

Preface

“The consequences of severe untreated dental disease in children and adults are devastating. People live in pain, suffer from poor self-esteem, and face complications with other systemic diseases, such as diabetes, stroke, heart disease and preterm births...”

■ *Catalyzing Improvements in Oral Health Care: Best Practices from the State Action for Oral Health Access Initiative, Center for Health Care Strategies, August 2006*

In May 2000, the U.S. Surgeon General’s report, *Oral Health in America*, described both the “marked improvement in the nation’s oral health in the past 50 years” and the simultaneous “silent epidemic of oral disease affecting our most vulnerable citizens.”

In response to this report, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) convened a Statewide Steering Committee to draft an Illinois Oral Health Plan. IDPH hosted a series of community forums to gather community input and unveiled the Illinois plan at an Oral Health Summit on September 11, 2001.

Since 2001, the Illinois Oral Health Plan (IOHP) has been used by state and local leaders in the development of new programs and policies throughout Illinois. State, federal, and private sector funding has been utilized to implement many of the initiatives outlined in the plan.

In 2006, IDPH reconvened a Statewide Steering Committee to update the plan. During the summer of 2006, seven Town Hall meetings were held throughout Illinois to gather public input. The new plan was unveiled to the public in May of 2007.

The Illinois Rural Health Association (IRHA) has facilitated the IOHP II planning process and developed the draft recommendations. The IFLOSS Coalition: Communities working together to improve oral health in Illinois (IFLOSS) has taken a lead role in publishing and disseminating the findings statewide and would like to acknowledge the many participants who are continuously working toward making this plan a reality in Illinois. Though they are too numerous to name here, all are listed in the Appendix section of this Compendium.

The information included in the Oral Health Plan II and the developments that took place at and since the Summit have been shared with oral health and health care professionals and other community stakeholders who are concerned with the important role oral health plays in the overall health of Illinois’ residents of all ages. In this plan, you will learn more about the strategic objectives, goals, and strategies by which model oral health will become a standard for all Illinois citizens.

This plan is also intended as a guidepost for improving the oral health of all Illinoisans and as a model for other states as they work to improve the oral health of their citizens. The success of the plan contained in this publication is simple. It requires that each reader take ownership of a strategic goal, specific action or identified strategy within the plan. This plan belongs to the entire state. The responsibility and credit lie with us all and can not and should not be assigned to one or a handful of constituents.

As you read the plan and familiarize yourself with the background material, ask yourself how you and your organization can help make the plan a reality. We encourage your comments, input and suggestions. Together, we can improve the status of oral health in Illinois.



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Acknowledgements

The Illinois Department of Public Health, IRHA and the IFLOSS Coalition would like to thank the following Statewide Steering Committee members for their time and energy in the development of this plan. Their commitment to improving oral health care for all Illinois residents led to the creation of this ambitious five-year plan for oral health care in Illinois.

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