



# Utah Oral Health Coalition

**Leadership (March 2021 to March 2022):**

Danyelle Evans, Laura Green, Co-chairs  
Dr. David Steward, Chair-elect  
Jessie Mandle, Past Chair

**Steering Committee (3 year term ends)**

Danyelle Evans, Co-chair (3-2023)  
Laura Green, Co-chair (3-2023)  
Dr. David Steward, Chair-elect (3-2024)  
Jessie Mandle, Past Chair (3-2022)  
Sasha Harvey, (3-2023)  
Jade Hill (5-2024)  
Dr. Brent Larson (3-2024)  
Gary Monk (2-2024)  
Dr. Steve Steed (5-2024)

**Coalition Members**

American Academy of Pediatrics, Utah Chapter  
Association for Utah Community Health  
Avisis Inc.  
Big Smiles  
Community Health Centers, Inc.  
Community Health Connect  
Dixie State University Dental Hygiene Program  
Fortis College Dental Hygiene Program  
Head Start  
Health Access Project  
Intermountain Healthcare  
Maliheh Free Clinic  
Midvale Community-Building-Community  
Pantry Smiles, Bountiful Food Pantry  
Precision Mobile Care  
Primary Children's Hospital  
Roseman University of Health Sciences, College  
of Dental Medicine  
Sacred Circle Healthcare  
Salt Lake Community College Dental Hygiene  
Program  
Salt Lake Donated Dental Services  
Salt Lake Valley Health Department  
SelectHealth  
Senior Charity Care Foundation  
TeethFirst  
Tooele County Health Department  
United Way of Salt Lake  
University of Utah School of Dentistry and  
General Practice Residency Program  
Utah College of Dental Hygiene  
Utah County Health Department  
Utah Dental Association and Alliance  
Utah Dental Hygienists' Association  
Utah Department of Human Services  
Utah Diabetes Association  
Utah Health Policy Project  
Utah Medical Education Council  
Utah Partners for Health  
Utah Tobacco Free Alliance  
Utah Valley University Dental Hygiene Program  
Voices For Utah Children  
Weber State University Dental Hygiene Program

Dear Honorable Governor Cox,

On behalf of the Utah Oral Health Coalition (UOHC), we wish to congratulate you as you lead Utah on our road to recovery and continued growth. We are writing today to share why oral health is an integral piece of Utah's future and to invite you to be a partner in strengthening oral health care for all Utahns.

The UOHC is a coalition of over thirty organizations including health care providers and practitioners, businesses, community organizations, professional training schools, professional dental organizations, educators, and advocates. We have members from across Utah who come together with the shared goal of improving access to dental care and reducing unmet oral health needs for Utahns. For over 20 years, we have worked together to advance our shared goals, making significant progress over the years.

However, oral health challenges remain for many residents across our state. These challenges prevent adults from finding work and children from reaching their full potential in school. According to state survey data, 22% of low-income Utah residents have said that the appearance of their mouth affects their ability to interview for a job. Utah's unmet oral health care needs affect Utahns across the lifespan with one in five children experiencing *untreated* oral health disease. Every year, taxpayers spend millions of dollars in uncompensated care costs for emergent dental needs to be assessed in emergency rooms.

The UOHC has identified several key state-level policy priorities that need to be addressed or reinstated in order to leverage public and private investment in improved health and to ensure that we can begin to reduce oral health disparities in our state. These key priorities include:

- Restoring funding for a full-time state dental director and public oral health program.
- Funding a statewide infant/school/middle aged/geriatric adult dental screening program.
- Reinstate funding for statewide screening and assessment, and expand to populations beyond elementary school
- Improving medical-dental integration in Utah's health care system.
- Reinstating Medicaid dental benefits for adults.

We would like to invite you or a member of your staff to meet with our coalition, so that we can discuss these priorities further and hear more about your plans to address oral health challenges on the path to One Utah. We look forward to working alongside you to ensure that all Utahns, no matter their age, where they live, or the language that they speak, can smile without embarrassment. Thank you for considering this request and championing the health and wellbeing of all Utahns!

Sincerely,

Utah Oral Health Coalition