



## Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #404

### **Dental and Oral Health Initiatives (Health and Family Services -- HIRSP and Public Health)**

[LFB 2005-07 Budget Summary: Pages 269 and 270, #13, 14, 15, and 16]

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#### **CURRENT LAW**

Currently, 10 of 16 Wisconsin technical colleges offer a dental hygiene associate degree program. Additionally, three of the colleges -- Madison Area Technical College (MATC), Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (NWTC) in Green Bay, and Western Wisconsin Technical College (WWTC) in La Crosse -- use their dental facilities to train dental hygienists and assistants, and to provide services to low-income individuals.

Through the Seal-a-Smile program, the Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) provides \$60,000 GPR annually, primarily through local public health departments and community agencies, to provide dental sealants for low-income children and to provide information and education to promote oral health.

The donated dental services program is directed at persons who are unable to afford needed dental care because of a limited income, which is linked to a permanent disability, chronic illness, or advanced age. Participating dentists, who work out of their own offices and clinics, agree to volunteer their services to one to two patients each year. The state contracts with the Wisconsin Dental Association (WDA) to administer the program, and contributes \$40,000 GPR annually, which is used to help support a part-time referral coordinator and to pay laboratory bills.

DHFS provides \$75,000 GPR annually from a \$10 million appropriation for tobacco use control grants for an anti-spit tobacco educational program. Targeted to children, the program introduces the dangers of using spit tobacco through a comic book featuring Milwaukee Brewers players. The comic book provides oral health messages, encourages children to read, and incorporates other educational skills.

## GOVERNOR

*Dental Services at Technical Colleges.* Provide \$159,800 (\$117,200 GPR and \$42,600 FED) in 2005-06 and \$159,800 (\$117,500 GPR and \$42,300 FED) in 2006-07 to increase dental services technical colleges provide to low-income individuals. The funding includes \$86,100 GPR annually to fund grants to two technical colleges that would enable them to operate year-round dental clinics that serve children from low-income and uninsured families.

*Seal-a-Smile Expansion.* Provide \$78,000 (\$67,600 GPR and \$10,400 FED) in 2005-06 and \$78,000 (\$67,700 GPR and \$10,300 FED) in 2006-07 to expand the Seal-a-Smile dental sealant program for school-aged children.

*Spit Tobacco Prevention.* Provide \$21,000 GPR annually to increase funding for the anti-spit tobacco program. Modify a current appropriation to authorize DHFS to distribute grants for oral health services, in addition to dental services (as provided under current law), and budget the increased funding for the spit tobacco prevention program in the modified appropriation.

*Donated Dental Services.* Provide \$20,000 GPR annually to increase, from \$40,000 to \$60,000, the amount of funding DHFS provides annually to WDA to support the donated dental services program.

## DISCUSSION POINTS

### Dental Services at Technical Colleges

1. MATC, in cooperation with the Madison Health Department, operates a program that provides dental services to low-income children. The dental operating suites used to train students in the dental hygiene and dental assistant program are also used as the dental clinic for children. The program provides both preventive and restorative care to approximately 150 children each year, representing over 300 patient visits. MATC and the City of Madison share contractual costs for a dentist who provides treatment at the clinic. The clinic is a medical assistance (MA) and BadgerCare certified provider.

2. NWTC and the NEW Community Clinic in Green Bay also run a cooperative program to provide restorative dental services to low-income children and adults who lack insurance. Staffed by volunteer dentists and NWTC dental assistant program students, the program is open one afternoon per week for 20 weeks each year.

3. WWTC in La Crosse collaborates with the Scenic Bluff federally qualified health center (FQHC) to expand the health center's capacity to provide dental services. The Scenic Bluff FQHC uses the MA reimbursements to support the dentist and dental hygienist who work at the site.

4. Dental clinics at the seven remaining technical colleges with dental hygienist and dental assistant training programs are typically not utilized when school is not in session. The

funding provided in AB 100 would be used to fund grants to two additional technical colleges to allow the colleges to contract for preventive and restorative dental services and operate their dental clinics year-round. The administration projects that the funding, when combined with local matching funds, would allow each of the two additional technical colleges to hire a dentist, dental hygienist, and dental assistant for 16 hours each week for 48 weeks. In addition to providing services at the clinics, the professional staff would act as mentors for the students who assist the staff during the school year. Based on the experience of the MATC clinic, it appears that 30 percent of the estimated care provided at the clinics may be reimbursed through MA. Under the administration's proposal, the staff costs not covered through MA reimbursements would be split between the state grant funding and the local match provided by the technical colleges.

5. According to the administration, several of the technical colleges with dental programs have expressed an interest in the proposed grant program, which would allow them to make use of their clinics on a year-round basis, provide mentoring experiences for their students, and help address the significant unmet need for dental services for MA eligible persons and uninsured adults. The administration had first proposed to provide funding to a technical college for a two-year period only, and require that the technical college fully support the program thereafter. However, the administration now indicates that proposed grants would be provided on an ongoing basis to the two selected technical colleges, with hopes of expanding the program in future years.

### **Seal-a-Smile Program**

6. Since 2000-01, the Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin has managed \$60,000 through a contract with DHFS to administer the Wisconsin Seal-a-Smile program. The program's mission is to prevent dental decay and promote oral health as part of children's total health by increasing the number of dental sealants applied to their teeth. The sealants are applied to the chewing surfaces of a child's teeth, where they prevent cavities and the need for fillings. The sealants have been shown to effectively prevent tooth decay for several years. The Alliance distributes grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000 to communities, which the communities typically combine with other funding to administer the program. The number of community programs funded each year has ranged from 12 to 17 and funding requests have exceeded available funding. Table 1 shows the number of programs participating, the number of children screened, the number of children who received sealants, and the number of teeth sealed for the period 2000-01 through 2003-04.

**TABLE 1**

**Wisconsin Seal-a-Smile Program Selected Results  
Fiscal Years 2000-01 thru 2003-04**

	<u>2000-01</u>	<u>2001-02</u>	<u>2002-03</u>	<u>2003-04</u>
Programs Participating	17	16	16	14
Number of children screened	2,077	3,919	4,367	4,255
Number of children who received sealants	1,560	2,918	2,670	2,898
Number of teeth sealed	5,626	10,701	10,697	12,344

7. For those with restricted access to prevention and treatment services, tooth decay often goes untreated, leading to adverse health consequences. Untreated dental problems often result in visits to the emergency room and expensive restorative procedures. DHFS estimates that, in 2002-03, MA paid \$12.2 million for restorative dental procedures for preventable oral health problems.

8. The administration estimates that the additional funding provided in the bill would allow more than 900 additional children to participate in the Seal-a-Smile program and pay for more than 3,500 sealants. The administration expects that the number of children served and sealants applied may increase significantly if local agencies are able to use the state funds to leverage additional funding.

**Anti-Spit Tobacco Program**

9. The anti-spit tobacco program is the product of a joint effort among the WDA, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, DHFS, and the Milwaukee Brewers. The program distributes a curriculum-based comic book featuring Milwaukee Brewers players that incorporates an oral health message with language and math skills and history and geography. Ten thousand of the comic books were distributed to persons under the age of 16 at a Brewers game in April, 2005, and approximately 2,000 "Stamp Out Spit Tobacco" lesson kits and 87,000 comic books were mailed to all fifth-grade classes in public and private schools throughout Wisconsin in late March, 2005. The program is supported by \$75,000 GPR from DHFS' \$10 million GPR appropriation for tobacco use control grants, over \$200,000 in cash and in-kind contributions, and volunteer efforts that assist with mailings.

10. The anti-spit tobacco program teaches children about the dangers inherent in using smokeless tobacco, and seeks to dispel common myths about the product. For example, annual evaluations of fifth graders have shown that the program materials have significantly reduced the percentage of students who mistakenly believe smokeless tobacco to be a safe alternative to cigarettes, and the number who mistakenly believe smokeless tobacco to be less habit-forming than cigarettes.

11. The additional funding provided in the bill would be used to re-introduce an instructional DVD into fifth-grade classrooms. The DVD, first created and distributed in 2003, also features Milwaukee Brewers players. The \$21,000 GPR increase provided in the bill represents just over two-tenths of one percent of the \$10 million appropriation for tobacco use control grants. In light of the state's fiscal constraints, rather than provide additional GPR funding to support this activity as recommended by the Governor, the Committee could amend the bill to require, in each year of the 2005-07 biennium, DHFS to provide at least \$96,000 GPR annually (the \$75,000 base and the \$21,000 GPR annual increase recommended by the Governor) from the current \$10 million tobacco prevention appropriation to support the anti-spit tobacco program.

**Donated Dental Services**

12. The donated dental services program is directed at low-income persons who are unable to afford dental care. To be eligible for the program, a person's limited earning capability must be linked to a permanent disability, chronic illness, or advanced age (65 or older). Information pertaining to an applicant's need is based on a completed application and a phone interview conducted by a program referral coordinator. Participating dentists agree to volunteer their services to one to two patients per year, and the dentists decide whether to accept any individual patient based on an assessment of the person's dental needs.

13. In 2003-04, 482 dentists representing 67 counties participated in the program, representing 23% of active WDA dentists. Dentists participating in the program work out of their own offices and clinics. Between 1998 and 2002, the program donated \$1 million in services to 484 disabled, poor, and uninsured state residents.

14. The donated dental services program is coordinated through the WDA. The state contracts with WDA to administer the program and contributes \$40,000 annually, which is primarily used to help support a program referral coordinator and pay laboratory bills. The additional funding provided in the bill would provide for additional program referral and lab services.

**ALTERNATIVES**

1. Adopt the Governor's recommendation.
2. Modify the Governor's recommendations by reducing funding in the bill by \$21,000 GPR annually to delete the additional funding that would be provided for the anti-spit tobacco program. Instead, require DHFS to allocate at least \$96,000 GPR annually in the 2005-07 biennium from the amounts budgeted for tobacco use control grant appropriation to support the anti-spit tobacco program.

<b>Alternative 2</b>	<b>GPR</b>
<b>2005-07 FUNDING</b> (Change to Bill)	- \$42,000

3. Modify the bill to delete funding for one or more of the following.
  - a. Dental services at technical colleges (-\$117,200 GPR and -\$42,600 FED in 2005-06 and -\$117,500 GPR and -\$42,300 FED in 2006-07).
  - b. Seal-a-Smile expansion (-\$67,600 GPR and -\$10,400 FED in 2005-06 and -\$67,700 GPR and -\$10,300 FED in 2006-07).
  - c. Spit tobacco prevention (-\$21,000 GPR annually).
  - d. Donated dental services (-\$20,000 GPR annually)
  
4. Delete provision.

<u>Alternative 4</u>	<u>GPR</u>	<u>FED</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
<b>2005-07 FUNDING</b> (Change to Bill)	- \$452,000	- \$105,600	- \$557,600

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