



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