



## FIRST THINGS FIRST

### Oral Health Statewide Strategy Recommendation

With the completion of an early childhood oral health study conducted by ADHS in the spring and summer of 2008, significant data were collected statewide to determine the oral health needs of young children in the state. In addition, ADHS received a substantial grant award from the Health Services Research Agency (HRSA) to address the shortages of oral health professionals and to develop coordination models at two pilot sites to increase access to oral health care in communities throughout the state. Based upon these two developments and in consultation with other oral health stakeholders, we are recommending that FTF statewide funding be redirected from consultation and data collection for a report on the oral health needs of children to instead fund a third pilot site for the demonstration. As a one-time investment, this will provide important data and information on effective strategies to improve the delivery of oral health, especially in rural communities. The following is a brief description of the original strategy as well as an explanation of the recommended change.

#### **Current Strategy: Increasing Access to Oral Health Screening and Care**

##### Summary

Supporting the oral health of children birth through age five involves community level action and support as well as state level policy analysis, development, and/or change to achieve FTF goals and outcomes. At the community level, FTF Regional Councils are addressing the oral health care needs of their birth through five children through a range of strategies from planning to screening and preventive care. At the statewide level, FTF staff, key leadership within the oral health community, the ADHS Office of Oral Health, and AHCCCS concur that the infrastructure for oral health care must also be addressed through planning, advocacy, and policy change.

Building effective partnerships, developing achievable strategies and finalizing an implementation plan would be the key outcomes to achieve through a facilitated process lead by an expert consultant and stakeholder volunteers.

This effort supports FTF goals and strategic direction to collaborate with existing Arizona early childhood health care systems to improve children's access to quality health care; and to build on efforts to increase the number of health care providers utilizing a dental home model.

##### State Funds Requested to Support Strategy

Item	FY10
<b>Consultant with expertise in oral health to provide: research, meeting facilitation, report-out, data collection and analysis, recommendations and final report on improving oral health of children birth through age five. 12 month contract.</b>	\$50,000

## **New Strategy: Increasing Access to Oral Health Screening and Care**

### Summary

Teledentistry is a developing area of dentistry that integrates electronic health records, telecommunications technology, digital imaging, and the Internet to link dental providers and their patients. Teledentistry offers innovative prospects in the delivery of dental care and has the potential to enhance the current practice of dentistry. Through the exchange of clinical information over distances, teledentistry can facilitate the delivery of dental care in areas underserved by dental practitioners, and therefore overcome social and geographic barriers.

In 2009, the Arizona Department of Health Services, Bureau of Women's and Children's Health, Office of Oral Health responded to the HRSA Oral Health Workforce grant announcement and submitted a program proposal to improve accessibility of oral health services for underserved populations and areas in Arizona by expanding the oral health workforce. First Things First provided a letter of support. A grant was awarded to Arizona and will support a 3-year program, *Improving Arizona's Oral Health Workforce through the Promotion of Enhanced Dental Teams Utilizing Teledentistry Practice and/or Affiliated Practice*. The proposed program goal is to promote and develop enhanced dental teams, utilize teledentistry practice and/or affiliated practice, and improve workforce capacity, diversity and flexibility for providing oral health services to underserved populations and underserved areas.

Activities will include developing advisory committees to address barriers/challenges for teledentistry practice and affiliated practice; building linkage with the state's oral health coalition; training providers on teledentistry technology; and gaining the support of regional partnership councils for enhanced dental teams. Activities will also include implementing three demonstration practice models striving for best practices to serve preschool/school-aged children and educate their parents/primary caregivers. The program will use communications to develop support networks, provide resource information on a Website, and share lessons/successes at the national, state and local levels. Sites for the project are throughout the state in both rural and more urban areas including one site on the Hopi Nation.

### Strategy Activities and Characteristics

Additional funding is needed to seed one of the three demonstration practice models with the equipment, hardware and software necessary to carry out teledentistry procedures. With this funding, there is a powerful opportunity to improve outreach and service and create enhanced dental teams to provide care to underserved populations and in underserved areas. The proposed program will contribute to the evolving vision of a "health home" and promote access to dental services in underserved urban and rural areas. The proposed site for expansion of the project is located in the Navajo/Apache region.

State Funds Requested to Support Strategy

Item	FY10
<b>Equipment and supplies for one demonstration practice model to deliver teledentistry to underserved populations. Includes: software, cameras, dental chairs, x-ray equipment, computers and other hardware. One- time expense.</b>	\$50,000

Recommendation to the Board

Approve a change in the previous oral health statewide health strategy that builds upon current infrastructure in the state to increase access to quality oral health care for children from birth to five.