



1

# Partners for a Healthier Community, Inc. BEST Oral Health

Putting the Mouth Back in the Body:  
Improving Oral Health Across the Commonwealth

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BEST - Bringing early Education Screening & Treatment



2

## Imagine this!

- By the year 2010,
  - Families/children who participate in this program {BEST}, when they register for kindergarten at the Springfield Public School's Parent Information Center, will produce an oral health record, which profiles annual dental health screenings and fluoride varnish applications {comprehensive dental exams} that began at the age of 2.
  - Students will enter kindergarten with sound bodies and healthy mouths and their family and the community will be ready to provide them with continuing oral health care as part of routine health care.

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## Our Assumptions & Success Factors

3

- **Bridging Social Ties and Creating Support Networks**
  - Use existing ties between and among EEC organizations to reach parents and families and channel resources. By design, we aim to set up a model where several EEC organizations share strategy, activities, and pool resources.
- **Health Advocacy and Policy Change**
  - Beyond the pilot phase there will be the need for state budget and legislative action to secure MassHealth benefits and to create more flexible coverage options and procedure codes to sustain local projects.



## Our Assumptions & Success Factors

4

- **Capacity Building and Leadership Development**
  - Open Wide Train the Trainers Program will develop the capacity of individuals and organizations to deliver their own oral health education program.
- **In-reach Health Promotion**
  - Provide services onsite to a defined population and connect them to a continuum of oral health care and other needed health resources.
  - Connect dental treatment (clinics and private providers) to EEC organizations and provide oral health education and treatment for the whole preschool population, on site in preschool settings to enrolled children and their siblings.



# Complex Problems Need a Comprehensive Response



- Administrative**
  - Partners for a Healthier Community
  - Executive Office of Health and Human Services
  - Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Office of Oral Health
- Public Schools**
- Higher Education**
  - Boston University Goldman School of Dental Medicine
  - Tufts School of Dental Medicine Community Dental Programs
  - Springfield College School of Social Work
  - Springfield Technical Community College
- Private Sector**
  - Commonwealth Mobile Oral Health Services
  - Private Dentists
- Public Health Providers**
  - Western Massachusetts Hospital
  - Springfield Department of Health and Human Services
  - Holyoke Community Health Center
  - Caring Health Health Center
  - Early Childhood Education Centers



# Taking Action





# Policy

Government

Public-Private Partners

Community Partners

Academic Partners



7



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# Children are Receiving Services

8

**Best Case Scenario:** In FY 2010, BEST is able to sustain services to over 5,000 children currently enrolled at BEST preschool sites and fully transition these programs to be self sustaining.

Additionally, BEST will replicate its model and will increase access to dental care for 12,545 students enrolled in public school preschool – 5th grade.



**Worst Case:** Over 3,500 children in the BEST preschool program remain at significant risk of oral disease and will not gain access to preventive and comprehensive dental care.

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