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## DURING CHILDREN'S DENTAL HEALTH MONTH, FLORIDA HEALTH HIGHLIGHTS SUCCESS OF SCHOOL-BASED SEALANT PROGRAM



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**Tallahassee, Fla.**— February is Children's Dental Health month and the Florida Department of Health is working to promote good oral health for children and families through preventive dental care. Over the past three years, the number of county health departments providing School-Based Sealant Programs has increased from 27 to 51. Governor Rick Scott's Fighting for Florida's Future Budget recommends \$1.2 million in funding to expand the School-Based Sealant Program to the remaining counties statewide. This program helps ensure low-income children have access to quality dental care.

"Children with poor dental health often deal with pain and infections that can cause tooth loss, and difficulty eating and speaking which negatively impacts their performance in school," said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. Celeste Philip. "Dental sealants are an effective way to prevent tooth decay and they are offered at no cost to schools, parents or children through the department's School-Based Sealant Program. I am grateful to Governor Scott for recommending funding to expand this program statewide so we can serve more children and families."

Every \$1 Florida invests in dental sealants saves \$1.88 in costs related to treating decaying teeth. Dental sealants are thin plastic coatings applied to the grooves on the chewing surfaces of molar teeth and are 86 percent effective in preventing tooth decay. According to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, dental sealants prevent 80 percent of cavities in the back teeth, where nine in 10 cavities occur. Currently, the department's School-Based Sealant Programs are serving more than 46,000 children.

Dental sealants performed by the department were analyzed for cost effectiveness by comparing the cost of receiving one dental sealant to the cost of one dental filling on an unsealed tooth. The cost savings over three years for 39,083 children receiving one dental sealant is more than \$2.5 million.

For more information about the School-Based Sealant Program, please click [here](#).

### About the Florida Department of Health

The department works to protect, promote, and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county, and community efforts.

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