

# MAKING SMILES HAPPEN®: 2016 ORAL HEALTH STUDY OF KENTUCKY'S YOUTH

## Where are we? What can be done? Who can help?

### Why does the oral health of our youth matter?

Good oral health is an integral component of healthy development, optimal childhood learning, and employment prospects later in life. Tooth decay is the single most common chronic disease in children and often established by the time a child enters preschool. Decay can be passed on from parent to child and lead to serious, sometimes life-threatening infections in the body. When teeth are healthy and pain-free, it's easier to focus, listen, play, share, learn, solve, grow and thrive.

### THE STUDY:

Delta Dental of Kentucky partnered with Kentucky Youth Advocates and the University of Louisville School of Dentistry through the Making Smiles Happen® initiative to conduct a new statewide survey of children's oral health. We sent a dentist to 60 schools across five regions of the state to directly observe the mouths of 3rd and 6th graders. We also asked parents about family oral health history, collecting data for over 2,000 students. The result is a long overdue picture of children's oral health in Kentucky.

### KEY FINDINGS:



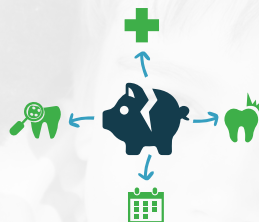
The percentage of 3rd and 6th graders in need of dental care has increased since 2001.



Two out of five 3rd and 6th graders have untreated cavities.



Over half of 3rd and 6th graders do not have sealants.



Socioeconomic status is a significant factor in 3rd and 6th graders' oral health. Children in low-income families are more likely to not have visited a dentist in a year or more, to experience a toothache, to have tooth decay, and have urgent dental care needs.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:



#### DEVELOP

Develop comprehensive goals and objectives for a statewide oral health plan.



#### LAUNCH

Launch regional networks to develop local, data-driven solutions.



#### ESTABLISH

Establish school-based sealant programs in all high needs schools.



#### PROMOTE

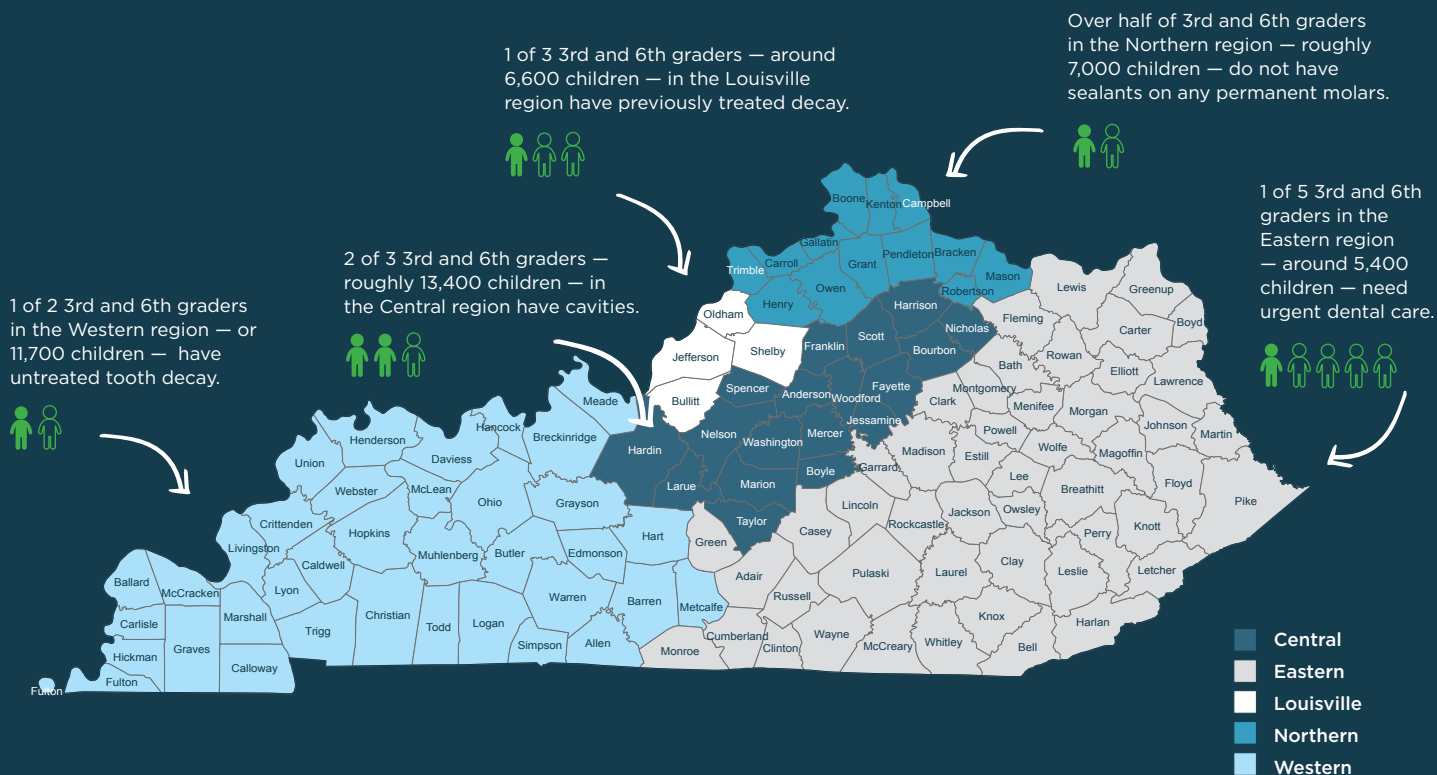
Promote oral health literacy campaigns.



#### COLLECT

Regularly collect state and county-level oral health data.

## Making Smiles Happen: 2016 Oral Health Study of Kentucky's Youth Regions



**MAKING SMILES HAPPEN:**  
2016 Oral Health Study of Kentucky's Youth

11001 Bluegrass Parkway, Suite 100, Jeffersontown, KY 40299  
502.895.8167 | [Info@KentuckyOralHealth.com](mailto:Info@KentuckyOralHealth.com)  
[KentuckyOralHealth.com](http://KentuckyOralHealth.com)