

The California Dental Association's strategic public policy actions and advocacy for significant investments have led to improved oral health and access to care for the public for over two decades. CDA's advocacy efforts have supported early dental disease prevention efforts and advanced innovation in the dental delivery system for all Californians, especially vulnerable populations.

Dental Public Health Successes

Proposition 56 transformed dental public health in California through tobacco tax funding



Proposition 56 (2016) – California Healthcare Research and Prevention Tobacco Tax Act:

The passage of Proposition 56, a measure co-sponsored by CDA, resulted in:

1. Historic improvements in Medi-Cal provider reimbursement rates (40% increases), which had been among the lowest in the nation for decades.
2. A commitment of \$30 million a year to fund local oral health initiatives throughout the state. Prior to Proposition 56, the state budget allocated approximately \$3 million annually to dental disease prevention programs for children.
3. Funding for CalHealthCares which provides eligible dentists with student loan repayment in exchange for a five-year service obligation. CalHealthCares has awarded approximately \$38 million in student loan repayment and practice support grants to 148 California dentists.

Office of Oral Health Established:

In 2014 California recommitted to a strong dental public health infrastructure with a dentist-led State Office of Oral Health (OOH). After decades without a state dental director, the OOH now has a state oral health plan, a ten-year roadmap to build local infrastructure, collect statewide data and promote effective oral health messaging to vulnerable communities. In 2021, the OOH published the **nation's most comprehensive oral health literacy toolkit** to improve equitable access to care and train dental staff in health literacy practices.



17%

1995

60%

2008

Community Water Fluoridation:

Water fluoridation is a public health program that reduces cavities by about 25% in children and adults. CDA's leadership was instrumental in the expansion of access to community water fluoridation in California, including sponsoring AB 733 and SB 96, **increasing fluoridation in California from 17% in 1995 to over 60% since 2008**. CDA continues to work with the California Department of Public Health and state water boards to support and educate the public on sustaining and expanding community water fluoridation.

Pediatric Oral Health:

A requirement for kindergarteners to receive an oral health assessment was created with AB 1433 in 2006. The bill helps schools identify children suffering from untreated dental disease and helps parents establish a dental home for their children. In 2018, the law was strengthened to provide the state dental director with more oversight, improving data collection and linking vulnerable students to dental care in their community.

Tooth decay is the most common chronic condition experienced by children



2022-23 State Budget Investments in Oral Health

DENTAL ACCESS FOR PATIENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

CDA and a coalition of dental providers, along with consumer and disability rights advocates brought forward a budget proposal to build new and expand existing special needs dental clinics and outpatient surgery centers. This investment will significantly expand the network of settings able to provide care for patients whose physical, medical or cognitive disabilities make it challenging for them to receive dental care. This new program was funded with \$50 million over two years.

COMMUNITY-BASED CLINICAL EDUCATION FOR DENTAL STUDENTS

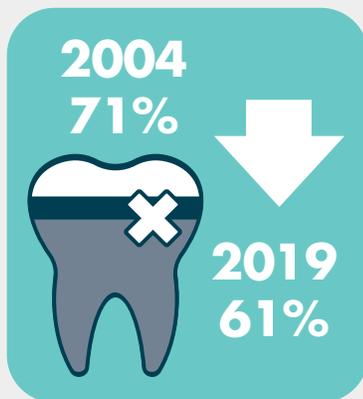
A \$10 million budget ask brought forward by CDA was approved to develop new and enhanced community dental student rotations to improve access to care for California's most at-need populations and individuals in underserved and rural areas, as well as to increase the cultural competency of graduating dentists.

DENTAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

CDA is working to expand the dental assistant pipeline through newly funded state programs, such as the High Road Training Partnership and Apprenticeship Innovation Fund. CDA's Smile Crew CA has expanded dental assisting training opportunities throughout the state with the creation of boot camp and job placement programs.

Producing Results

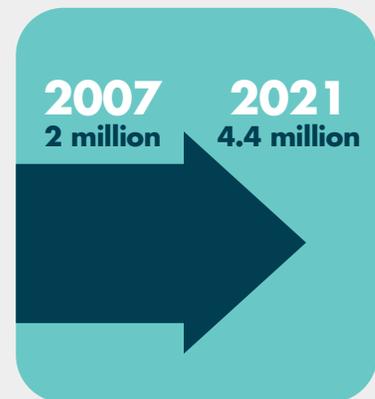
10%_{pt} DECREASE
in childhood
dental cavities



31% INCREASE
in Medi-Cal Dental
providers



MORE THAN DOUBLED
Medi-Cal Dental visits



Next Steps

- **Meaningful Coverage:** Build on investments made in Medi-Cal Dental to improve access, including sustainable provider rates over the long term.
- **Equitable Disease Prevention:** Create and expand capacity in California to increase education, prevention, and connect vulnerable populations to dental care through innovative delivery programs.
- **Diversity in Dentistry:** Develop dental workforce pathways to increase the supply and diversity of dental care team members.