

Creighton's Healthy Smiles program is making a **BIG IMPACT**

BY THE NUMBERS

21

Schools were visited by the Healthy Smiles program to deliver preventive services.

2,706

Children were screened annually in the elementary schools by the Healthy Smiles program.

1,361

Children and adolescents with unmet dental needs who received assistance to access a dental home and complete treatment.

4,403

Dental sealants were placed to help prevent tooth decay.

Creighton
UNIVERSITY

School of Dentistry



Dental sealants help protect against tooth decay, supporting better learning outcomes and reducing costs.

Preventive dental care—such as sealants, screenings, and fluoride treatments—promotes school attendance, enhances learning, prevents cavities, and lowers overall healthcare expenses. According to the Nebraska Oral Health Survey of Young Children, lower-income schools (schools with a higher percentage of students eligible for the National School Lunch Program) have a significantly higher prevalence of decay experience compared to higher-income schools. To address these oral health disparities, the Healthy Smiles program began in January 2014 and currently serves about 21 Omaha schools, including 19 elementaries/pre-schools, 1 middle school, and 1 high school identified as high-risk for dental decay and barriers to care.

The Healthy Smiles program provides school-based preventive services for approximately 2,500 children annually at no cost to families. Children avoid missing school and parents avoid missing work with school-based dental programs.

For children with urgent dental needs, the Community and Preventive Dentistry division assists families in securing a dental home. Some children with severe decay, pain, or infection need operating room care but lack insurance or experience financial barriers. 78 uninsured children received operating room dental surgeries funded by our grant partnerships and donations over the last 2 years!

For more information about the Healthy Smiles program, contact:
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**Dental sealants are protective coatings applied onto children's teeth by a dentist, dental hygienist or dental student. These coatings can be resin-based or glass ionomer-based and create a physical shield that protect the chewing surfaces of back teeth with pits and fissures. Experts recommend sealants to prevent cavities.*

Sources: Nebraska DHHS and Creighton University School of Dentistry