



2023-2027

State Oral Health Plan



ORAL
HEALTH
OHIO

Managed by HealthPath Foundation

Acknowledgments

Oral Health Ohio is a coalition of statewide partners who educate and advocate to improve the state's oral and overall health. Oral Health Ohio received funding from the CareQuest Institute for Oral Health to support the development of the 2023-2027 State Oral Health Plan. Oral Health Ohio contracted with the Health Policy Institute of Ohio (HPIO) to facilitate and create the State Plan.

Oral Health Ohio and HPIO are grateful to the members of the State Oral Health Plan advisory committee, focus group participants, and other partners who contributed their time and expertise to this plan.

The State Oral Health Plan advisory committee collectively selected the priorities and goals of the State Plan. However, the State Plan does not necessarily reflect positions taken by individual members. Also, while Oral Health Ohio commissioned this State Plan and HPIO drafted it, the State Oral Health Plan does not necessarily reflect positions taken by Oral Health Ohio or HPIO, which are governed by their own bylaws. Oral Health Ohio will honor its bylaws, including those pertaining to scope of practice issues, when prioritizing action.

HPIO

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Executive summary

What is the State Oral Health Plan?

The State Oral Health Plan is a prioritized, actionable roadmap to integrate oral health with overall health and elevate it to the same importance. The State Plan is designed to guide actions taken by policymakers, advocates, educators, providers, and funders. The vision of the State Plan is that all Ohioans will have optimal oral health across the lifespan. Public and private collaboration is needed to achieve this goal.

The State Plan:

- Elevates 12 priorities within five focus areas, identified in figure 2
- Highlights opportunities to advance equity
- Presents 14 goals and a menu of action steps so that state and local partners can take action on the State Plan
- Tracks progress on eight outcomes

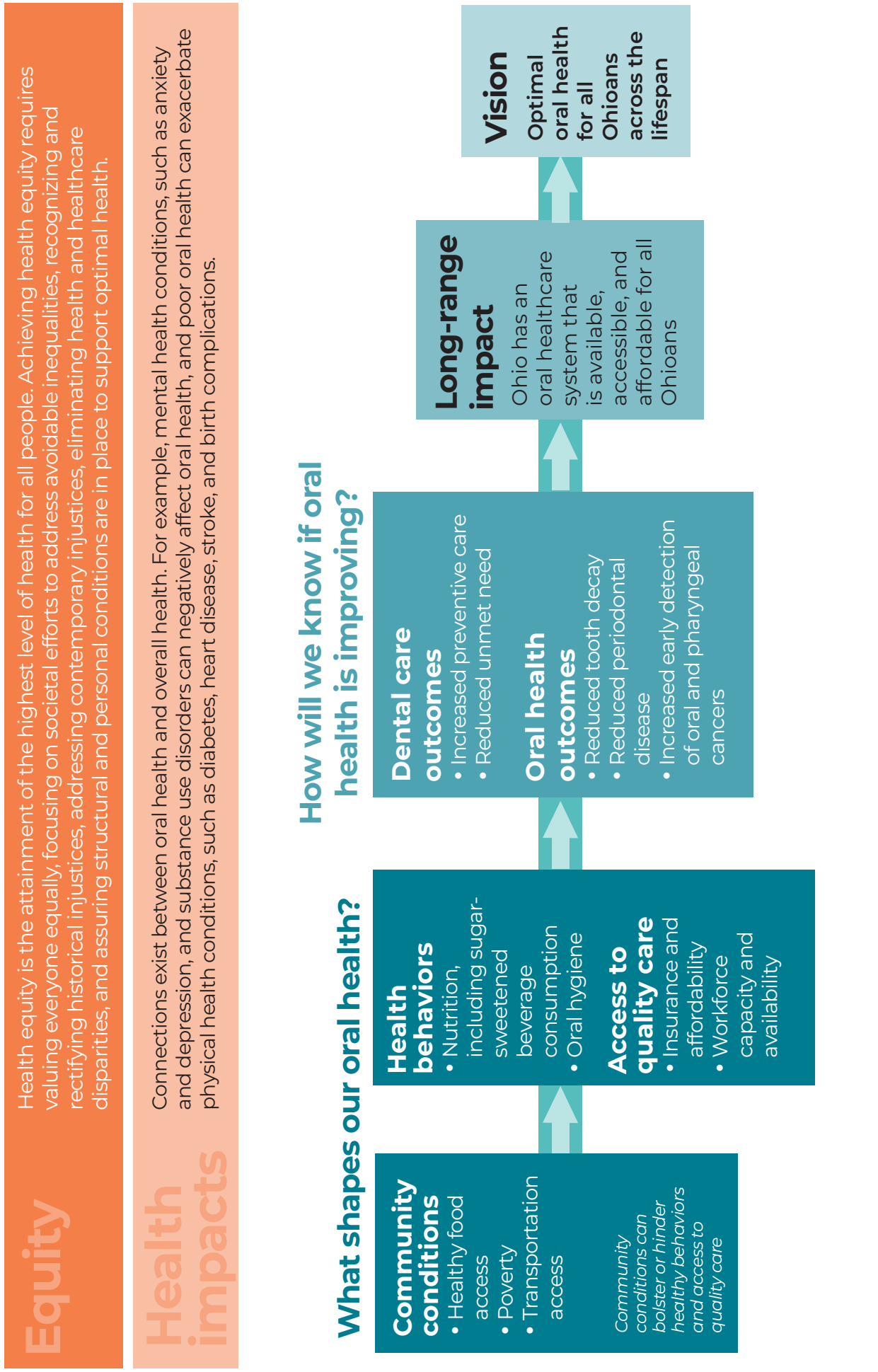
Why is the State Oral Health Plan important?

Oral health is a critical, yet often overlooked part of overall health. From infancy to older adulthood, oral health affects a person's overall health and well-being. Figure 1 describes these connections, as well as factors that influence oral health. Community conditions like poverty, food security, toxic stress, and discrimination; health behaviors; and care access and affordability can affect oral health and overall health. Many Ohioans face obstacles to optimal oral health. Untreated oral health problems can lead to considerable pain and infection, which can negatively impact quality of life or even have life-threatening consequences.

Figure 1. **Connections between oral health and overall health**



Figure 2. State Oral Health Plan conceptual framework



How was the State Oral Health Plan developed?

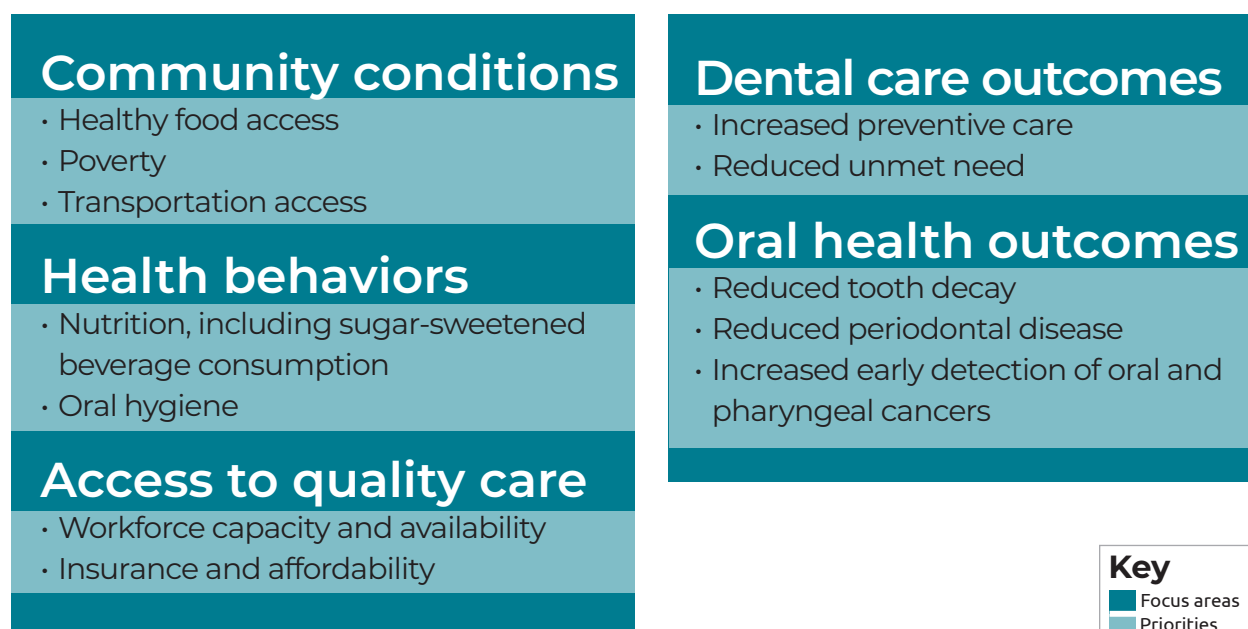
Facilitated by the Health Policy Institute of Ohio, under contract with Oral Health Ohio, the State Plan was developed with an analysis of secondary data and input from approximately 200 Ohioans through:

- **Healthcare provider focus groups** with 52 participants from a variety of dental and medical specialties and locations across the state
- **Consumer focus groups** with 114 community members in five cities (Columbus, Athens, Cleveland, Toledo, and Cincinnati) (see the **Assessment of Ohio's oral health strengths and challenges** for more information on healthcare provider and consumer focus groups)
- **Multi-sector advisory committee** with 28 members who provided guidance and feedback throughout development of the Plan. The advisory committee was responsible for reviewing, discussing, and selecting the priorities for this State Plan, as well as the goals and action steps to address each priority

What are the priorities addressed in the State Oral Health Plan?

The State Plan is organized into five focus areas. Within these focus areas, the State Plan identifies 12 priorities. Figure 3 lists the focus areas and priorities of the State Plan.

Figure 3. Focus areas and priorities of the State Oral Health Plan



What are the goals of the State Oral Health Plan?

The long-range impact of the State Plan is that Ohio has an oral healthcare system that is available, accessible, and affordable for all Ohioans. To achieve this, the Plan elevates 14 goals that partners can advance together (listed in figure 4). The Plan also includes specific action steps that can be taken to achieve each goal on pages 13-28.

Figure 4. Goals of the State Oral Health Plan

Action steps to address each goal can be found on the page numbers referenced in parentheses.

Priorities	Goals
Community conditions: Transportation access	1. Improve and increase utilization of non-emergency medical transportation options (p. 15)
Health behaviors: Nutrition, including sugar-sweetened beverage consumption	2. Encourage healthy eating by increasing access to healthy foods and restricting access to unhealthy foods (p. 16) 3. Enhance nutrition education (p. 17)
Health behaviors: Oral hygiene	4. Improve Ohioans' access to oral hygiene preventive products (p. 18) 5. Improve Ohioans' knowledge of oral health and hygiene (p. 19)
Access to quality care: Workforce capacity and availability	6. Develop dental pipeline programs and recruitment strategies and offer financial incentives for health professionals serving underserved areas and/or populations (p. 21) 7. Enhance dental and medical education (p. 21) 8. Expand scope of practice for dental hygienists (p. 22)
Access to quality care: Insurance and affordability	9. Ensure reimbursement for oral health services by private and public insurers, including Medicare (p. 23) 10. Increase the number of oral health providers who provide services to Medicaid enrollees (p. 23)
Dental care outcomes: Increase preventive care and reduce unmet need for dental care	11. Acknowledge and expand medical-dental integration (p. 25) 12. Implement patient navigation services and culturally adapted care (p. 25) 13. Increase locations where people can access dental care (p. 26) 14. Increase preventive clinical interventions (p. 27)

Note: No goals were selected for the poverty and healthy food access priorities. Addressing these priorities is critical to improving oral health for all Ohioans, and State Plan partners are encouraged to work alongside other Ohio organizations who are working to improve these community conditions.



Prioritizing equity

Ohio faces striking disparities across State Plan priorities. To eliminate these unjust differences, policies, programs, and services must be tailored to Ohioans with the greatest need, such as Ohioans of color, Ohioans with disabilities, Ohioans with low incomes, and Ohioans living in rural or Appalachian regions. These groups, among others, face bias, discrimination, and structural barriers to oral and overall health that can be eliminated through deliberate action. The State Plan provides partners with the tools needed to improve oral health outcomes and advance equity in Ohio.

How will the State Oral Health Plan be implemented?

Ensuring that all Ohioans have optimal oral health across the lifespan will require collaboration from partners across Ohio, as identified in figure 5. The State Plan is designed to be implemented by public and private partners at both the state and local levels. The priorities, objectives, and action steps in the State Plan provide flexible options for partners from many sectors to contribute to improved oral health outcomes for Ohioans across the state.

To advance State Plan implementation, State Plan partners can:

- **Embrace one or more State Plan priorities and/or priority populations** as a focus of their organization’s work
- **Promote the State Plan** as a tool for assessing which policies, programs, and services should be advanced at the federal, state, and local levels
- **Allocate resources toward evidence-informed action steps** in the State Plan and tailor those resources to the Ohioans most at risk for poor outcomes
- **Collaborate with cross-sector partners** to advance State Plan priorities, including coordinating on the action steps described in the State Plan
- **Evaluate implementation of State Plan action steps** and track whether the intended outcomes, including improved oral health and eliminated disparities, have been achieved

Figure 5. State Oral Health Plan implementation partners

