



2017 - 2018
Dental Program
Annual Report



Children's
FRIEND

Dear Friends,

We are pleased to present the 2017-2018 Annual Report of the Children's Friend Dental Program. Time has flown by, and we have just completed our fifth year of this visionary partnership with Samuels Sinclair Dental Center at Rhode Island Hospital.

We are very proud of the progress we have made since the inception of this partnership and could not have achieved it without the leadership and dedication of all of the participants who make this work: Samuels Sinclair Dental Center team, our Board, our Child Care Partners, our incredible teaching and nursing staff, and our very own leadership team, in particular David Caprio, our President and CEO, and Maria Chionchio, Nurse Family Partnership Manager. We also acknowledge and thank the children and families who have embraced visits from the dentist and hygienist and taken an active role in practicing and promoting oral health – they are what make this program so eminently worthwhile and successful.

Since the first year of this partnership we have worked hard to promote the importance of a dental home¹ and increase the number of children with access to one. At the end of this program year, we are pleased to share that 91% of currently enrolled Head Start and Pre-K children have a dental home, either through Samuels Sinclair or a private dentist. This is a significant increase since the first year, when approximately 60% of students reported a dental home.

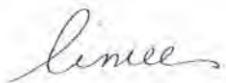
Our innovative sealant project has continued to expand. This program year, 41 children received sealants, which is nearly four times the number of children who received sealants in the project's pilot year. We look forward to seeing this project continue to grow.

As you will read in the following pages, Children's Friend continues to emphasize the importance of oral health within a holistic health context. We are excited to enhance current efforts in the coming program year with the implementation of a designated "Dental Team" that will spearhead the Children's Friend partnership with Samuels and improve coordination of dental health services across the agency.

This program year we are excited to share that 41% of enrolled children, or 70 children, under the age of three received dental services. In the coming year, we plan to continue expanding access to dental services to our infant and toddler population, a big step toward improving the healthy development of children in our program.

As always, we look forward to sharing the highlights of the 2017-2018 program year in this report – and to sharing continued successes in the years to come.

Thank you!



Aimee G. Mitchell, MSW, LICSW
Senior Vice President of Programs and Operations
Director of Head Start



Mary Cram
Board Member
Children's Friend

¹A "dental home" is care provided by a licensed dentist in a manner that is comprehensive, accessible, coordinated and family-centered. American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (2018). Retrieved from: <http://www.aapd.org/advocacy/dentalhome/>

Partner Spotlight: Ken Hewett, BSBA

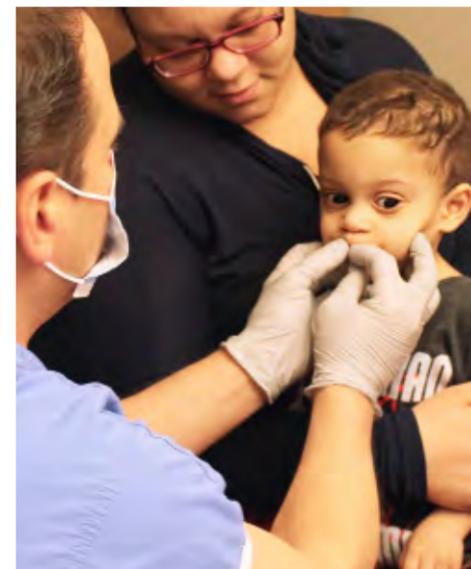


Ken Hewett knows about logistics. After spending 20 years in the U.S. Navy, he entered the field of medical practice management and has spent the past 15 years putting his managerial and logistical skills to good use keeping dental offices running smoothly. In 2013, Ken became the Practice Manager at Samuels Sinclair Dental Center, sharing that he "was lucky enough for an opportunity to come to Rhode Island Hospital... [and work with] a group of extremely professional and caring folks."

Ken is integral to the success of the Dental Program partnership with Children's Friend. In his role as Practice Manager, Ken coordinates the scheduling of the dentists and hygienists who visit each Children's Friend and Child Care Partner site from September to May, making it possible for hundreds of children to receive a dental exam and cleaning every school year. Working together with Children's Friend staff to improve coordination of services, Ken has seen the program grow. "There was a lot of thought process at the beginning. We had to think about how the equipment would be sterilized, how we would get toothbrushes to the children, so many things. Now that this partnership [Children's Friend and Samuels] have been working together for almost five years, we have seen an increase in children. We now see Early Head Start kids, have seen the sealant program grow, and have had successful dental fairs where we reach many children and families at the same time." A highlight of the program, Ken says, is that no children are turned away and that Samuels Sinclair Dental Center becomes, for many families, their entry point to accessing dental services.

The partnership with Children's Friend has been successful, Ken shares, because "we have the opportunity to interface with people who are just as passionate and caring as we are. We have the same goals in mind regarding children and being able to educate families. We communicate with each other, we don't look at this program as 'you and I' but as 'we'."

Children's Friend is proud to be part of that "we" and to have such a rewarding partnership with Samuels Sinclair Dental Center. Together, we work to improve the health and wellbeing of children and families!





Innovation in Practice: Dental Sealant Project

During the 2015-2016 year, Children's Friend and Samuels developed and implemented an innovative pilot project to apply dental sealants to primary teeth. Sealants are coatings that are applied to the chewing surfaces of back teeth and act as a barrier to keep out plaque and food, aiding in the prevention of cavities. Although sealants are recommended for school-age children², they are less commonly applied to baby teeth.

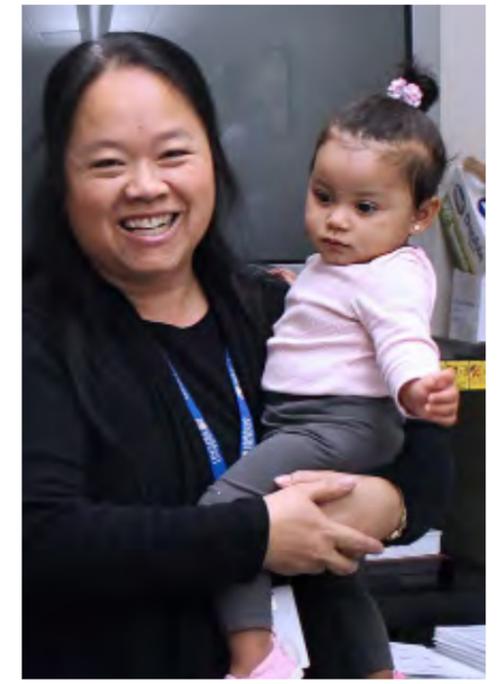
In the first year of the project, 11 children received sealants, with no child developing cavities after the sealant application. Based on these encouraging and positive results, the project was expanded during the 2016 - 2017 program year to include screening all students within Children's Friend's five Pre-K classrooms. Ninety children were screened at the beginning of the school year as candidates to receive sealants and 20 received a sealant application. Once again, the results were very positive, with no child's teeth showing any evidence of decay.

This program year (2017-2018) nearly 70% of children eligible, or 41 children, received sealants. This doubles the number of children receiving this oral health benefit from the previous program year. The project continues to show evidence of success in preventing and mitigating primary tooth decay, which sets the stage for improved oral health.

"This project has continued to be successful," shared Dr. George Dupont, pediatric dentist at Samuels Sinclair Dental Center. "For the third year in a row, we saw that none of the children who received sealants had developed cavities after the application. Although the sealant material does wear away eventually, the results seem to indicate the sealants have been effective at reducing the incidence of cavities."

Permission to apply sealants has been added to the dental exam consent forms for the 2018-2019 school year. This streamlines the consent process for families and it is hoped that this change will increase the number of children who receive sealants on their teeth. We continue to be proud of this innovative project and the oral health benefits it provides the children in our program.

² National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (August 2017). *Seal Out Tooth Decay: A booklet for parents*. NIH Publication No. 17-489. Retrieved from: <https://www.nidcr.nih.gov/sites/default/files/2017-11/seal-out-tooth-decay-parents.pdf>



Expanding Opportunities: Holistic Health Supports

At Children's Friend, we are constantly working to improve our delivery of services to children and families. Over the years, we have found that integration of services and coordination of efforts not only lead to better outcomes for the children in our program, but also help build a stronger internal community among our staff, who care deeply about our mission and vision of children's health and wellbeing.

During the 2017-2018 program year, Children's Friend embarked on an enhanced team approach to the implementation of the Dental Program by designating a "Dental Team" that includes our two Health Managers, Alex Grigorian and Lucia Santiago, and two bilingual Health Project Coordinators, Shelby Mack and Rosy Semper. The team is led by Maria Chionchio, Nurse Family Partnership Manager at Children's Friend. The team supports the coordination, promotion, implementation, and analysis of the Dental Program.

A key function of this enhanced team approach is to strengthen program monitoring and increase participation in the program. During the coming program year, the Health Project Coordinators, Shelby and Rosy, will work closely with the Children's Friend nursing team to make sure that Dental Program consent forms are completed, a critical component of children's participation.

Shelby and Rosy will also assist with the entry of dental exam results into the database that tracks children's participation and follow-up needs. With this extra support, nurses will have more time to reach out to families who may benefit from individual outreach to engage with the program. The additional outreach to families is important, as the Children's Friend Dental Program is often their first point of access to securing a dental home, a significant step towards better oral health for the whole family.

Oral health is a crucial component of overall health and wellbeing. We are thrilled to launch this new, coordinated effort within our Health Team to ensure that all children in our Head Start and child care programs can access the benefits of our incredible partnership with Samuels Sinclair Dental Center.

Oral Health in Practice: Healthy Teeth, Healthy Families

Children’s Friend offers an array of programs to support children and families in Rhode Island. One of these programs is Healthy Families America (HFA), a national evidence-based maternal and child home-visiting service. The model of HFA engages families in supportive home visiting with the goal of promoting and strengthening positive parent-child relationships, healthy development of children, and building on strengths of families and their protective factors.

“What I do as a home visitor is to identify the strengths and challenges that families might have, and work with them to make their parenting journey less stressful,” shares Jennifer Maldonado-Diaz, a Bilingual Family Support Worker with the Children’s Friend HFA program. “I help families gain access to different resources that can help them.”

“We look at health through holistic, systemic, and ecological lenses,” adds Rachel Hallene, Healthy Families America Supervisor. “With that being said, we explore their health with them, and oral care is part of that. Talking about oral health and asking families if they have a dentist – and if they don’t, helping them access one – is an important piece of that holistic health approach.”

Jennifer knows how important oral health can be to a family’s overall wellbeing. Last year, Jennifer began working with a family who had a child with significant oral health needs. “A big stressor for that parent was her child’s teeth,” said Jennifer. Jennifer introduced the family to the Samuels Sinclair Dental team at one of Children’s Friend’s agency-wide “Dental Days,” and over the next several months, Samuels provided no-cost treatment to ensure the child’s needs were addressed. “The team at Samuels Sinclair Dental Center really stepped up to help this family,” shared Maria Chionchio, who leads the Children’s Friend Dental Team. “This is the true benefit and impact of this strong partnership.”

How does Jennifer feel about her role in supporting this family and others as a home visitor? “I love what I do,” says Jennifer. “My goal is always to support families and to help them, when necessary, see the light at the end of the tunnel.”



Key Accomplishments & Progress

We are very proud of the successes of the Dental Program and are excited for the program to continue growing. Each year we continue to refine elements of this collaboration and are pleased to share our 2017-2018 program year accomplishments as a testament to the strength of our partnership with Samuels Sinclair and the Dental Program.

Ninety-one percent (91%) of currently enrolled Head Start and Pre-K children had a dental home. Samuels Sinclair is the dental home for over half of the children in the program (56%), with 41% accessing a private dentist.

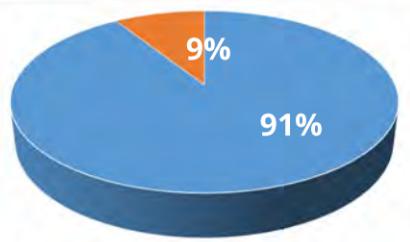
For many of the children enrolled in Head Start and Pre-K, their exam with the dentist from Samuels Sinclair is their first time seeing a dental health provider. This program year, a total of **721 children had a dental exam.** During the exam, children are also screened as potential candidates to receive sealants.

This program year, Wednesdays were designated as “dental hygiene day” across Children’s Friend Head Start centers and Partnership sites. This further standardized access to dental cleanings and fluoride treatment for the children and enhanced the coordination of scheduling. **A total of 637 children saw the hygienist for a cleaning and fluoride treatment** this year.

A goal of Children’s Friend has been to expand access to the Dental Program to our infant and toddler population. This program year, **41% of enrolled children (70 children) under the age of three received dental services** through Samuels Sinclair. This is more than double the number of children under three receiving dental care in the prior program year (2016-2017).

We continue to see encouraging results from our innovative sealant project. This program year, **67% of children (41 children) who were eligible for sealants received them,** and our goal is to continue to increase the number of children receiving this oral health benefit. To achieve this, we have amended the dental service consent form to include permission to apply sealants if the child is found to be a candidate. This streamlines the consent process as parents can now give permission for the exam and sealant application on the same form at the same time.

Children with a Dental Home
Program Year 2017/2018





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