-selected working sessions focused on SDF and MDI message creation, webinar/toolkit development, and innovative approaches to interprofessional engagement. Among the key takeaways from these sessions were:

- the benefits of generating core content that can be easily customized for organizations' unique and varied audiences,
- the importance of including pediatric and dental representation in all aspects of programming from planning through implementation to model interprofessional collaboration and promote buy-in, and

- the value of working with local and state societies and organizations to facilitate in-person opportunities for pediatric (including school health) and dental professional relationship building.

The meeting concluded with a group discussion on accountability structures and opportunities to nurture and sustain the potential collaborations and momentum generated by **SDF is Coming**. Participants identified short-term commitments that included continued exploration of resources, information sharing about SDF and MDI with colleagues, and identification of opportunities to foster interprofessional connections.

SDF is Coming provided a rare opportunity with time and space for key stakeholders to come together for the purposes of relationship-building through dialogue and resource sharing. Attendees have been invited to reconvene at the June 2025 [Oral Health Learning Café](#) to report on their progress and discuss challenges, emergent needs, and next steps.

The promise of SDF as a minimally invasive tool for early treatment of dental caries by pediatric healthcare professionals is potentially game changing for children and their families. With enthusiasm for broader implementation, key stakeholders are also mindful of existing gaps such as limited workflow models, state differences in payment, challenges associated with training and practice on children's teeth, and workforce shortages as well as insurance issues that often make local dental referrals difficult.

Learnings from the **SDF is Coming** small and large group sessions highlight several action recommendations for AAP and other key stakeholder organizations to consider as they support SDF implementation in pediatric practice settings and greater interprofessional collaboration to improve pediatric oral health care access.

Action recommendations:

- Facilitate matching stakeholders' informational needs with existing resources
- Create relationship building opportunities at local and regional levels
- Identify opportunities for joint sponsorship at organizational conferences and meetings

The AAP is grateful to the CareQuest Institute for Oral Health for their generous, ongoing support of this project as well as to the participants who attended the 2024 meeting and the stakeholder organizations they represent.