



Northwest Territories Oral Health Action Plan

2018/19 - 2020/21

SEPTEMBER 2018

Government of
Northwest Territories



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Minister's Message



The Department of Health and Social Services is pleased to present the *NWT Oral Health Action Plan 2018/19 – 2020/21*. This action plan delivers a multi-directional approach to improving the oral health status of our population, and will improve the way that oral health services are provided in the Northwest Territories.

We know that good oral health is an essential element of our overall health. We know that healthy mouths in children are crucial for adequate nutrition, growth, language development, school performance and social well-being. Yet, dental caries is the most common chronic infectious disease of childhood, and places a substantial burden on our population.

The good news is that oral disease is a largely preventable condition. As a result, we are targeting preventive interventions that will avert oral disease in the infant, child, and youth populations. An additional focus on the prenatal population will strengthen healthy practices at the family level, ensuring that our youngest residents get the best opportunity for a lifetime of sound oral health.

This action plan is guided by the recommendations set forth in the 2014 strategic framework, *Brushing Up on Oral Health*. Highlights of the action plan include using a population health approach to promote oral health, strengthening the role of primary health care in oral health, augmenting the oral health professional workforce, improving territorial dental services, and emphasizing cultural safety. Tackling the issue from many angles will lead to improved oral health outcomes throughout the territory.

Implementing the actions established in this plan requires close collaboration with our partners integral to improving oral health in the Northwest Territories: the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE); the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA); the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources (ENR); Aurora College; and the Health and Social Services Authorities (HSSAs). The *NWT Oral Health Action Plan* directly supports the GNWT commitment to improving oral health outcomes, particularly for children aged 0-5 through the interdepartmental early childhood development framework, *Right from the Start*.

We look forward to fulfilling the objectives of the *NWT Oral Health Action Plan* over the next three years, as we move towards meeting our vision: for all children in the NWT to enjoy a state of optimum oral health – free from chronic pain, decay and tooth loss.

Glen Abernethy
Minister of Health and Social Services



Introduction

The *NWT Oral Health Action Plan 2018/19 - 2020/21* represents an exciting shift in oral health service delivery in the Northwest Territories (NWT). Implementing this action plan will significantly reduce the high rates of oral disease in the territory, particularly among children and youth.

Oral Health in the NWT

Oral disease requires immediate attention in the NWT. The *Canadian Health Measures Survey*, the *First Nations Oral Health Survey*, and the *Inuit Oral Health Survey* confirm the significant burden that oral disease places on the population of the Northwest Territories. Our remote, northern context and the low number of municipalities with a resident dentist contribute to high rates of oral disease and untreated tooth decay. The Canadian Institute for Health Information reports that the NWT has the second highest rate of day surgeries to treat early childhood caries in Canada.

Oral Health – An Essential Component of Overall Health

Oral health is an important element of our general health. Healthy mouths and teeth in children promote healthy growth, nutrition, speech/language development, good school performance, and social well-being. Sadly, chronic pain and tooth loss from untreated oral disease can impair a child's ability to eat, speak, sleep, and learn. In adults, oral disease has been linked to an array of chronic and systemic diseases such as diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, cardiovascular disease and pneumonia.





What We Have Learned

The 2014 report *Brushing Up on Oral Health – Northwest Territories* is the guiding strategic document to direct improved oral health care in the NWT. The review identifies the need to shift towards a prevention-focused program that prioritizes children’s oral health. *Brushing Up on Oral Health* confirms that evidence-based interventions can improve oral health at both the individual and population level. Such interventions include applying the common risk factor approach to oral care, improved screening and restructured oral health care teams.

Our Approach – Focus on Prevention

Fortunately, oral disease is largely preventable. Consequently, this action plan focuses largely on preventive activities that will deter oral disease in the population, including engaging more oral health professionals in the NWT. Improving territorial dental care for municipalities without a resident dentist is also an important area for action. Key concepts guiding the action plan include using a population health approach to promote oral health; integrating oral health services into primary health care; emphasizing cultural safety; surveillance, monitoring and evaluation; and improving territorial dental care. Together, these principles will result in improved oral health outcomes in the infant, child, youth and prenatal populations, and improved oral health literacy for all residents of the NWT.

The implementation of the *NWT Oral Health Action Plan* aligns with the GNWT commitment to improving oral health outcomes, particularly for children aged 0-5 through the interdepartmental early childhood development framework, *Right from the Start*.



Action Plan Overview

The *NWT Oral Health Action Plan* aims to achieve its goal and vision through four broad objectives. Guiding principles directed the development of the objectives, action areas and activities.

Goal

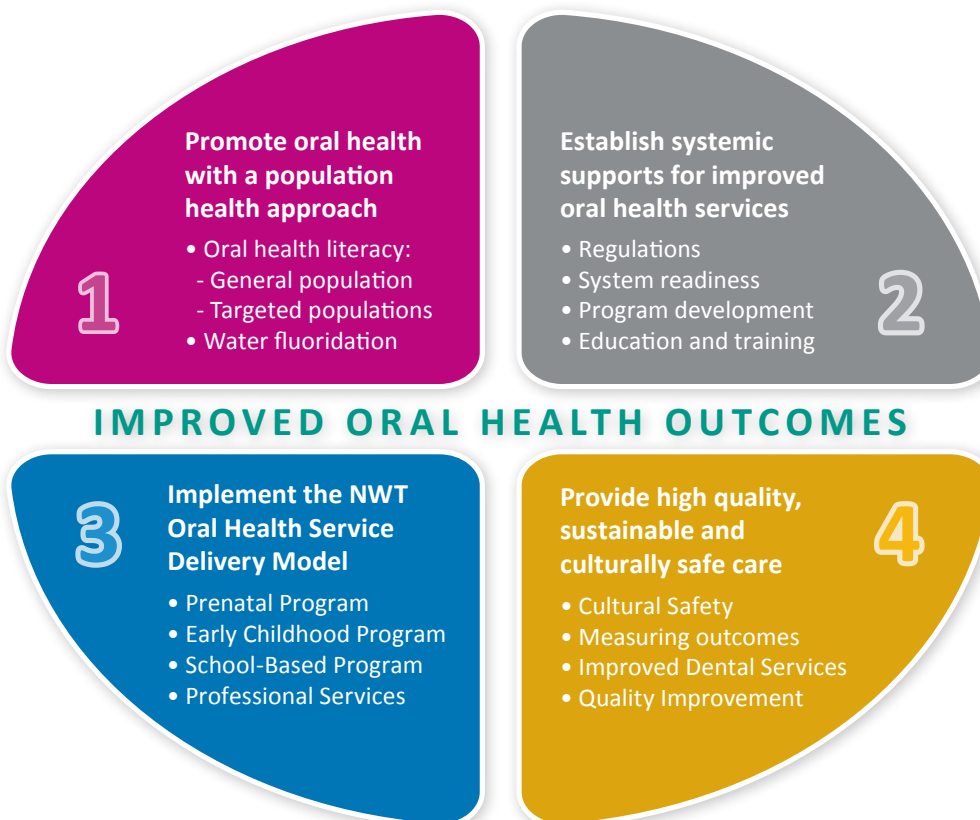
The overarching goal of the *NWT Oral Health Action Plan* is improved oral health outcomes in the infant, child, youth and prenatal populations.

Vision

For all children in the NWT to enjoy a state of optimum oral health – free from chronic pain, decay and tooth loss.

Objectives and Key Action Areas

Four broad objectives will achieve the goal and vision of the *NWT Oral Health Action Plan*. Each objective is subdivided into key action areas. Under each key action area, targeted action items direct the improvement of oral health service delivery in the NWT.



Guiding Principles

The activities set forth in this action plan are based on the following guiding principles:



Preventive Interventions

Treating end-stage disease alone will not achieve substantial improvements in oral health status – only a significant investment in preventive measures will avoid the onset and spread of oral disease.

Population Health Approach

Interventions with widespread or universal effects and those creating a health promoting culture towards oral health will improve the oral health status of all residents and reduce health inequities among groups.

Service Integration

Oral health care will be integrated into existing primary health care services, creating a unified oral health program for children, youth, and expectant mothers.

Cultural Safety

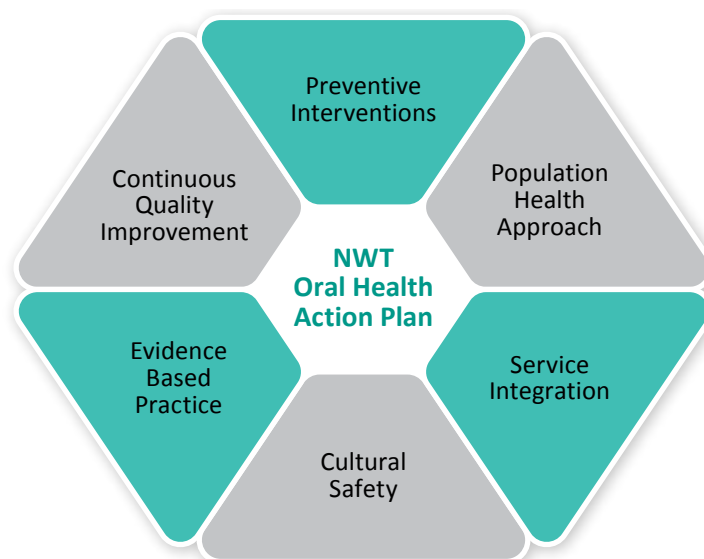
Cultural safety is an outcome based on respectful engagement which recognizes and strives to address power imbalances inherent in the health and social services system. The result is an environment where people feel safe receiving health care.

Evidence Based Practice

Oral health care programs and services will be delivered according to research and based on best practices.

Continuous Quality Improvement

Quality assurance will be achieved through program evaluation and population oral health surveillance, resulting in high quality oral health care delivery.

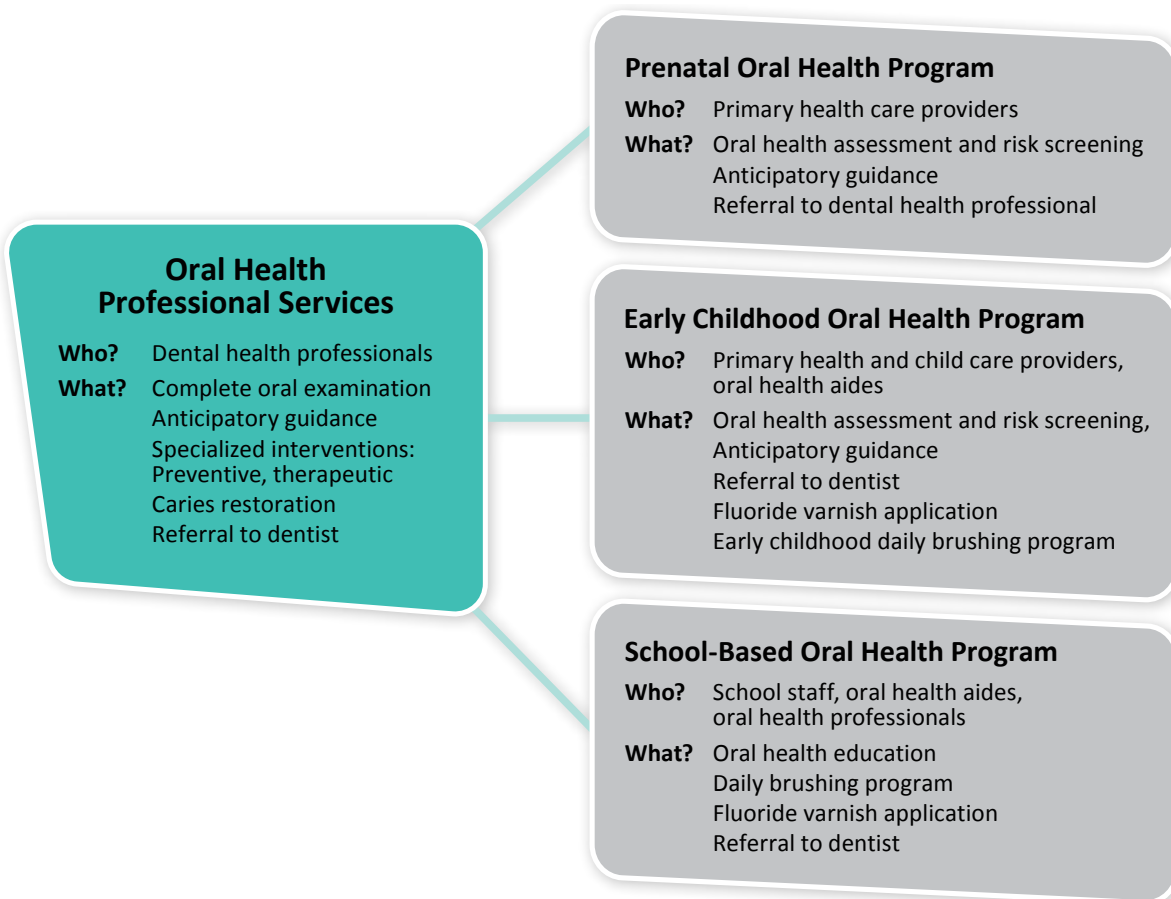


NWT Oral Health Service Delivery Model

The *NWT Oral Health Service Delivery Model* is a central component in unifying oral health service delivery. It is an evidence-based, cost-effective service model which emphasizes oral disease prevention and early identification of disease, and the integration of oral health services into primary health care and school settings. The model targets four points of focused intervention: the Prenatal Oral Health Care Program, the Early Childhood Oral Health Program, the School-Based Oral Health Program, and the Oral Health Professional Services Program.

Highlights of the service model include:

- Primary health care providers delivering oral health assessment and education
- Community members trained as oral health aides to provide select oral health care services
- Fluoride varnish program available to all children and youth
- Daily brushing programs in schools and early childhood settings
- More dental health professionals available throughout the territory, providing specialized preventive and therapeutic oral health services



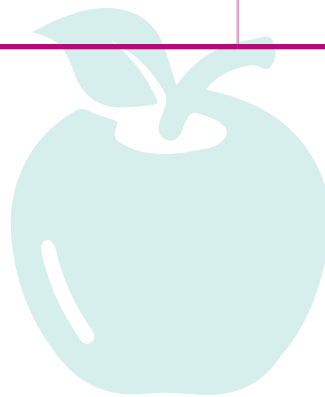


OBJECTIVE 1: Promote Oral Health with a Population Health Approach

Lead(s)	Activities and Timelines	Outputs	Outcomes
HSS HSSAs/ HSS	<p>Oral Health Literacy in the General Population</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop health promotion programs to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster awareness of oral health as an essential component of overall health Enhance knowledge of good oral health behaviours Reduce oral health risk factors (2018/19 - 2020/21) Ensure that oral health promotion is incorporated into Community Healthy Living Fairs using a phased-in approach. (Phase 1: 2018/19, Phase 2: 2019/20, Phase 3: 2020/21) 	Health promotion initiatives to build oral health literacy in the general population.	Enhanced knowledge of oral health behaviours and a reduction in risk factors for oral disease.
HSS/ ECE	<p>Oral Health Literacy in Targeted Populations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop prenatal and postnatal oral health education programs for delivery in prenatal classes, communities, and boarding homes, in partnership with the Healthy Family Program. (2019/20 – 2020/21) Include oral health content in the NWT school health education curriculum. (2019/20 – 2020/21) 	Oral health education programs for prenatal and school-aged populations.	Improved oral health literacy among prenatal and school-aged populations.



Lead(s)	Activities and Timelines	Outputs	Outcomes
<p>HSS</p> <p>HSS/ MACA/ ENR</p>	<p>Community Water Fluoridation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide community consultation and outreach education on drinking water fluoridation. (2019/20) • Develop a framework for expanded community water fluoridation. (2018/19) • Support education on drinking water fluoridation. (2019/20 – 2020/21) • Expand community water fluoridation where feasible. (2020/21) 	<p>Framework and educational outreach for expanded community water fluoridation.</p>	<p>Expanded community water fluoridation in the NWT where feasible.</p>





OBJECTIVE 2: Establish Systemic Supports for Improved Oral Health Services

Lead(s)	Activities and Timelines	Outputs	Outcomes
HSS	Regulatory Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish NWT Oral Health Program Standards. (2018/19) Establish oral health components of the NWT Community Health Nurse Standards. (2018/19) Establish an NWT Dental Room Standard. (2018/19) Revise legislation/regulations to support the oral health professional role. (2020/21) 	Oral Health Program Standards, Oral Health CHN Standards, Dental Room Standard, revised Oral Health Professionals regulation.	Improved regulation and standardization of oral health service delivery.
HSS/ HSSAs	Electronic Medical Record (EMR) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare the EMR for expanded oral health documentation. (2018/19) Revise the Prenatal and Well Child Records and Users Guides to support expanded oral health documentation. (2018/19) Establish referral pathways to support access to oral health and dental professionals. (2018/19) 	Updated EMR prepared for expanded oral health documentation.	Improved oral health care services through better continuity of care.



Lead(s)	Activities and Timelines	Outputs	Outcomes
HSS HSSAs	Infrastructure and Equipment Readiness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete an inventory of all dental rooms. (2018/19) Develop a standardized dental equipment maintenance schedule. (2018/19) Equip all dental rooms to the NWT Dental Room Standard. (Phase 1: 2018/19, Phase 2: 2019/20, Phase 3: 2020/21) Equip all oral health care delivery settings for oral health service delivery. (Phase 1: 2018/19, Phase 2: 2019/20, Phase 3: 2020/21) 	NWT Dental Room Inventory, NWT Dental Equipment Maintenance Schedule, fully equipped oral health care delivery sites across the territory.	NWT children and youth receive oral health services in settings prepared with up-to-date equipment.
HSSAs HSS HSS/ ECE	Procedures and Program Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish standardized oral health procedures for primary health care providers. (2018/19) Update the oral health Community Health Nurse (CHN) clinical practice guidelines. (2018/19) Develop an NWT School Daily Brushing Program. (2018/19) Develop an NWT Early Childhood Daily Brushing Program. (2018/19) 	Oral health procedures for primary health care providers, oral health CHN clinical practice guidelines, NWT Daily Brushing Programs.	NWT children and youth receive consistent oral health care from primary health care providers; children and youth achieve improved oral health from daily tooth brushing programs.
HSSAs/ HSS	Human Resource Readiness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and define new professional and administrative oral health positions. (2018/19) Consultation on enhanced oral health services with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary care providers Community health representatives Dental therapists Education staff (2018/19 – 2020/21) Employ new oral health positions using a phased-in approach. (Phase 1: 2018/19, Phase 2: 2019/20, Phase 3: 2020/21) Establish a Territorial Chief Oral Health Officer role. (2020/21) 	Job descriptions for new oral health positions and Chief Oral Health Officer; consultation with health and education staff.	The oral health workforce is prepared to deliver preventive services to children and youth.
HSS HSSAs/ HSS HSS/ Aurora College	Oral Health Education and Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and provide oral health education programs for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary health care providers Community health representatives/ oral health care aides (2018/19 – 2020/21) Identify and offer oral health education resources for education and licensed early childhood education staff. (2018/19 – 2020/21) Identify oral health professional learning needs and provide training as required. (2018/19 – 2020/21) Strengthen oral health content in the Nursing, Community Health Representative, Personal Support Worker, and Early Learning and Child Care programs at Aurora College. (2019/20) 	Oral health education programs and resources for oral health service providers; strengthened oral health content for nursing and CHR curriculums at Aurora College.	Children and youth in the NWT receive oral health preventive care from knowledgeable service providers.





OBJECTIVE 3: Implement the NWT Oral Health Service Delivery Model

Lead(s)	Activities and Timelines	Outputs	Outcomes
HSS/ HSSAs	Prenatal Oral Health Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a three-phase implementation plan for the Prenatal Oral Health Program. (2018/19) 	Prenatal Oral Health Program Implementation Plan.	Improved oral health practices and reduced risk behaviour in expectant mothers, leading to improved oral health.
HSSAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support health centres to deliver primary oral health care services to expectant mothers as part of the NWT Prenatal Record: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oral health assessment Oral health risk screening Anticipatory guidance Referral to oral health professional (Phase 1: 2018/19, Phase 2: 2019/20, Phase 3: 2020/21)		



Lead(s)	Activities and Timelines	Outputs	Outcomes
HSS/ HSSAs HSSAs	<p>Early Childhood Oral Health Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a three-phase implementation plan for the Early Childhood Oral Health Program. (2018/19) Support health centres to deliver primary oral health care services to all infants and children as part of NWT Well Child Record visits or at quarterly Oral Health Days: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oral health assessment Oral health risk screening Anticipatory guidance Fluoride varnish application Referral to oral health professional (Phase 1: 2018/19, Phase 2: 2019/20, Phase 3: 2020/21) Support daycares, day homes and other early childcare education/childcare settings to deliver the NWT Early Childhood Daily Brushing Program. (Phase 1: 2018/19, Phase 2: 2019/20, Phase 3: 2020/21) 	Early Childhood Oral Health Program Implementation Plan.	Increased number of parents/ caregivers who provide daily oral health care to their children; reduced caries in the early childhood population; reduced number of children aged 5 and under requiring dental treatment under general anesthetic.
HSS/ ECE HSS/ ECE/ HSSAs	<p>School-Based Oral Health Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a two-phase implementation plan for the School-Based Oral Health Program. (2018/19) Support schools to deliver preventive oral health care programs in the school setting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oral health education as part of the NWT health education curriculum The NWT School Daily Brushing Program Fluoride varnish application Hosting oral health professional appointments (Phase 1: 2019/20, Phase 2: 2020/21) 	School-Based Oral Health Program Implementation Plan.	Increased number of children reporting daily tooth brushing; reduced caries in the school-age population.
HSSAs	<p>Oral Health Professional Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a three-phase implementation plan for the Oral Health Professional Services Program. (2018/19) Support the HSSAs, health centres and oral health professionals in providing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete oral examination Specialized oral health professional preventive and therapeutic interventions Anticipatory guidance and counseling Referral to dentist (Phase 1: 2018/19, Phase 2: 2019/20, Phase 3: 2020/21) 	Oral Health Professional Services Implementation Plan.	Increased number of NWT children and youth receiving oral health professional intervention; reduced number of untreated caries; reduction in caries in NWT children and youth.





OBJECTIVE 4: Provide High Quality, Sustainable and Culturally Safe Care

Lead(s)	Activities and Timelines	Outputs	Outcomes
HSS/ HSSAs	Culturally Safe Care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct consultation to ensure culturally safe oral health care service delivery. (2018/19 – 2019/20) • Implement cultural awareness training for oral health professionals and oral health primary health care providers. (2019/20 - 2020/21) 	Culturally safe oral health guidelines, cultural awareness training completion reports.	Children and youth receive culturally safe oral health care.
HSSAs/ HSS	Sustainable Oral Health Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage local community members as oral health care aides where possible. (2019/20 - 2020/21) • Promote oral health professional careers to NWT secondary school students. (2019/20 – 2020/21) • Partner with dental hygiene school(s) to reserve seats for NWT students. (2020/21) 	Oral health care aide and oral health profession promotion reports, formal agreement with a Canadian dental hygiene school.	Oral health care aide and oral health profession promotion reports, formal agreement with a Canadian dental hygiene school.



Lead(s)	Activities and Timelines	Outputs	Outcomes
HSSAs HSS	<p>Improved Dental Service Quality and Coordination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase focus on pediatric care in dental service contracts and improve coordination with local oral health professionals. (2018/19) • Administer dental contracts under one health authority. (2018/19) • Partner with NIHB to improve approval time for dental treatment. (2019/20) • Develop pediatric dental sedation best practice guidelines. (2019/20 – 2020/21) • Formalize the delivery of dental services in schools. (2019/20) • Develop a program to ensure dental treatment is accessible to all children and youth. (2020/21) 	Restructured dental contracts to improve pediatric care and coordination; NWT pediatric dental sedation best practice guidelines; Dental Service Delivery in NWT Schools MOU; universal child/youth dental insurance plan.	Children and youth in the NWT receive improved dental care; the number of children undergoing general anesthetic for dental treatment is reduced; all children and youth in the NWT have fully funded dental care.
HSS	<p>Measure Population Oral Health Status Using Surveillance Tools and Techniques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the quality of oral health outcome data sources in consultation with oral health care providers. (2018/19) • Develop data extraction capability for oral health outcomes from information systems. (2019/20) • Develop analytical methods and routine reporting formats for oral health outcomes. (2020/21) 	<p>Baseline data, analytical methods, and reporting tools developed to track population health improvements.</p> <p>Oral health outcomes measured and reported to inform practice and program improvements.</p>	Oral health improvements in both targeted populations and overall NWT population as a result of evidence-informed decision-making in a timely and responsive manner.
HSS/ HSSAs	<p>Continuous Quality Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement an NWT Oral Health Program Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. (Development: 2018/19. Implementation: 2019/20 – 2020/21). • Monitor adherence to NWT Oral Health Program Standards. (2019/20 – 2020/21) • Monitor use of the oral health components of the EMR. (2019/20 – 2020/21) • Monitor dental services contracts deliverables to ensure coordinated, effective and patient-centred delivery. (2019/20 – 2020/21). 	NWT Oral Health Program Monitoring and Evaluation Plan; NWT Oral Health Program Standards Audit Tool; patient satisfaction surveys.	High quality oral health and dental care services are delivered to children and youth throughout the territory.



If you would like this information in another official language, call us.

English

Si vous voulez ces informations en français, contactez-nous.

French

Kīspin ki nitawihitīn ē nīhīyawihk ōma ācimōwin, tipwāsinān.

Cree

Tłjchq yatı k'èè. Dı wegodi newq dè, gots'ō gonede.

Tłjchq

ʔerihł'ís Dēne Sųlíné yatı t'a huts'elkēr xa beyáyatı theʔə ʔat'e, nuwe ts'ēn yółtı.

Chipewyan

Edı gondı dehgáh got'je zhatié k'éé edat'éh enahddhę nıde naxets'é edahlı.

South Slavey

K'áhshó got'ıne xədə k'é hederı ʔedłhtl'é yerınowę nıdé dúle.

North Slavey

Jii gwandak izhii ginjik vat'atr'ijähch'uu zhit yinothtan jı', diits'at ginohkhii.

Gwich'in

Uvanittuaq ilitchurisukupku Inuvialuktun, ququaqluta.

Inuvialuktun

Ĉ'bdĸ nŋ^{sb}Δ^c Λ^rLJΔ^rc Δ^{db}ŋ^cc^{sb}γ^rL^cŋ^b, Δ^{rc}ŋ^cΔ^c Δ^{sb}c^rΔ^cΔ^{sb}ŋ^c.

Inuktitut

Hapkua titiqqat pijumagupkit Inuinnaqtun, uvaptinnut hivajarlutit.

Inuinnaqtun

1-855-846-9601

