

Oral Health and Pregnancy

Whatcom County Oral Health Coalition (OHC)

**The OHC is a broad-based coalition
working to improve oral health
among community members of all ages
through prevention, education, and
increased access to care.**

Healthy Smiles from The Start

Vision

Raise a new generation free from the overwhelming dental disease common among low-income families and individuals in Whatcom County

Focus

Pregnancy and early infancy

2010 Initiative

Prenatal & perinatal

Oral Health and Overall Health:

- Raise awareness of the prenatal and early childhood stages as strategically essential in the creation of a lifetime of oral health.
- Maximize capacity to prevent and treat dental disease in pregnancy and early childhood.
- Emphasize oral Health/ overall health connections

Proposed priorities:

Assess, Promote, Ensure, Build, Refer

1. **Dental capacity**; assess the need, availability, & sufficiency.
2. Mutually agreeable **guidelines/ protocols**; affirm & promote locally.
3. **Dental access**; ensure sufficiency.
4. **Relationships** between OBs, FPs, peds, & dental providers; build!
5. **Simple referral** & follow-up mechanisms; develop & implement.

OVER-ARCHING GOALS and RELATED TOPICS

- Encourage collaboration among all health care professionals to strengthen oral health services in Whatcom County.
 - Build relationships
 - Establish a network
 - Develop guidelines for preventive and restorative dentistry during pregnancy
 - Generate Consistent Messaging
- Initiate & implement strategies to meet the oral health needs of our community.
 - Assure Capacity
 - Provide Access
 - Develop a referral System

(cont.)

OVER-ARCHING GOALS and RELATED TOPICS (cont.)

- Enhance current oral health education by realizing original and creative approaches that appeal to all members of the community;
- Transform perceptions and increase awareness related to oral health for:
 - Dentists
 - Physicians/Providers
 - Pregnant Women and their Families

Progress/ Updates

- Made contact with the Ob Advisory Committee at St Joseph's Hospital and found support for our initiative;
- Dr. Stephen Wagoner recruited from Ob Advisory Committee to join our OH Coalition;
- Seamar and Interfaith dental clinics commit to seeing women in pregnancy;
- Commitment imperiled by threat to Medicaid funding of adult dental;

Progress/ Updates

- Baseline data obtained for Whatcom County and Washington State
 - 20% of Whatcom County Women on Medicaid see a dentist during their pregnancy, compared to 25% in Washington as a whole.

Progress/ Updates

- Proposal to develop outreach and marketing materials on oral health care in pregnancy submitted to ADA by Interfaith;
- Draft form developed for use in ob provider offices to refer women to oral health care.
- 2/10 OHC presentation scheduled @ OB/FP CE Meeting;
- Next steps?