



OFFICE OF ORAL HEALTH



FY25 COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT



Meet the Office of Oral Health



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Our Perspective

We believe there is a story behind every smile. Those “smile stories” are the keys to understanding the factors that have helped or inhibited an individual’s journey toward oral health.

The OOH features a diverse team whose oral health experiences are shared by many Arkansans. These experiences are like threads that weave throughout our programming and outreach; they propel us in our mission to help **all Arkansans** attain oral health.

Highlights & Partnerships

Between July 2024 and June 2025, OOH made statewide impact through health promotion and disease prevention initiatives. Advancements in oral health interventions were championed through collaboration with internal and external partners.

Over **50,000** oral health kits distributed

Over **4,000** preventive dental sealants placed

Over **33,000** preventive oral health services provided in Local Health Units



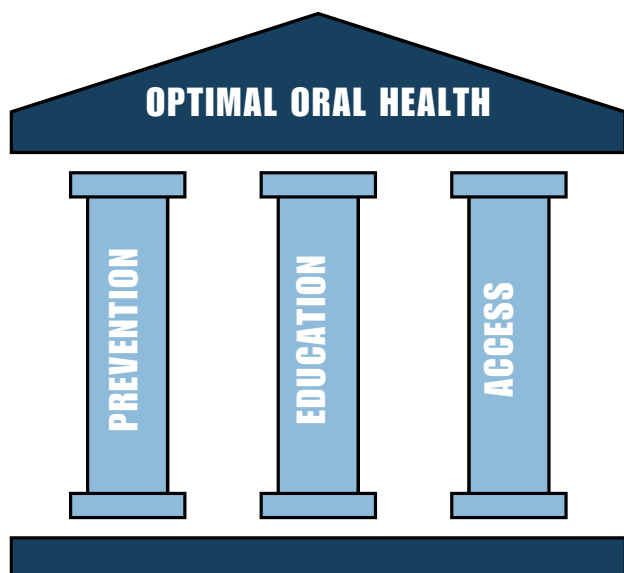
Sealant Partners

- Arkansas Children's Hospital (ACH)
- FutureSmiles Dental Clinic



Arkansas Department of Health

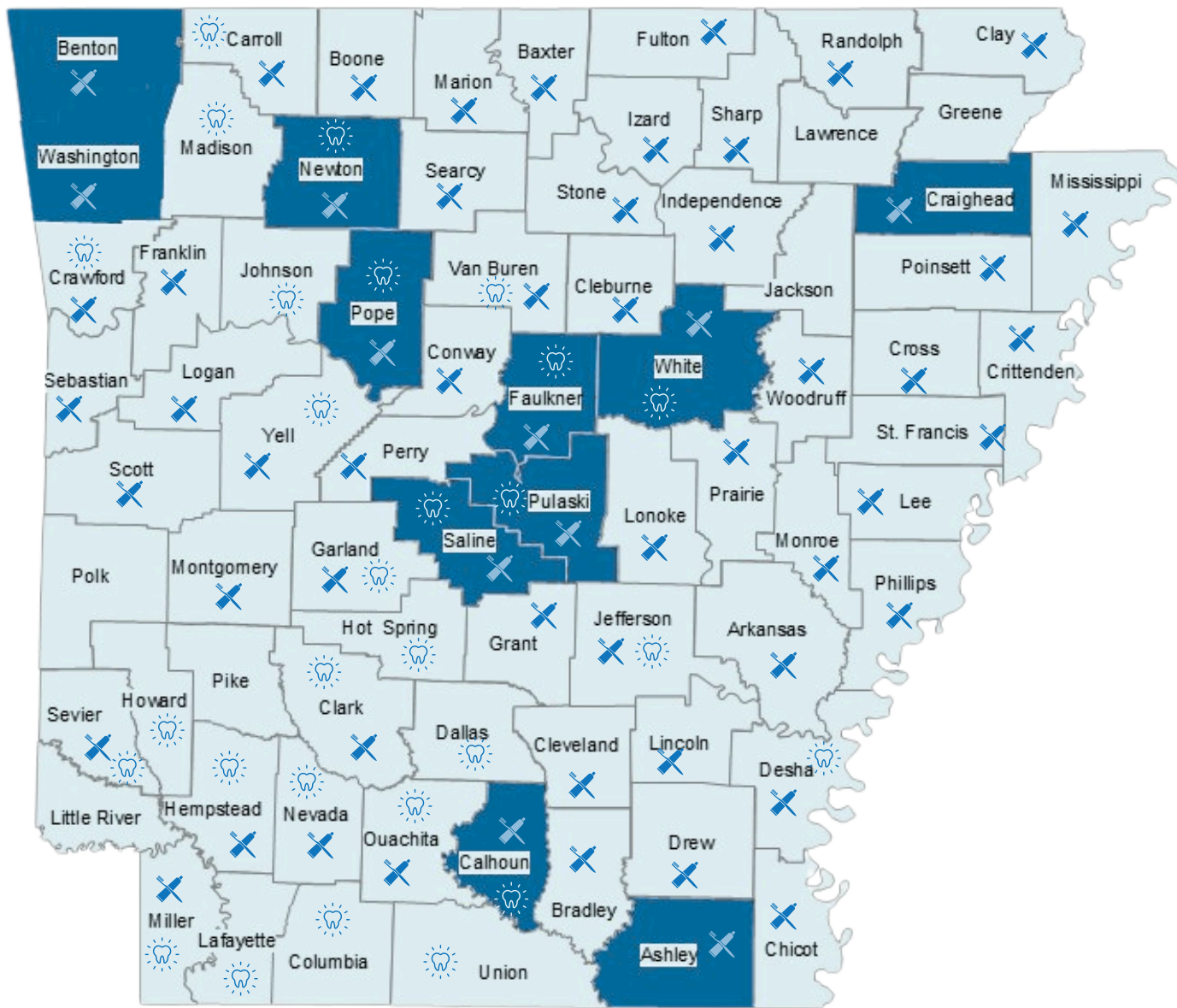
- ADH Community Health Promotion Specialists (CHPS) and Community Health Nurse Specialists (CHNS)
- ADH Local Health Unit (LHU) Staff
- ADH Office of Health Communications





Our Mission

The Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) Office of Oral Health's (OOH) mission is to champion oral health for all Arkansans through programming that increases access to care, promotes oral health literacy and behaviors, and brings together medical and oral health care for positive public health outcomes.

Impact Across 75 Counties



 <p>Services Provided in Local Health Units:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Fluoride Varnish Applications ◦ Screenings ◦ Oral Health Kits 	 <p>Oral Health Kits Distributed for Educational Events</p>
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Prevention

Preventing oral diseases before they start has many benefits. It can prevent pain, infection, and more expensive dental treatments later on. Preventing oral diseases can even help control diseases found in other parts of the body.

The OOH emphasizes prevention with programs for Toothbrushing, Fluoride Varnish, and Dental Sealants.

Toothbrushing

Daily toothbrushing is the single most important oral disease prevention method for people of all ages. The risk of developing cavities and gum disease is significantly reduced by brushing at least twice a day, flossing daily, and maintaining regular dental check-ups.



Fluoride Varnish

Fluoride varnish is a thin gel that contains minerals that strengthen teeth. Fluoride varnish can prevent, slow, or stop early cavities. It is safe and easily applied with a small brush, and it can be used up to four (4) times per year.

Dental Sealants

Dental sealants are thin coatings applied to the chewing surfaces of molar (back) teeth to prevent food and bacteria from getting into the grooves of those teeth. Timely delivery of dental sealants on permanent molars can prevent over 80% of cavities.



Toothbrushing

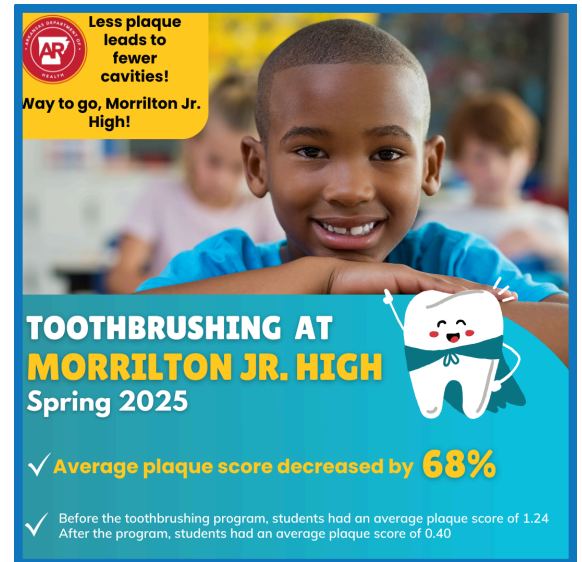
Classroom Toothbrushing Toolkit

Toothbrushing in school classrooms can teach children the skills they need to take care of their own teeth and gums.

During FY25, the OOH assisted three pilot schools with incorporating daily toothbrushing into the school day. On average, the program reduced students' dental plaque by 40%, with individual school's reduction reaching as high as 68%.



OOH staff deliver pre-pasted, disposable toothbrushes to Morrilton Jr. High School for classroom toothbrushing



Scan the QR code to access the digital OOH toothbrushing toolkit



Oral Health Kits

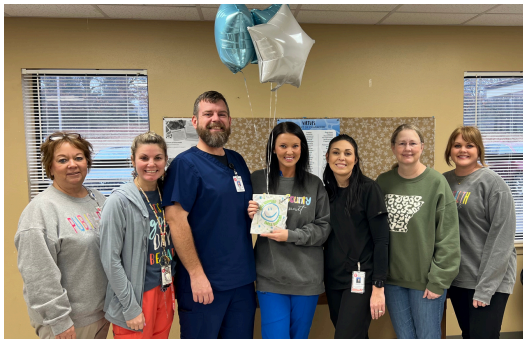
Year-round, the OOH distributes oral health kits (toothbrushes, toothpaste, and floss) to organizations across the state. Oral health is promoted by these organizations through presentations and community events.

During the National Children's Dental Health Month (NCDHM) observance in February 2025, ADH Community Health Promotion Specialists (CHPS) and Community Health Nurse Specialists (CHNS) distributed over 50,000 oral health kits to students in Arkansas.

Fluoride Varnish & Dental Sealants

Paint-A-Smile Fluoride Varnish

The Paint-A-Smile program trains medical professionals to perform oral risk assessments, oral screenings, education, and fluoride varnish application. Providing these services in medical settings helps close the gaps that exist for children who do not have regular access to comprehensive dental care.



Staff from LHUs in Osceola and Paragould, AR, recognized for providing the most fluoride varnish applications to children in 2024

In FY25, the OOH provided Paint-A-Smile support to UAMS Family Medicine Residents, as well as members of the Arkansas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Fluoride Varnish	Oral Evaluations	Risk Assessments	Referrals to a Dentist
8,541	8,107	8,006	8,006

On average in FY25, over 700 children received fluoride varnish applications in ADH LHUs each month. In addition to fluoride varnish, LHU staff provided oral health education, oral evaluations, oral risk assessments, and referrals to local dentists.

Dental Sealants



OOH Staff work with School Nurse and ADH CHPS/CHNS to provide school-based sealants in Dover, AR

School-based sealant programs are an effective way to reach children with important interventions to prevent cavities.

School-based sealant programs provide sealants to children—generally aged 6 to 11 —using portable equipment in a school setting.

4,000 Sealants
55 Locations
28 Counties

In FY25, OOH and partners provided over 4,000 sealants in locations across 28 Arkansas counties.

Education

Education leads to informed decision-making about personal oral health and hygiene habits.

The OOH provides education on the prevention and treatment of oral diseases, as well as the mouth-body connection, to a wide variety of Arkansans through media, exhibits and presentations, and community outreach.



Exhibits & Presentations

In FY25, the OOH educated stakeholders on key oral health messages and helpful tools tailored for health influencers, such as providers, school nurses, and teachers through the following events and groups:

2024 Arkansas Dental Hygienists Association Conference	2024 Arkansas Academy of Family Physicians Conference	2024 Arkansas Osteopathic Medical Association Conference
2024 Arkansas Nurse Practitioner Association Conference	2025 Arkansas School Nurses Association Conference	2025 School-Based Health Alliance of Arkansas Spring Symposium
2025 HPV Summit	2025 Chronic Disease Forum	2025 Arkansas Head Start Association State Collaboration Institute
Arkansas Community Health Workers Association	Arkansas Association of Area Agencies on Aging	Arkansas Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association

Media

Paid Media

In partnership with the ADH Office of Health Communications, the OOH conducted a multi-platform media campaign educating Arkansans on topics such as the importance of oral health in pregnancy and preventing and treating gum disease. These topics garnered more than two million impressions across digital media, social media, and radio.

Earned Media

The OOH provided data and information on oral health topics in Arkansas for both local and national media outlets. The OOH also had a regular column in the Arkansas State Dental Association Journal to educate dental professionals about oral health issues affecting Arkansans.



GUM DISEASE

DON'T WAIT FOR THE WARNING SIGNS

Gum disease often develops silently, without obvious symptoms, but it can lead to serious health problems if left untreated.

Even if you don't feel pain or notice signs, it's crucial to take preventive action. Protect your oral health by brushing and flossing daily, and make regular visits to your dentist.

HEALTHY.ARKANSAS.GOV





Pregnant?

ORAL HEALTH MATTERS MORE THAN EVER DURING PREGNANCY

You're brushing for two now!

Gum disease and other dental issues can affect both you and your baby. By brushing and flossing daily, and visiting your dentist regularly, you're protecting both your smile and your little one's health.

HEALTHY.ARKANSAS.GOV



Community Outreach

Community Member Connections

In FY25, the OOH collaborated with numerous community-based organizations with the goal of improving oral health, including:

- Alzheimer's Association, Arkansas Chapter
- Mexican Consulate of Little Rock
- Parents as Teachers Home Visiting Program
- Vestido Rojo Women's Health Event
- Vine & Village



OOH Staff provide oral health materials at the Mexican Consulate Health Fair

Hometown Health



ADH CHPS/CHNS pose with new puppets that educate students about proper toothbrushing

The OOH provided educational puppets to ADH CHPS/CHNS for use in hometown health initiatives and school outreach. OOH also initiated an educational partnership with the Arkansas Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association to provide "Healthy Living for the Brain & Body" lectures to Area Agencies on Aging around the state.

Free Screenings

In FY25, OOH staff provided screenings for children in UAMS Head Start programs, Little Rock School District elementary schools, and at summer feeding sites hosted by the Central Arkansas Library System.

A poster for free oral screenings for children 18 and under. The poster features the Central Arkansas Library System logo and the text "BE MIGHTY". It lists the dates, times, and locations for the screenings.

FREE ORAL SCREENINGS FOR CHILDREN 18 AND UNDER

REGISTRATION REQUIRED

GET READY TO HEAD BACK TO SCHOOL WITH FREE DENTAL SCREENINGS OFFERED BY THE AR DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH!

EMAIL BEMIGHTY@CALS.ORG WITH YOUR PREFERRED BRANCH TO RECEIVE A CONSENT FORM.

AUG 1	WILLIAMS LIBRARY	12:30PM
AUG 2	NIXON LIBRARY	11:00AM
AUG 5	CHILDREN'S LIBRARY AND LEARNING CENTER	11:30AM
AUG 5	FLETCHER LIBRARY	2:00PM
AUG 8	SANDERS LIBRARY	11:00AM

ACCESS

Access to quality oral health care helps people prioritize oral health.

Having access to oral health care involves having the funds to cover the cost of care, having a provider nearby, and having a provider who can provide the type(s) of services needed.

The OOH promotes access by providing training to oral health providers, sharing resources with clinics that provide services in underserved populations, and highlighting pathways to Dental Hygiene Collaborative Care.

Sharing Resources

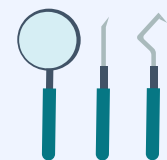
Resources to improve oral health can take many forms. They can include items or services related to finances, equipment, information, professional connections, or technical assistance.



Ultimately, the OOH aims to share resources that expand the tools that community partners can use to improve oral health throughout our state.

Dental Hygiene Collaborative Care (DHCC)

Arkansas-licensed dentists and dental hygienists who wish to provide services in public settings, such as schools and long-term care facilities, may enter into a collaborative care agreement that allows dental hygienists to provide preventive services to children or older adults without a dentist on site.



The OOH aids in reviewing and approving DHCC permit applications to enhance this initiative to expand access to dental services by allowing individuals from a practice to be in multiple places at once to provide essential care.

Resources

School-Based Dental Clinics

In collaboration with ADH Coordinated School Health section and the School-Based Health Alliance of Arkansas, in FY25, the OOH developed a Readiness Assessment Tool for dentists and schools considering the initiation of school-based dental care.


The tool walks interested parties through the fundamental components to consider for

optimal start-up and operation of a school-based dental clinic with the goal of encouraging more dentists and dental hygienists to provide care in school settings.

School-based dental care can eliminate traditional barriers to care, such as limited transportation or parents' difficulty taking time off from work, and lead to improved health outcomes for children.




In FY25, OOH staff also provided technical assistance and initiated professional connections for three School-Based Dental Clinics seeking a dental provider.



School-Based Dental Clinic (SBDC)

Readiness Assessment Tool



Component	Is component in place?		Notes <small>Describe what may be needed for next steps</small>
	Yes	No	
Engagement			
• Are school administrators, teachers, wellness committees, etc. committed to supporting an oral health service line?			
• Have the community and/or students voiced or demonstrated a need for oral health services?			
• Will providers/staff be willing to build community trust through engagement in extracurricular activities [e.g. health fairs, sporting events, etc.]?			
•			
Clinic Space			
• Has the school identified space to serve as a dental clinic?			
• Has the facility been built out for use as a dental clinic? <i>Things to consider include plumbing, electrical outlets, sterilization space, radiography space, patient waiting area, exam chairs, handwashing station, internet connectivity</i>			
• Will dental services be provided in a shared space also used for other health services?			
• Will fixed equipment be needed?			
• Will portable equipment be needed?			
• Has radiologic equipment been registered with the Arkansas Department of Health?			

School-based health care can improve health by meeting children where they are.

Currently 21 of Arkansas's 65 School-Based Health Centers include dental care.



Resources & DHCC

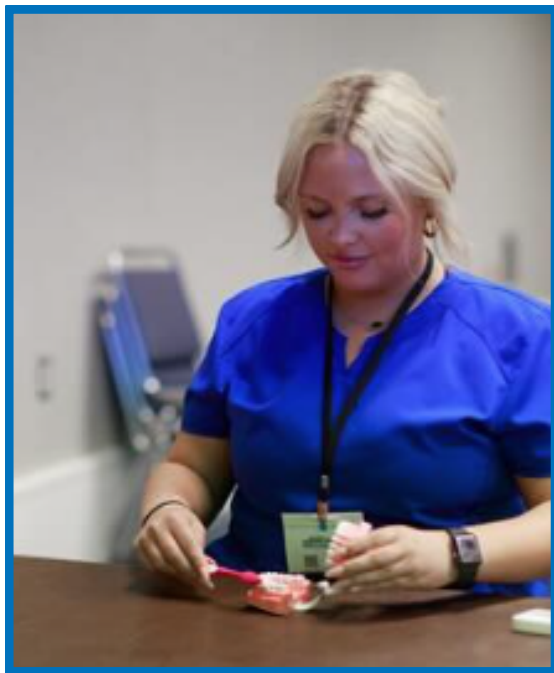
Dental Workforce

During FY25, OOH staff supported high school students in their introduction to the dental industry by judging the Dental Sciences competition at the 2025 HOSA State Leadership Conference held in Hot Springs, AR.

HOSA is an international student organization whose mission is to empower members to become leaders in the global health community through education, collaboration, and experience.



Following the 2025 HOSA State Leadership Conference, OOH was invited to participate on the Arkansas Department of Education Division of Career and Technical Education's Healthcare Frameworks Revision Committee, which advised on several courses, including a Medical Professions course that introduces high school students to several health professions, including those in the field of oral health.



One Arkansas student demonstrates the skill "Oral Hygiene Instruction: Brushing & Flossing" during the 2025 HOSA State Leadership Conference

Dental Hygiene Collaborative Care (DHCC)

During FY25, with input from OOH, the Board of Health finalized a rule change expanding the use of DHCC permits into all Arkansas schools.

The OOH also encouraged the use of DHCC permits to provide care to underserved populations by interfacing with dental hygienists attending the 2024 Arkansas Dental Hygienists Association Annual Conference.



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