

# South Dakota Department of Health

## 2010 Oral Health Survey of South Dakota Third Grade Students

### Executive Summary

During the 2009-10 academic school year, the South Dakota Department of Health, with assistance from the South Dakota Dental Association, conducted a statewide dental survey to determine the oral health status of South Dakota. The data will aid in the development of strategies to improve oral health. Results were compared to a similar dental survey conducted in 2006. Overall, it was found that in 2010, tooth decay, the single most common chronic childhood disease, continued to be a major problem for South Dakota's children.

### Key Findings

Sixty-two percent of the children had cavities and/or fillings (decay experience) and 29 percent of the children had untreated dental decay (cavities). Dental decay is a significant public health problem for South Dakota's children.

Forty-five percent of the children did not have dental sealants. In 2010, 55% of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade children screened had dental sealants compared to 61% in 2006. Forty-six percent of American Indian children had dental sealants in 2010 which is a dramatic decrease from 2006 when 70% of American Indian children had received dental sealants. While dental sealants are a proven method for preventing decay, many of South Dakota's children have not received this preventive service.

Twenty-nine percent of the children were in need of dental care including 8 percent that needed urgent dental care because of pain or infection. A large proportion of South Dakota's children are in need of dental care.

Compared to white non-Hispanic children, a significantly higher proportion of American Indian children have decay experience (58% vs. 84%) and untreated decay (22% vs. 48%).

Thirty-eight percent of children that participate in the free/reduced price school lunch program had untreated decay compared to only 17% of children not eligible for the program.

Oral disease is progressive and cumulative and becomes more complex over time. If left untreated, tooth decay can lead to needless pain and suffering; difficulty in speaking, chewing, and swallowing; missed school days; increased cost of care; the risk of other systemic health problems; and loss of self-esteem. Emerging research points to associations between oral disease and diabetes, cancer, and heart and lung diseases (US Dept. of Health and Human Services, 2000).

The full report is available at <http://doh.sd.gov/oralhealth>

or email a request for a hard copy of the full report to: [DOH.INFO@state.sd.us](mailto:DOH.INFO@state.sd.us)