

October 14, 2016

## FLORIDA HEALTH EXPANDS SCHOOL-BASED DENTAL SEALANT PROGRAMS WITH NEW GRANT FUNDING



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**Tallahassee, Fla.**—The Florida Department of Health is observing the first World Cavity-Free Future Day by establishing School-Based Sealant Programs in Alachua, Hardee, Levy, Marion, Okeechobee, Sarasota, and Seminole Counties. Every \$1 Florida invests in dental sealants saves \$1.88 in fillings.

“Dental sealants are a cost effective way to prevent adolescent tooth decay,” said State Surgeon General and Secretary Dr. Celeste Philip. “This investment ensures more children in our state have access to effective dental care so they can live long, healthy lives.”

School-Based Sealant Programs offer preventive dental services in Title I schools at no cost to schools, parents or children. The Public Health Dental Program leads the department’s efforts to improve and maintain the oral health of all persons in Florida through evidenced-based and cost-effective programs.

Tooth decay affects approximately one in five children in Florida and is the single most common chronic condition affecting children in the United States. 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.

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.

These newly established School-Based Sealant Programs will help the counties make strides toward eliminating barriers in access to dental care for local children.

To learn more about the Public Health Dental Program visit [www.flhealth.gov/dental](http://www.flhealth.gov/dental)

## **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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