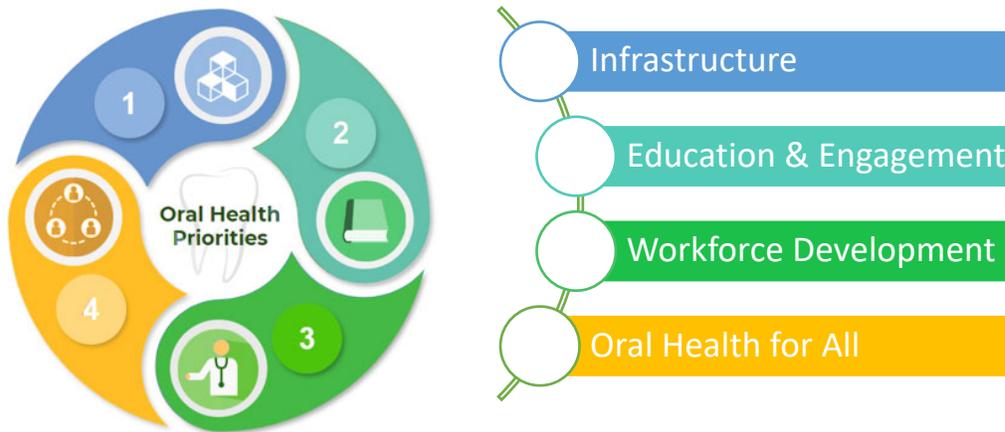


Hawai'i Oral Health Community Strategies and Recommendations 2019

One of the most significant but often overlooked aspects of an individual's health is oral health. The Surgeon General issued a report on the link between good oral health and general well-being, emphasizing the association between oral health issues and other health problems, such as cardiovascular disease and lower respiratory infections¹.

The effects of poor oral health, such as periodontal disease and dental caries, have significant negative impacts on the overall well-being of an individual and can impede daily activities. Often, these outcomes are preventable through regular oral home care, a healthy diet, and routine dental visits. Unfortunately, significant oral health disparities exist in Hawai'i that have led to poor oral health outcomes, especially in children. Vulnerabilities such as low socioeconomic status (SES), limited resources, and low oral health literacy intersect with limited access to professional dental services, lack of statewide water fluoridation, overall low value emphasis on oral home care, and diets rich in fermentable carbohydrates.

A framework to improve the oral health of Hawai'i has been developed through State-wide townhall meetings, oral health task force recommendations, CDC National Oral Health Recommendations, and Healthy People 2020 Oral Health objectives. Within this framework are four main priorities: Infrastructure, Education and Engagement, Workforce development, and Oral Health for All.



Now more than ever before, the improvement of the oral health for Hawai'i requires community engagement. These priorities and their recommendations serve as a framework for community adoption and alignment of efforts. Implementation of these recommendations, done at the community level, speaks to the unique needs of each community. As community capacity grows, so does the collective capacity state-wide to improve the oral health of Hawai'i.

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2000). Oral Health in America: A Report of the Surgeon General. Retrieved from <https://www.nidcr.nih.gov/DataStatistics/SurgeonGeneral/Report/ExecutiveSummary.htm>

PRIORITY AREA		Recommendations
1	Oral Health Public Health Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a dental public health team at the state level to support a statewide oral health program. • Establish an interconnected infrastructure among oral health and primary health systems, people, relationships, and resources. • Develop a state strategic plan that can guide the oral health landscape. • Implement a strong surveillance system that provides ongoing data collection. • Improve access to sources of fluoride through public water, dental sealants, and other evidence-based fluoride services.
2	Community Education & Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate the public and community connectors on the importance of oral health in relation to overall health and promote preventive oral healthcare. • Improve oral health knowledge and awareness among health professionals, families, parents, adults, children, and especially vulnerable populations. • Strengthen and expand on collaborative efforts among oral health leaders and stakeholders in support of a unified statewide oral health coalition. • Develop and establish as a statewide coalition that can plan the next steps and priorities in improving oral health in Hawai'i for the future.
3	Oral Health Workforce Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of oral health general practitioners and specialists in areas experiencing shortages. • Support primary care providers to increase the number of children, adolescents, and adults who obtain regular preventive dental services. • Increase special needs training among oral health general practitioners and specialists to meet the needs of high-risk populations. • Encourage oral health and primary health care providers to collaboratively integrate and expand their practice settings to meet the needs of all.
4	Access to Oral Health Care for All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve oral health for all by reducing the proportion of individuals who have dental caries in their primary or permanent teeth. • Increase the proportion of low-income children and adolescents who receive preventive dental service during the year. • Increase the proportion of adults who receive dental coverage for basic preventive and restorative dental interventions. • Integrate oral health within school-based health programs to improve access to preventive dentistry and oral health education. • Utilize existing evidence-based practices, such as tele-dentistry that are low-cost and easy to access for communities with geographical barriers.