

THE SCHOOL DENTIST

A Family Dentist for Your School

Michigan's Oral Health Report

The Michigan Department of Community Health's "2006 Burden of Oral Disease in Michigan" report summarized the current status of oral health in Michigan. Findings in the study, which support the school dentist prevention program, follow.

- One in four (25%) Michigan third grade children have untreated dental decay.
- In 1996, the most recent year for which national data is available, U.S. School children missed a total of 1.6 million days of schools due to acute dental conditions, or more than three days for every 11 students. [USDHHS 2000a]
- Screening revealed that nearly one in ten Michigan third grade children are in need of immediate dental care for signs or symptoms of pain, infection, or swelling.
- Free and reduced lunch participants also had higher rates of untreated dental disease.
- If sealants were applied routinely to susceptible tooth surfaces in conjunction with the appropriate use of fluoride, most tooth decay in children could be prevented. [USDHHS2000b]
- Only one in five Medicaid children nationally have received preventive care at the dentist in the past year.
- Access to care plays an important role in determining dental need, as demonstrated by the fact that...
 - ... children who experienced difficulty in obtaining dental care were three times more likely to have immediate dental care needs.
 - ... as of 2004, 65 counties in Michigan were designated as provider shortage areas for dental services.
 - ... nine counties lack a dentist that accepts Medicaid. Sixty-five of Michigan's 83 counties qualified as a dental shortage area in 2004.
 - ... in Michigan's fiscal year 2005, \$68 million was spent on dental services, representing only one percent of Medicaid health care expenditures in Michigan.

For more information about the above document or other oral health information, contact the Michigan Department of Community Health, Oral Health Program at (517) 335-8388, visit the State of Michigan's Oral Health website at www.michigan.gov/oralhealth, or email oralhealth@michigan.gov.

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