



THE IMPACT OF FIRST 5: FIRST TOOTH, FIRST BIRTHDAY



First 5 Sacramento Tackles Pediatric Oral Health

THE CHALLENGE: Tooth decay is the number one cause of kindergarten absences, and untreated dental issues can trigger a cascade of family problems. Children in pain miss school, causing parents to miss work and schools to lose funding.

FIRST 5 ACTION: First 5 Sacramento has a comprehensive approach to oral health — increasing utilization, expanding system capacity, innovating preventative service access, and connecting partners to generate solutions that improve the dental care system.

First 5 Impact

By creating 5 new dental clinics and adding 23 new pediatric dental chairs, First 5 funding provided urgently needed oral care to thousands of children. As a result, dental utilization rates in the managed care system doubled for all children over the last 5 years, with a utilization increase of 250% for children ages 0-3 years.

COMMITMENT TO THE FULL SPECTRUM OF CARE:

Beyond the investment in dental clinics, First 5 Sacramento expanded water fluoridation and focused on services in community-based settings, with mobile dental screenings at low income preschools and parent education on the importance of early dental care.

SYSTEMS EFFICIENCY & INTEGRATION: First 5 funded a pioneering study on dental utilization rates that spearheaded an oral health movement in Sacramento. The study revealed dismal utilization rates for children on Medi-Cal, which resulted in the creation of an advisory body to make improvements to the system so that it better serves all children.

“While more children are seeing a dentist now than in the past, we can still do better,” explains Julie Gallelo, First 5 Sacramento’s Executive Director. “Our goal is to increase utilization rates by 5% per year for the next three years in an effort to turn the curve for Sacramento’s most vulnerable kids.”