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SCHOOL-BASED SEALANT PROGRAM PROVIDES COST-EFFECTIVE PREVENTATIVE DENTAL CARE



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Tallahassee, Fla.— February is Children’s Dental Health month and the Florida Department of Health joins dental professionals nationwide to promote good oral health for children and families. Currently, more than 65 percent of the department’s county health offices provide School-Based Sealant Programs offering preventive dental services at no cost to schools, parents or children. For every \$1 Florida invests on dental sealants saves \$1.88 in fillings.

“Dental health matters for overall health,” said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. “The department is committed to promoting healthy teeth and gums through a variety of services across Florida’s communities.”

Tooth decay is the single most common chronic condition affecting children in the United States and in Florida. Left untreated, dental decay can result in:

- Infection, pain, inadequate tooth function and tooth loss;
- Impaired nutrition and inadequate speech development;
- Costly emergency department visits; or
- Poor school performance.

In 2014, department dental programs provided sealants to nearly 37,000 children. 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.

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 36,955 children receiving one dental sealant is more than \$2.3 million.

Throughout the month, the department will continue to promote cost effective interventions including dental sealants and community water fluoridation for lifelong health and well-being for Florida’s children and their families.

To learn more about the Public Health Dental Program visit:

<http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/community-health/dental-health/index.html>

About the Florida Department of Health

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