



The Foundation of Delta Dental of Washington

September 28, 2017

VIA EMAIL & U.S. MAIL

Fox Blackhorn
Compliance Coordinator
Washington State Public Disclosure Commission
711 Capitol Way, Room 206
Olympia, WA 98504-0908

Re: *Complaint filed by Gerald Steel against Arcora Foundation
(PDC Case Number 25218)*

Dear Mr. Blackhorn:

Thank you for this opportunity for Arcora Foundation to respond to the Complaint filed by Gerald Steel on September 15, 2017. The PDC has asked us to respond to the following allegations:

- Allegation One: Violation of RCW 42.17A.205 for failure to register as a political committee.
- Allegation Two: Violation of RCW 42.17A.255 for failure to report independent expenditures in support of fluoridation ballot proposition in Port Angeles.
- Allegation Three: Violation of RCW 42.17A.320 for failure to list sponsor ID on political advertising in support of fluoridation ballot proposition in Port Angeles.

Mr. Steel's allegations are unfounded, and we request that the Commission dismiss the Complaint. As explained further below, the brochure attached to Mr. Steel's complaint is not related to the November 7, 2017 advisory vote on fluoridation in Port Angeles, but is instead part of our ongoing education and outreach efforts surrounding oral health issues in Clallam County and across the state. Arcora Foundation has no record of any prior Public Disclosure Commission complaints being filed against it, and it complies with the requirements of the Fair Campaign Practices Act, chapter 42.17A RCW. We offer the following information to assist the Public Disclosure Commission in evaluating the Complaint.

1. Arcora Foundation

Arcora Foundation, formerly the Washington Dental Service Foundation, is the largest nonprofit organization dedicated to improving oral health in Washington state. We are a nonprofit founded and funded by nonprofit Delta Dental of Washington, the state's largest dental benefits company. In addition to providing care to underserved communities through its SmileMobile, we

promote prevention and expanding access to care by providing grants to community organizations to support oral health programs for low-income families and by developing training and tools for healthcare providers.

Arcora Foundation works statewide to achieve its vision: that all people enjoy good oral and overall health, with no one left behind. Because the oral health needs in Clallam County are significant, we have worked within the county for over a decade to:

- Provide capital grant funding to bring fluoridation for the first time to Port Angeles;
- Provide capital grant funding to develop and expand non-profit dental clinics serving low income children and adults;
- Provide operational grant funds to support the Access to Baby and Child Dentistry (ABCD) in Clallam and Jefferson Counties;
- Host the SmileMobile, a mobile dental van that provides treatment to children and pregnant women in communities throughout the county;
- Partner with community organizations to address oral diseases in culturally appropriate and regionally specific ways, including educating people regarding fluoridation;
- Train physicians to apply fluoride varnish, to screen, and to refer for treatment when they see more severe dental disease, including discussions of fluoridation; and
- Train childcare providers on how to help children build healthy habits, including a good diet, brushing with fluoride toothpaste, and flossing.

2. The Brochure

The brochure attached to Mr. Steel's Complaint ("Brochure") was created following the November 2016 release of Smile Survey raw data for Clallam County. The Smile Survey is conducted by the Washington State Department of Health with partnership and support from the Arcora Foundation.¹ Our work on the Brochure began sometime in March 2017, after the key employee working on the Brochure returned from leave, and the Brochure was finalized in August 2017. The Brochure was created in partnership with the Clallam County Health and Human Services Department to educate the public on the results of the Smile Survey, as an educational tool for members of the public and patients with questions and concerns about the use of fluoride and fluoridation, and to encourage people to access care via the SmileMobile. We printed 2,500 copies of the Brochure, for a cost of \$2,033, for distribution to several dental service providers and clinics in the region, and at the Clallam County Health and Human Services Department. We also distributed the Brochure along with SmileMobile flyers on August 10, 2017, at a local presentation by the Washington State Department of Health discussing the Clallam County Smile Survey results analysis.

¹ Further information about the Smile Survey is available on the Washington State Department of Health website. <https://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/OralHealth>.

The Brochure has never been mailed to voters, and we do not intend to mail it to voters in advance of the Port Angeles advisory vote. The Brochure was created to share the results of the Smile Survey data and to continue our longstanding efforts to educate members of the public, including Clallam County citizens, on the benefits of fluoride.

Examples of our other publications, presentations, and educational literature, both within Clallam County and across the state, are provided as attachments to this letter. These educational efforts include, but are not limited to:

- Flyers announcing the SmileMobile, our mobile dental clinic, coming to Port Angeles and Sequim (attachment at page 7), distributed with the Brochure at the Clallam County Health and Human Services Department and to regional medical and dental offices;
- A September 2015 pamphlet titled “Clallam County – Oral Health Status in Brief,” describing the county’s dental professional shortages as well as levels of fluoridation in the county (attachment at page 9), distributed at community meetings and Clallam County health professional networks;
- A fact sheet compiled in partnership with several Spokane organizations, titled “Smile Spokane: Improving Spokane’s Oral Health” (attachment at page 12), distributed at Spokane’s “Teeth Week” and through local health professionals, and a description of the work of Smile Spokane (attachment at page 20); and
- A poster titled “Why Do Children Need Fluoride?” (attachment at page 17), distributed statewide and at Clallam County trainings for health professionals and online since its publication in 2015.

We submit the above publications, as well as additional examples of our educational outreach, as attachments to this letter to provide the PDC context for the publication at issue in Mr. Steel’s Complaint. The Brochure, along with the many other attached examples of our educational efforts, are not connected to a particular election. A list of these educational publications is provided as the first page of the attachment.

3. Mr. Steel’s Allegations

3.1 Allegation One: “Violation of RCW 42.17A.205 for failure to register as a political committee.”

Entities that qualify as “political committees” must file “a statement of organization with the commission.” RCW 42.17A.205(1). An entity is a political committee if it has the expectation of receiving contributions or making expenditures in support of, or opposition to, any candidate or any ballot proposition. RCW 42.17A.005(37). Further, to be a “political committee,” influencing an election must be a primary purpose of the entity. We have not received contributions or made expenditures in support of the November 7, 2017 advisory vote. The funds spent on the Brochure

are not “in support of, or opposition to any candidate or ballot proposition” because the Brochure is an educational tool for health providers to educate patients on oral health.

Instead, the Brochure is part of our ongoing effort to build social norms in which oral health is valued and people are informed with scientifically-based educational tools. Health providers continue to provide health care services for their community irrespective of elections and ballot propositions, and we support providers’ efforts to supply patients and the community with valuable educational tools like the Brochure.

3.2 Allegations two and three: “Violation of RCW 42.17A.255 for failure to report independent expenditures in support of fluoridation ballot proposition in Port Angeles” and “Violation of RCW 42.17A.320 for failure to list sponsor ID on political advertising in support of fluoridation ballot proposition in Port Angeles.”

Mr. Steel also claims that we have failed to report independent expenditures in support of the advisory vote and that we violated RCW 42.17A.320 by failing to list a sponsor’s name and address on political advertising in support of the advisory vote. Because the Brochure is an educational publication created without reference to the advisory vote, these allegations are not correct.

RCW 42.17A.255 requires reporting of independent expenditures, which are “any expenditure that is made in support of or opposition to any candidate or ballot proposition that is not otherwise required to be reported[.]” RCW 42.17A.320 requires that “[a]ll written political advertising, whether relating to candidates or ballot propositions, shall include the sponsor's name and address.” RCW 42.17A.320(1). “Political advertising” is defined as:

any advertising displays, newspaper ads, billboards, signs, brochures, articles, tabloids, flyers, letters, radio or television presentations, or other means of mass communication, used for the purpose of appealing, directly or indirectly, for votes or for financial or other support or opposition in any election campaign.

RCW 42.17A.005(36).

Because the Brochure is not “in support of or opposition to” a ballot proposition, allegations two and three are unfounded. As explained above, the Brochure was not created in support of or opposition to the advisory vote. The Brochure was created for educational purposes, as part of our longstanding efforts within both Clallam County and across the state, and is not targeted toward city voters. The Brochure was placed in health clinics across the county, not solely in the city, and the Brochure does not mention the advisory vote. The Brochure is not political advertising or an independent expenditure intended to influence the advisory vote.

4. Conclusion

Thank you again for this opportunity to address concerns about the nature of our work. Our consistent statewide efforts to educate the public on dental health issues are not in support of or opposition to the November 7, 2017 advisory vote in Port Angeles. While we have not made contributions in support of the ballot proposition at this point, we will fully comply with all statutory requirements if we do so in the future. If you or your staff have any questions, need any additional information, or would like to follow up with anyone at the Arcora Foundation, please let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Diane Oakes", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Diane Oakes
CEO and President, Arcora Foundation

Selection of Materials that highlight fluoridation and their distribution

Page Number	Type	Item	Distribution
7-8	Flyer	Smile Mobile Schedule Port Angeles and Sequim	Clallam County
9-10	Flyer	Oral Health Status in Brief	Clallam County
11	Brochure/Flyer	Fluoridation Data	Website , Community Partners Statewide
12-13	Brochure/Flyer	Smile Spokane Fact Sheet	Spokane Teeth Week w/ Smile Mobile & Civic Groups, Health Professionals
14-15	Brochure/Flyer	Clallam County Oral Health Status	Smile Mobile Clallam County, Civic Groups, Medical Dental Offices
16	Flyer	Drink Like An Elephant	Cavity Free Kids Training Handout, Early Learning providers, website
17	Poster	Why Do Children Need Fluoride?	Health Offices, Health Professional Training, Website
18	Poster	Fluoride: Cavity Fighter	Health Offices, Health Professional Training, Website
19	Video	Arcora Video Materials List with Links	Website , Mighty Mouth Education Campaign
20	Website	SmileSpokane Blogpost	Website
21	Website	Arcora Fluoridation Page	Website
22	Website	Arcora Transformation Page	Website
23	Website	Arcora SmileMobile Page	Website
24	Website	Arcora Integrating Oral Health & Overall Health Page	Website

The SmileMobile dental clinic is coming to...



Port Angeles

Sept. 11 - 22, 2017

Schedule a dental exam by calling:

1.888.286.9105

Location

Jefferson Elementary
218 E. 12th St.
Port Angeles, WA 98362

The event is open to the community regardless of the school your child attends.

Details

- Open to all children (birth through high school) and pregnant women
- Accepts Medicaid (Apple Health) and offers a sliding fee scale
- Operated by Arcora Foundation in partnership with Seattle Children's Hospital

This event/activity is NOT being sponsored by the school district and the district assumes no responsibility for the conduct of or safety of the event/activity. In consideration for the privilege to distribute these materials, the school district shall be held harmless from any cause of action, claim, or petition filed in any court or administrative tribunal arising out of the distribution of these materials, including all costs, attorney's fees, and judgments or awards.

The SmileMobile dental clinic is coming to...



Sequim

August 14 - 23, 2017

Schedule a dental exam for your child by calling:

1.888.286.9105

Location

Sequim Boys & Girls Club
400 W. Fir St.
Sequim, WA 98382

The event is open to the community regardless of the school your child attends.

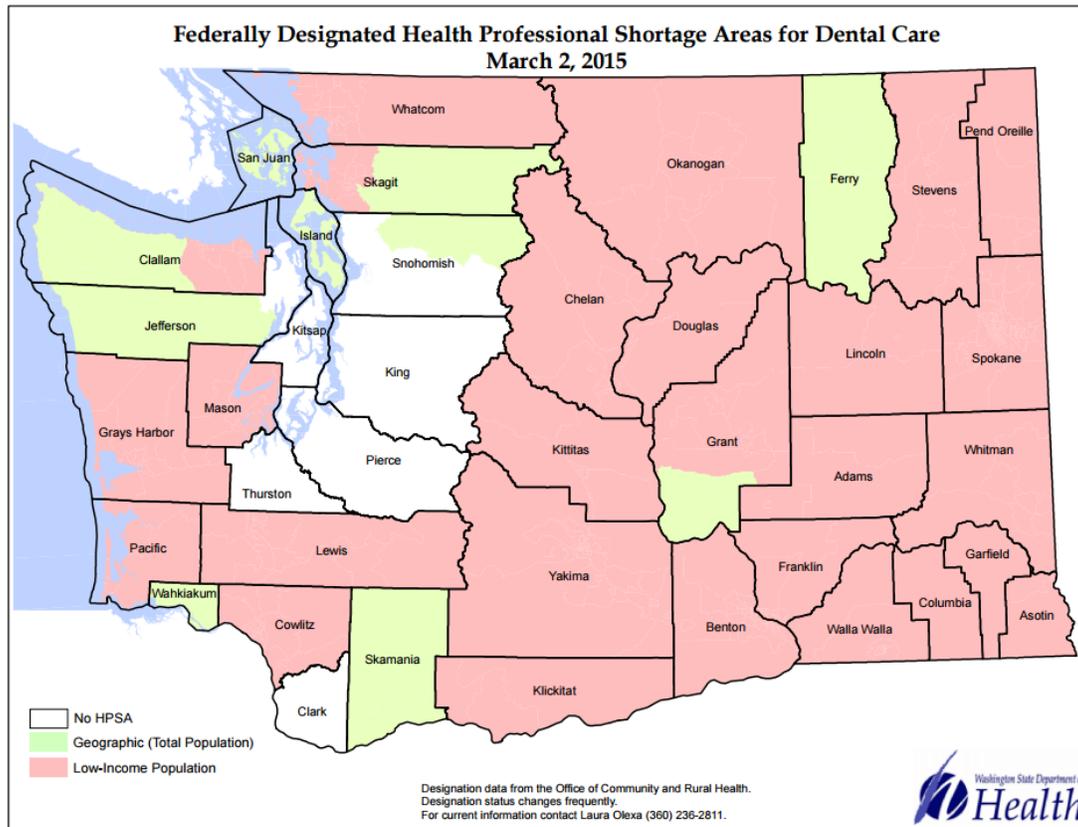
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Clallam County faces Dental professional shortage: Why?

- 44% of public water systems in Clallam County have fluoride at the level needed to prevent tooth decay ¹ compared to 53%² statewide and 75% nationally³
- All of Clallam County is considered a Federally Designated Health Professional Shortage Area for Dental Care.
- In 2011, adults on Apple Health lost their dental benefit and funding for dental hygienists to provide fluoride varnishes in schools was cut.⁴
- In 2012, of the 14,741 Clallam County residents enrolled in Medicaid only 26.6% received dental services, as compared to 39.2% statewide.
- In 2013 adult access to Apple Health coverage was restored; however, three years without prevention services increased demand for treatment. Additionally, more working people qualify for Apple Health than ever before.



¹ Washington State Department of health Office of Drinking Water, 2006.

² Washington State Department of health Office of Drinking Water, 2015.

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012.

⁴ Clallam County Health Assessment and Improvement Plan, 2013.

More is being done to treat and prevent cavities:

- **2006 –**
 - Community Water fluoridation begins. Benefits include reduction of cavities by 25% over a lifetime for everyone regardless of age, income, or insurance status.
- **2013 –**
 - Access to Baby and Child Dentistry (ABCD) begins. Coordinator begins to engage the community mid-year. Four dentists trained to provide services. Four-eight children newly enrolled in dental care.
 - Volunteers in Medicine of the Olympics offers “Talk to Teen” program that provides oral health education to 6th graders, expand their comprehensive adult dental program, and provide \$100,000 in free dental work.
 - Cavity Free Kids training through the Washington Dental Service Foundation trains 49 childcare providers to integrate oral health into daily activities.
 - The Smile Mobile visits Port Angeles March, September, and October providing care to 189 low-income children free of charge by the Washington Dental Service Foundation.
- **2014 -**
 - SeaMar Community Health Center opens a Dental Clinic to serve low-income adults and children of Port Angeles.
 - OlyCap and VIMO have partnered to provide \$2000 per month in vouchers accepted by local dentists for needing urgent care to uninsured adults.
 - ABCD saw 450 newly enrolled children. Of those 120 children made their first dental visit and 100 children that needed additional treatment.
- **2015 -**
 - Thirteen dentists in Clallam County have been trained through ABCD to provide dental care to children.
 - \$34,000 given to VIMO from Clallam County to serve the homeless and at risk. This will quadruple the care VIMO can provide - from 10 to 52 patients a month.

Please help Clallam County to become 100% cavity free:

- Support continued community water fluoridation. Prevention is the most cost-effective way to manage cavities.
- Encourage your daycare providers to provide healthy snacks and model good oral health behavior. Not all learning happens in the home.
- Help publicize the importance of oral health and celebrate the progress being made in Port Angeles by attending community events, clinic openings, and visiting the Smile Mobile when it’s in town. Celebrate these event in your social media feed.
- Support local efforts to acquire funding to expand treatment services.

Percentage of Washington State Population on Community Water Systems Receiving Fluoridated Water 2015



Key Water System Fluoridation Concepts

Fluoridated Water
Water that has dentally significant fluoride levels of 0.6 – 2.0 mg/L

Fluoridating Systems
Water Systems whose staff adjust the water to optimal levels for dental health

Intertied Fluoridated Systems
Water systems that purchase water from fluoridating systems

Naturally Fluoridated Systems
Water systems that sell water with 0.6 – 2.0 mg/L of fluoride

Public Water System Population Receiving Dentally Significant Fluoride Levels (0.6 - 2.0 mg/L)⁽¹⁾



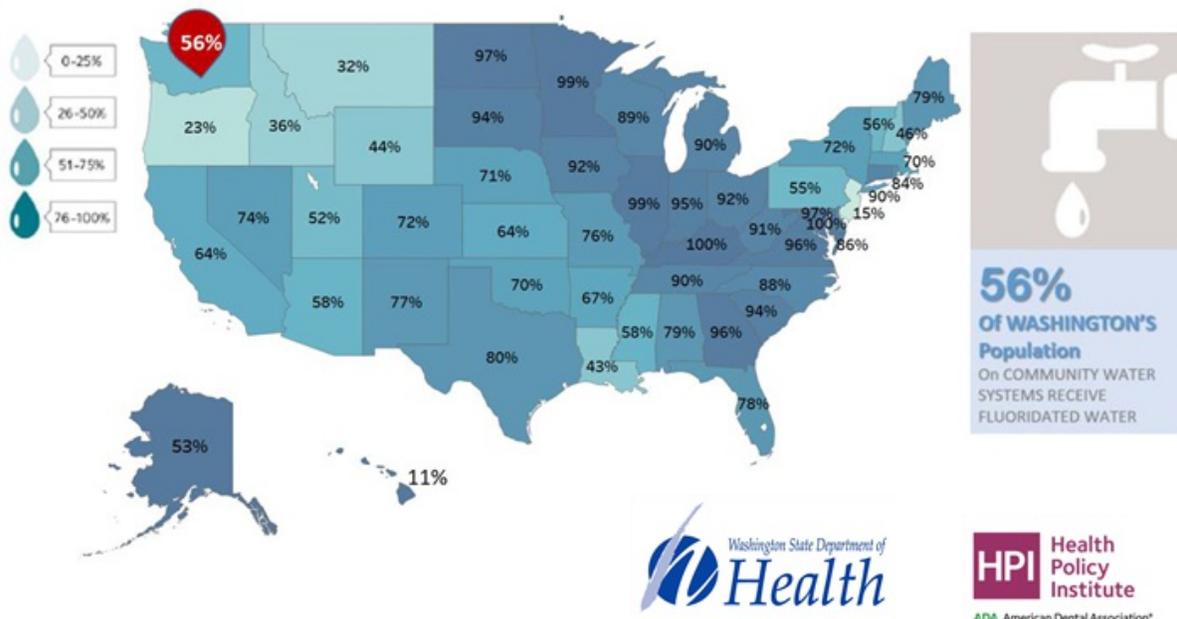
KEY:

- Less than 33%
- 33% - 66%
- More than 66%
- Fluoridating Systems

1. Fluoridating systems do not include all fluoridated systems; they exclude intertied and naturally fluoridated water systems. However, the color coded percentage of the population who receive fluoridated water by county does represent all types of fluoridated systems.
2. Data covers years 2000-2015
Source of data: Sentry Database.

How does WA State Compare with Other States?

Percentage of Population on Community Water Systems Receiving Fluoridated Water in 2012 ⁽²⁾



SOURCES:

Maps courtesy of: (1) Washington State Department of Health and (2) American Dental Association (ADA) Health Policy Institute (HPI).



Improving Spokane's Oral Health

Partners

Empire Health Foundation

Washington State Board of Health

Spokane District Dental Society

Spokane Regional Health District

Providence Medical Center

Washington Dental Service Foundation

Smile Spokane grew out of a partnership of community leaders and agencies seeking to promote the importance of oral health and to determine what we as a community can do to prevent oral disease. Since that time, the partnership has adopted a formal mission and strategies to guide its work.

Mission

Creating a healthier Spokane by advancing oral health for all

We aim to implement strategies that:

- improve oral health and;
- increase knowledge of fluoridation as a safe, cost effective and equitable means of improving oral health.

2016 Strategies

- Recruit and mobilize oral health champions to promote the mission and strategies of Smile Spokane.
- Increase Community Education and awareness through activities such as Teeth Week and other community opportunities
- Launch a robust social and print media campaign
- Train and deploy our Smile Spokane speakers bureau.
- Support and train dental and medical professionals in educating patients on connection between oral health and overall health and the benefits of fluoridation.



Oral disease is the **#1** preventable chronic disease in children.

Why Oral Health Matters

Good oral health benefits a child’s ability to focus and learn, it helps employees avoid missing work for emergent dental appointments, it allows seniors to eat nutritious foods and feel good about their smile.

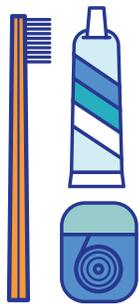
Oral health affects your overall health. Poor oral health is linked to heart disease, stroke and diabetes. Poor oral health may prevent individuals with cancer and other diseases from receiving potentially life-saving health care. In today’s service-sector economy, appearance matters. Adults with healthy teeth are at an advantage when interviewing for many jobs.

30%

of Spokane County adults have lost one or more teeth due to decay.



6 in 10 third graders in Spokane have experienced preventable tooth decay.



Brushing with fluoridated toothpaste, flossing and regular oral health checkups are an important part of prevention.

Prevention is Key

Prevention is the best way to avoid the impact of poor oral health. Unfortunately, the level of fluoridation in Spokane’s water is less than optimal to prevent decay. Here are a few websites where you can find reliable information on fluoridation.

www.ilikemyteeth.org www.cdc.gov/fluoridation www.ada.org/fluoridation

Join Us!

Please join us in our endeavor to improve oral health in our community! There are many ways to become involved including:

Social Media

Speakers Bureau

Presentations to your community or professional groups

Teeth Week volunteer

Oral disease has been linked to heart disease, diabetes and other major health conditions.



Contact Information

Jerrie Allard
jallard@smilespokane.org

Optimal fluoride in water protects and heals teeth – improving overall health.



Clallam County Health & Human Services
111 E. 3rd Street
Port Angeles, WA 98362

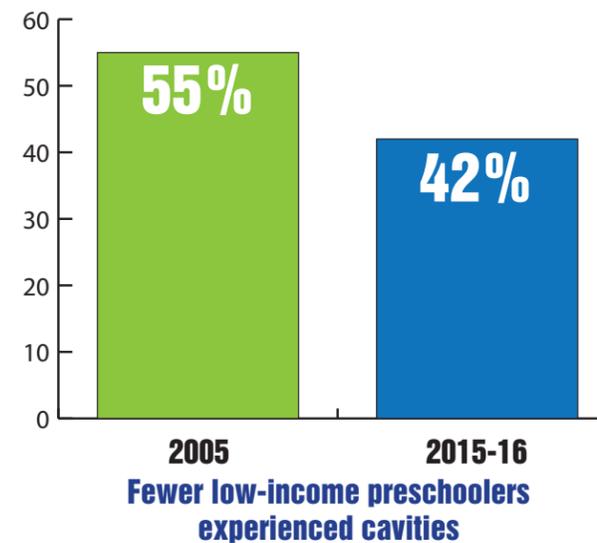


Clallam County children have improved oral health over the last decade, but challenges remain.

Clallam County Children Have Improved Oral Health

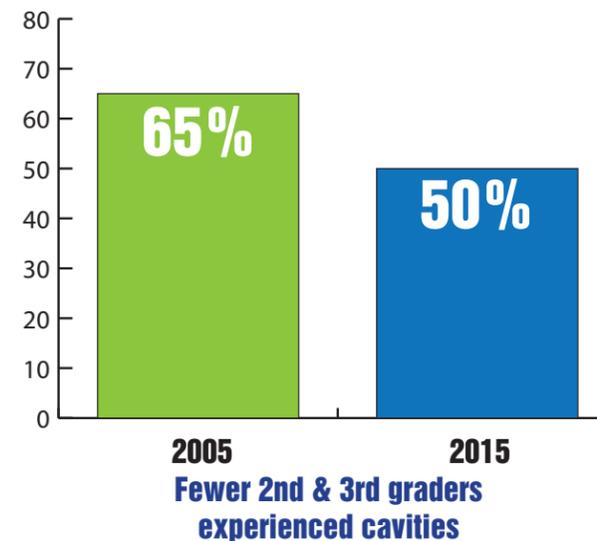


Recent surveys of children in Clallam County show a substantial improvement in kids' oral health in the past ten years.



What has helped children these past 10 years?

- The percentage of people with access to fluoridated water increased from 5% to 31%.
- The Access to Baby and Child Dentistry program helped connect more children to dental care, increasing utilization of dental services for kids ages 0-6 by 28 percent.
- More dental clinics served children and low-income residents (SeaMar, Lower Elwha, Jamestown S'Klallam, VIMO and SmileMobile).



What challenges remain?

- In August of 2016, Port Angeles lost optimal fluoride in drinking water, bringing its availability in Clallam County back to 5%. Statewide 56% of people on public water systems have fluoridated water, nationally 75% do.
- Clallam County remains listed by the federal government as having a shortage of dental professionals. Children, especially low-income children, and low-income adults still have trouble finding dentists.
- In the most recent survey, 21% of children have untreated decay by the 3rd grade compared to the state average of 12%.



Optimal fluoride in water protects and heals teeth – improving overall health.

What is fluoride?

Fluoride, a natural mineral, is found in most water supplies. Fluoridation adjusts the existing fluoride concentration to a level known to reduce tooth decay and improve oral health. Fluoride does this by joining with other minerals in the mouth to rebuild the tooth surface when a hole starts to form. Fluoride in water works with toothpaste and varnish to fix small decay before it becomes a cavity.

More than 70 years of scientific research has consistently shown that **an optimal level of fluoride in community water is both safe for health and for preventing cavities** by at least 25% in children and adults.

Just as iodine is supplemented to salt, Vitamin D to milk, and folic acid to breads and cereals to protect human health, **fluoride is supplemented to water to help defend against cavities.**

Clallam County is one of 35 of the state's 39 counties identified by the federal government as not having enough dental professionals to serve the public. Fluoride in the water helps strengthen and protect teeth for everyone, including those who have difficulty accessing dental care.

The SmileMobile visits locations annually throughout Clallam County to provide care for babies and children 18 and under. For more information, please call 1-888-286-9105.



What is the benefit to the community?

Fluoridation reaches individuals of all ages and socio-economic groups, making it a sound, population-based public health measure to improve oral health.

Painful cavities can affect school attendance, sleep, employment opportunities, nutrition, pocketbooks and quality of life.

The small amount of money needed to fluoridate water is a fraction of what it costs to treat dental disease in the community. **Fluoridation costs an average area homeowner less than 10 cents per month, much less than the cost of a single filling, for a lifetime of protection.** It reduces personal out-of-pocket costs for private payers and public insurance charges for low-income families and disabled individuals.



Bottom line: water with fluoride saves money.

Please, ask your dentist or doctor about fluoride.

Since fluoridation began, medical and dental professionals in Port Angeles have reported a noticeable improvement in their patients' dental health, with fewer cavities in both children and adults.



Drink Like an Elephant

Did You Know?

- Water is the best drink for our teeth and bodies.
- It's best to offer water for your child's thirst throughout the day.
- Juice, soda pop, and sports drinks cause cavities. Save them for special days.
- Water may contain fluoride, a natural mineral that helps prevent cavities.



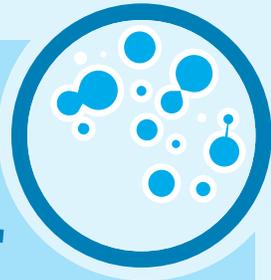
Take the Healthy Mouth Challenge!

I will:

- Drink and serve my child water instead of juice, soda pop, and sports drinks.
- Make drinking fun by giving my child a water bottle or straw.
- Make water more interesting for my child by adding slices of fresh lemon, cucumber, or strawberries.



WHY DO CHILDREN NEED FLUORIDE?



Our mouths contain **BACTERIA** +



That bacteria combines with sugars in the foods we eat and the beverages we drink and produces...

= **ACID**

The acid that is produced harms tooth enamel and damages teeth



FLUORIDE PROTECTS TEETH BY MAKING THEM MORE RESISTANT TO ACID

Get Your Fluoride Here!

-  Drink fluoridated water
-  Brush with the right amount of fluoridated toothpaste
-  Talk to your dentist or doctor about fluoride treatments

CAMPAIGN FOR **DENTAL HEALTH**
life is better **WITH TEETH**

ILikeMyTeeth.org

Fluoride is an important mineral for all children. Talk to your doctor or dentist to learn more.



FLUORIDE: CAVITY FIGHTER

Children can maintain good oral health in 4 ways:



Drink water that has fluoride



Brush twice a day with the right amount of fluoridated toothpaste



Eat a healthy diet, limiting sweet drinks, sticky candies, and snacks



Talk to your dentist or doctor about fluoride treatments

CAMPAIGN FOR
DENTAL HEALTH
life is better **WITH TEETH**

ILikeMyTeeth.org

Fluoride is an important mineral for all children. Talk to your doctor or dentist to learn more.



Arcora Video Material:

[Share the Water, Share the Love](#)

The screenshot shows the Arcora website interface. At the top left is the Arcora logo with the tagline 'The Foundation of Oral Health of Tomorrow'. A navigation menu includes 'Transformation', 'Prevention', 'Access', 'Who We Are', 'Resources', and 'Educational Materials'. The main heading is 'Share Water, Share Love'. Below it, a video player thumbnail for 'Mighty Mouth, September 2017' features the title 'Share the Water, Share the Love' and an illustration of four people at a water fountain. At the bottom is a green footer with the Arcora logo and address: '400 Parkway Ave North, Suite 800, Seattle, WA 98109, 877.454.7424'. A small 'SHARE ORAL CARE' icon is in the top right corner.

[Diabetes and Your Health](#)

The screenshot shows the Arcora website interface. At the top left is the Arcora logo with the tagline 'The Foundation of Oral Health of Tomorrow'. A navigation menu includes 'Transformation', 'Prevention', 'Access', 'Who We Are', 'Resources', and 'Educational Materials'. The main heading is 'Diabetes and Your Oral Health'. Below it, a video player thumbnail for 'Mighty Mouth, July 2017' features the title 'Diabetes and Your Oral Health' and an illustration of a person's head with icons for a heart, a brain, and a tooth. At the bottom is a green footer with the Arcora logo and address: '400 Parkway Ave North, Suite 800, Seattle, WA 98109, 877.454.7424'. A small 'SHARE ORAL CARE' icon is in the top right corner.

[Dr. Ben Danielson](#) (Note the posters in the background)

The screenshot shows the Arcora website interface. At the top left is the Arcora logo with the tagline 'The Foundation of Oral Health of Tomorrow'. A navigation menu includes 'Transformation', 'Prevention', 'Access', 'Who We Are', 'Resources', and 'Educational Materials'. The main heading is 'Dr. Ben Danielson'. Below it, a video player thumbnail for 'Mighty Mouth, July 2017' features the title 'Dr. Ben Danielson explains why baby teeth matter' and a photo of Dr. Ben Danielson in a white coat. At the bottom is a green footer with the Arcora logo and address: '400 Parkway Ave North, Suite 800, Seattle, WA 98109'. A small 'SHARE ORAL CARE' icon is in the top right corner.

< Previous Next >



- + Our Mission
- + We aim to implement strategies that:

Smile Spokane: A History of Action

Smile Spokane is the evolution of efforts by a passionate group of community leaders, organizations and oral health professionals working diligently to improve oral health in Spokane. For many years, partners such as the Washington State Board of Health, Empire Health Foundation, Arcora Foundation, the Spokane District Dental Society and others have led the charge in promoting community awareness and education on the importance of oral health in Spokane.

Creating a healthier Spokane by advancing oral health for all

The success and momentum of those early efforts led to the formation of Smile Spokane and the adoption of the mission to create a healthier Spokane by advancing oral health for all. The Smile Spokane partnership has grown to include more than 40 partners representing a diverse cross-section of Spokane.

Collectively, we are dedicated to championing strategies that improve oral health, including the promotion of fluoridation as a safe, cost effective and equitable means of improving oral health.

Current Strategies

In addition to mobilizing champions to promote a healthier Spokane by advancing oral health for all, our efforts for 2016 are to;

- Host Spokane's 3rd annual "Teeth Week", a community wide event that encourages Spokane to take care of its teeth.
- Educate the community through social media, print materials, and in person presentations of the importance of oral health.
- Train health workers, including both medical and dental professionals, on the oral health status of Spokane and the newest science on fluorides and fluoridation.
- Help promote the protection of teeth by using sports guards, and what to do in a dental emergency.

The intention of these activities is to support the people of Spokane in maintaining good oral health practices for a lifetime.

Get Involved

Like many important community issues, improving oral health will take a collective effort with many and diverse partners as part of the movement. There are a variety of ways to engage with us. [Click here](#) to learn more.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Velis, DDS, FAGD

Chair

Smile Spokane

By Nicholas Velis, DDS, FAGD | September 20th, 2016 | Blog, Homepage | 0 Comments

Share This Story. Choose Your Platform!



About the Author: Nicholas Velis, DDS, FAGD



Nicholas Velis DDS FAGD, Smile Spokane Strategy Team

Related Posts



Everyone has the right to good health, including oral health
April 6th, 2017



It's Teeth Week Time!
October 7th, 2016



Welcome To Smile Spokane!
September 25th, 2016 | 0 Comments

Leave A Comment

Comment...

Name (required) Email (required) Website

POST COMMENT

Community Water Fluoridation

Water fluoridation prevents tooth decay at every age

Why is the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) the lead organization encouraging communities to fluoridate their water? Because fluoridation is healthy and the most effective way to prevent tooth decay for everyone, young and old.

Through local education and funding for equipment, we help communities provide fluoridated water to their residents. In Washington, only 64 percent of communities receive the benefits of fluoridated water, compared to 75 percent nationwide.

Over the last ten years our work has helped ensure that an additional 287,000 people in Washington receive the health benefits of fluoridated water, saving families and taxpayers, conservatively, \$41.8 million.

National and international organizations recognize the benefits of fluoridation, including the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), [American Dental Association](#), and the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#).

Water fluoridation is one of the most beneficial and cost-effective steps a community can take to improve health for all residents.

Resources

- Learn what national experts say about fluoridated water by visiting [ILikeMyTeeth](#)
- The science of water fluoridation is explained in fun, interesting ways at [Fluoride Exposed](#)
- For more information on water fluoridation or how you can help, contact [Emily Firman](#).





Transformation

Transforming health systems to address oral health

Oral health is an essential part of overall health. Poor oral health affects the ability of a child to eat, sleep and learn. Oral disease is linked to serious chronic diseases including diabetes, heart disease and stroke. Yet, historically the mouth is treated separately, as if it is not connected to the rest of the body. Oral health is rarely addressed in primary care medical. That needs to change.

We work to ensure that the health of the mouth is part of whole-person health. We accomplish this goal by:

- **Integrating oral health and overall health** through developing, testing and spreading the tools and supports needed by health providers to use a population-health, data-driven, inter-professional approach to delivering oral health care.
- Expanding community, non-profit, and Tribal clinics to better integrate services and address social determinants of oral health.
- We partner with **Tribes** to explore new workforce and service delivery models.

SmileMobile

Providing care to children and pregnant women in rural and underserved communities

Our SmileMobile, a dental office on wheels, provides dental care to children and pregnant women living in rural and underserved communities who may have difficulty finding a dentist. The goal is to reduce disparities, improve health and connect families to care.

Since first hitting the road in 1995, our three-chair mobile clinic has provided care to more than 40,000 children and pregnant women throughout Washington who have no insurance or are insured through Apple Health (Medicaid).

The SmileMobile is a partnership of [Delta Dental of Washington](#), Arcora Foundation, and [Seattle Children's Hospital](#). Services include:

- Oral health education
- Examinations
- X-rays
- Preventive care (sealants, fluoride varnish)
- Fillings and simple extractions
- Referrals to local dental care

Services are provided at little or no cost. In each community, the SmileMobile partners with local organizations to help with outreach. We also participate in several special events throughout the year to provide dental care to uninsured adults.

To learn more or become a volunteer on the SmileMobile, contact [Karri Amundson](#), at 206.276.1620.

Do you need dental care? If you are pregnant, have a child or are an adult that meets the criteria call 1.888.286.9105 to find out if the SmileMobile will be coming to your area.

Integrating Oral Health & Overall Health

Oral health preventive care should be part of whole person care.

Engaging primary care medical providers in oral health

Oral health is essential to overall health. For too long oral health has been separated from overall health. It's time to "put the mouth back into the body" by treating the whole person. Oral health is rarely addressed in primary care, even though dental disease is a highly prevalent chronic disease. That is one reason why oral health is a top unmet health need in the country, and in Washington State.

To keep people healthy, all health professionals should pay attention to oral health

Increasingly healthcare systems are focused on population health and delivering value defined by improved health outcomes. This means moving upstream with preventive care, closing gaps in care, and payment models that incent keeping people healthy, rather than treating them only after they are sick.

This trend toward whole person care and preventing disease creates opportunities and incentives to ensure that oral health preventive services are included in primary care, particularly for high-risk patients such as pregnant women and people with diabetes. Oral disease is linked to many chronic diseases including diabetes, heart disease and stroke. Oral disease is largely preventable and prevention improves health. Ensuring that all health professionals pay attention to oral health will lead to improved population health.

Oral health preventive care should be part of "whole person" care delivered in primary medical care settings. That's why we:

- Train medical teams to address their patients' oral health. This includes screening for oral disease to catch it early and referring patients to dental care, delivering topical fluoride for patients at risk, and educating patients and families about the importance of good oral health and its connection to overall health. For patients who qualify, Apple Health (Medicaid) reimburses for these services.
- Provide the tools and technical assistance medical practices need to integrate oral health preventive services into a busy primary care visit.
- Work to ensure that oral health is included in health professional training programs so that the next generation of healthcare providers learns that good health must include a healthy mouth, and are prepared to address their patients' oral health.
- Collaborate with Accountable Communities of Health throughout the state to support the integration of oral health into health transformation activities that result in whole person models of care and improved health equity.
- Partner with care delivery systems to implement models for integrated medical-dental care and population oral health.

To learn more about this work, contact [Glenn Puckett](#).

For healthcare professionals:

- Read the [vision](#) for incorporating oral health into primary care
- Review the Smiles for Life [curricula](#)
- Order free oral health educational [materials](#)

To find out more or schedule a training, contact [Madlen Caplow](#).

