

Cumberland County School Oral Health Project

Cumberland County School Oral Health Project (Project) is a collaborative partnership of local Cumberland County oral health providers, Cumberland County, Maine CDC's School Oral Health Program (SOHP), and Children's Oral Health Network of Maine (COHN) supported for three years by Cumberland County Public Health Department and federal American Rescue Plan funding. The purpose is to build access to comprehensive oral health services for all schools in the county.

Goals of the Project.

- Develop coordinated and sustainable school-based oral health service infrastructure to address the unmet oral health needs of children in Cumberland County.
- Reach all schools in the county with comprehensive oral health services from prevention to minimally invasive treatment to restorative care.
- Make oral health care accessible to all students including those who are unable to access regular preventive dental care through a traditional dental home.

Need for Oral Health Care for Cumberland County Children.

- There are approximately 56,000 children between the ages of 1-18 in Cumberland County.
- When this project began, about 30,000 were going without any preventative dental care. Of these children, about 2/3rds have MaineCare or no dental benefits.
- The 2023 Cumberland County Community Health Improvement Plan supports/promotes access to oral health care as a key priority.

School-based Oral Health Services Reach Children Where They Are!

- Providing layered oral health services—from foundational screenings and varnish to advanced cleanings and minimally invasive interventions—to meet the many needs of your students
- Making it easier for children to stay in class instead of spending classroom time driving to a dental office
- Reaching children with essential preventive public health services much like hearing/vision screenings or flu clinics

What can this Project offer schools in Cumberland County? In partnership with Cumberland County Public Health and Maine CDC's SOHP, the Project brings more uniform, coordinated and comprehensive oral health services to schools:

- Provides comprehensive oral health services in the school setting
- Two levels of services delivered in school:
 - SOHP foundational services (screening, fluoride varnish)
 - Advanced prevention and minimally invasive treatment provided by a dental hygienist [cleanings, sealants, preventive and early caries arrest treatments/Silver Diamine Fluoride (SDF), and more]
- School agreement with a provider covers both SOHP and advanced services
- Care coordination for follow up treatment in partnership with school nurse
- Services are open to all students regardless of insurance. No payments are expected from families or schools for SOHP services. Cost of supplies for SOHP services are covered by the state. MaineCare and private insurance plans are billed directly by the provider.
- Providers work with families to ensure access to advanced care on a sliding fee scale
- Translated forms for families who don't read in English

How can your school and school nurses work with the Project?

- Contact Project Manager to be connected to a mobile dental provider who is part of this Project
 - Evelyn deFrees | evie@mainecohn.org
- Sign an agreement with the provider
- Schedule dates for the provider to visit your school
- Promote the opportunity for services, distribute consent forms to parents, collect consent forms, and send them to the provider on the agreed-upon timeline
- Serve as liaison for parent communication, manage set-up planning and site logistics for the visit days
- Collaborate with the provider on care coordination for students who need follow-up care

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Project Partners



Children's Oral Health Network of Maine



Cumberland County Public Health



Cumberland County School Oral Health Project

Year One (2023-24) Progress Update

The Cumberland County School Oral Health Project (Project) is a collaborative partnership of local oral health providers (Greater Portland Health, Mainly Teeth), Cumberland County Public Health Department, Maine Center for Disease Control (MCDC)'s School Oral Health Program (SOHP), and Children's Oral Health Network of Maine (COHN). The Project's purpose is to build infrastructure for and access to comprehensive oral health services for all schools in the county. It will be a pilot of a collaborative approach to building comprehensive and sustainable school oral health services for other regions across the state. The Project is testing a way to implement COHN's full "blueprint" of oral health services in school settings (foundational prevention services, advanced preventive and early intervention services, and comprehensive services for children needing a dentist/dental home).

The Project is supported for three years (2023-2026) by the Cumberland County Public Health Department (County) with federal American Rescue Plan Act funding. The County's decision to support the Project flows from the [2023 Cumberland County Community Health Improvement Plan](#) which promotes access to oral health care as a key priority. The need is great: There are approximately 56,000 children between the ages of 1-18 in Cumberland County and about 30,000 of them currently get NO preventive dental care. Of these children, about two-thirds have MaineCare or no dental benefits. Very few dental offices in Cumberland County are accepting new MaineCare patients and wait times for appointments can be very long, so most of these children do not have the option to establish a traditional dental home.

Launched in July 2023, the Project is building the infrastructure to provide school-based oral health services to reach children where they are: at school. The benefits are many. These layered oral health services can meet many of the needs of County students from foundational screenings and varnish to advanced cleanings and early interventions. Children can stay in class instead of losing classroom time being taken to a dental office. Children can access oral health care—an essential preventive public health service—in school as they commonly do for hearing and vision screenings or flu clinics.

Project Partners



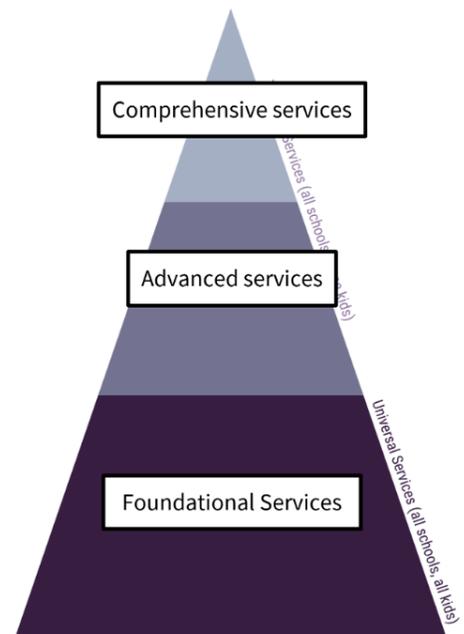
The key purpose of the Project is to address lack of access and inequities in oral health outcomes for low-income families and students, particularly those with MaineCare or no dental coverage. The goal is to build sustainable infrastructure and organizational capacity to mitigate inequities and ensure access to oral health services for all historically underserved children attending public schools in the county. Later in the Project, partners will be working to identify ways to make services as “low-barrier” as possible, reducing complexity of required consent forms, translating forms into multiple languages, and ensuring families are aware that foundational services are free of charge due to state funding to subsidize services for children without insurance coverage.

Access to Comprehensive Oral Health Services

One of the Project’s first group decisions was reaching partner consensus on [definitions](#) of oral health services to be included in each level of service (foundational, advanced, restorative) to help with clarity and consistency of the services to be offered.

This project aims to offer uniform, coordinated and comprehensive oral health services to all Cumberland County schools:

- Comprehensive oral health services provided in the school setting (foundational, advanced, restorative referrals and access to a dental home as needed)
- Services open to all students regardless of insurance. SOHP support enables foundational screenings and fluoride varnish to be provided to students without dental coverage at no cost to the family
- Two types of services layered together and delivered in school:
 - SOHP foundational services (screening, fluoride varnish)
 - Advanced prevention and early intervention services provided by an Independent Practice Dental Hygienist including cleanings, sealants, preventive care and early caries arrest treatments (Silver Diamine Fluoride-SDF)
- Agreements between school and provider that cover both SOHP and advanced services
- Care coordination for restorative needs in partnership with school nurse
- Translated forms for families for whom English is not their first language.



Financial Analysis and Tools

Projections of the unmet need for school oral health services were developed from data analysis of public school enrollment, numbers of students currently served by SOHP, numbers of students with private or MaineCare insurance, or no insurance. The analysis projected the number of students likely to need referrals for restorative care. Armed with provider data on costs, revenue and workflow process, Partnerships for Health (PFH) provided a financial analysis (of cost-sharing and payment structure models) that demonstrated options for the state SOHP as it considered how to provide sustainable financial support to providers working to expand foundational services to additional schools.

This financial analysis drove a key collaborative decision led by the Maine CDC's SOHP to support the providers with a partnership agreement to cover costs of serving all uninsured students. The SOHP signed agreements with both partner providers (Greater Portland Health Center and Mainely Teeth) to formalize state financial support for foundational services. This milestone helps ensure the sustainability of the expanded services beyond the current grant funding.

Collaborative work with Partnerships for Health, continues for developing the next stage of a financial simulator that includes costs and payment projections for both foundational and advanced preventive oral health services to all schools in Cumberland. This comprehensive services simulator builds on the earlier foundational services financial tool so that both providers and state partners can understand costs and sustainability projections for offering the full range of foundational and advanced oral health services to all school-children regardless of insurance status and ability to pay.

The screenshot shows a spreadsheet interface with several key sections:

- PER STUDENT** (Columns A-E):

| REVENUE | | 2023-24 | 48.74 |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|---------|-------|
| MaineCare Screening (D0190) | | 22.16 | |
| MaineCare Fluoride Varnish (D1206) | | 26.58 | |
| LABOR EXPENSES | | | |
| Hygienist Salary | \$ 45.00 per hour | 3.75 | |
| Travel | \$ 1.75 | 1.75 | 5.40% |
| Program Manager | \$ 39.00 per hour | 9.75 | |
| Hygienist Assistant | \$ 31.00 per hour | 7.75 | |
| Billing | \$ 32.00 per hour | 5.33 | |
| SUPPLY EXPENSES | | | |
| Screening | | 7.03 | |
| Varnish | | 0.88 | |
| EQUIPMENT EXPENSES | | | |
| Laptop | | 0.49 | |
| Camera | | 0.88 | |
| Software | | 1.93 | |
| Tablet | | 0.99 | |
- Year** (Column G): 2023-24
- Consumer Price Index** (Column H): 5.40%
- % of students at school receiving foundational care** (Column I): 40%
- % of students receiving foundational care who are uninsured** (Column J): 11%
- Foundational Billable Cost Per Student** (Column K): 11.65
- Foundational Nonbillable Cost Per Student** (Column L): 14.83
- Foundational General Operating Cost Per Student** (Column M): 13.63

Callouts and features:

- A blue cloud callout: "Use this tab to change any of the variables highlighted in YELLOW. This will change the cost-sharing and reimbursement options tabs."
- An orange cloud callout: "Click on the arrows on the County, SAU, and School Name to select/unselect schools. All other tabs will update to this school selection."
- A zebra illustration with the text "© 2023 Partnerships for Health".
- A summary box:

| You have selected: | |
|--------------------|---|
| 37,323 | total # of students |
| 14,929 | predicted # of students receiving foundational care |
| 1,642 | predicted # of uninsured students receiving foundational care |
- A table listing schools:

| County | School Administration Unit | School Name | Oct 2023 Student # |
|------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Cumberland | Brunswick Public Schools | Brunswick Jr High School | 518 |
| Cumberland | Brunswick Public Schools | Harriet Beecher Stowe Elementary | 522 |
| Cumberland | Brunswick Public Schools | Rose Furber Elementary School | 600 |
| Cumberland | Brunswick Public Schools | Brunswick High School | 723 |
| Cumberland | Cape Elizabeth Public Schools | Cape Elizabeth Middle School | 434 |
| Cumberland | Cape Elizabeth Public Schools | Cape Elizabeth High School | 518 |
| Cumberland | Cape Elizabeth Public Schools | Pond Cove Elementary | 557 |
| Cumberland | Chebeague Island Public Schools | Chebeague Island School | 10 |
| Cumberland | Falmouth Public Schools | Falmouth Middle School | 440 |
| Cumberland | Falmouth Public Schools | Falmouth High School | 706 |
| Cumberland | Falmouth Public Schools | Falmouth Elementary School | 843 |
| Cumberland | Gorham Public Schools | Narragansett Elementary School | 368 |
| Cumberland | Gorham Public Schools | Village Elementary School-Gorham | 433 |
| Cumberland | Gorham Public Schools | Great Falls Elementary School | 485 |
| Cumberland | Gorham Public Schools | Gorham Middle School | 641 |
| Cumberland | Gorham Public Schools | Gorham High School | 810 |
| Cumberland | Long Island Public Schools | Long Island Elementary School | 13 |
| Cumberland | Portland Public Schools | Cliff Island School | 3 |
| Cumberland | Portland Public Schools | Peaks Island School | 41 |
| Cumberland | Portland Public Schools | Presumpscot School | 230 |
| Cumberland | Portland Public Schools | Longfellow School-Portland | 257 |
| Cumberland | Portland Public Schools | Ocean Avenue | 347 |
| Cumberland | Portland Public Schools | Gerald E Talbot Community School | 364 |
| Cumberland | Portland Public Schools | Casco Bay High School | 382 |
| Cumberland | Portland Public Schools | East End Community School | 407 |
| Cumberland | Portland Public Schools | Howard C Reiche Community Sch | 427 |
| Cumberland | Portland Public Schools | Lincoln Middle School | 435 |
| Cumberland | Portland Public Schools | Amanda C Rowe School | 449 |
| Cumberland | Portland Public Schools | Kiva Middle School | 453 |

Navigation tabs at the bottom: Methodology, INPUT VARIABLES, Results COST-SHARING OPTIONS, Results PAYMENT OPTIONS, 2024 SOHP DECISION.

Provider Capacity-Building

Analysis of public school enrollment data and an inventory of the schools currently without oral health services helped inform projections of the additional infrastructure needed to serve all schools. To ensure the Project's oral health providers have the capacity they need to serve the additional schools, they developed capacity-building plans that then resulted in equipment purchasing requests and sub-award proposals approved by the County. Staff recruitment, on-boarding, and translation services are also supported by Project funds. These plans will guide the building of additional mobile capacity to serve all of the county schools with both foundational and advanced services, including some capacity for XRays and teledentistry exams when possible and appropriate, as well as increased targeted restorative capacity for children who need follow up care with a dentist. In total \$333,100 in grant funding has been awarded to the two partner providers. As a result:

- Greater Portland Health will equip seven hygienists for full delivery of foundational and advanced preventive oral health services at school locations and provide handpieces for one dentist to be able to deliver some basic restorative care, like fillings, at school locations.
- Mainely Teeth will equip four hygienists for full delivery of advanced as well as foundational services at school locations (including mobile x-rays), provide handpieces for one dentist to be able to deliver basic restorative care at school locations or on the mobile van, and the equipment and restorative tools for one special needs-accessible operator at their new clinic space, where they will serve students referred for restorative care from any Cumberland County school.
- In addition, Mainely Teeth has been able to hire an additional dentist with the expertise to manage surgery cases in the Operating Rooms at both Maine Medical Center and Mercy, as well as providing restorative care in Mainely Teeth's clinic spaces and on the mobile van. This dentist will partner as well with Greater Portland Health for surgical referrals, to ensure that all schools served by this project have access to the full continuum of care that may be needed in complex cases.



Outreach to Cumberland County Schools Districts

Six school districts are already a part of the Project as they had existing partnerships with Mainely Teeth or Greater Portland Health. These districts are Portland, South Portland, Westbrook, Falmouth, RSU 6/Bonny Eagle, RSU 61/Lakes Region and Sebago. Services at these schools were expanded in 2023-24 to include the state SOHP foundational preventive services as well as advanced preventive oral health services. The Project first focused on making sure that the providers had what they needed to fully serve these schools who had already requested their services.

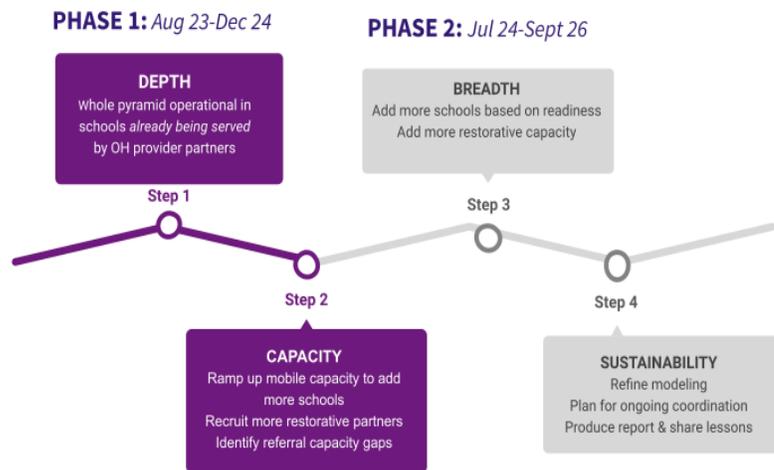
Then the Project worked collaboratively to inventory the rest of the schools in the county and ensure that partner providers would have the capacity to offer services to any schools wishing to add oral health services beginning in Fall 2024 and beyond. There are 13 districts who were not identified as already offering comprehensive oral health services who were offered the opportunity to partner with the Project: Brunswick School District, Freeport, Gorham, Scarborough, Chebeague Island Schools, Long Island Schools, RSU 14 (Raymond/Windham), RSU 15 (Gray/New Gloucester), RSU 17 (Harrison-only district school in Cumberland, rest in Oxford), RSU 51 (Cumberland school district), RSU 75 (Harpwell-only district school in Cumberland, rest in Sagadahoc County), Yarmouth.

Efforts then began to reach out to the leadership of these schools to offer them the opportunity to partner with the Project. In April/May 2024, schools received an introductory letter from the Project that included a video link and a [Project infosheet](#). Through spring and summer, the providers have been working to facilitate connections with school leadership to ensure any and all underserved school districts ready to initiate oral health services are aware of this opportunity. Several districts responded very quickly and are now preparing to launch services in the 2024-25 school year.



To track provider communication with school districts, PFH has developed and is using a data collection and analysis tool (OralEd Connect) that allows the providers to update results of their outreach to schools in real time and report that data to the Project at least monthly. First reported data will be reviewed in early fall 2024. Some school districts will opt to join the Project in 2024-25 and others in 2025-26, building toward the Project goal that by the 2026-27 school year all school districts in Cumberland County will offer comprehensive preventive oral health services that are accessible to all students regardless of insurance status and ability to pay.

CC OH Services Project Overview



Project administration

COHN meets regularly with our program evaluation and data partner—PFH—regarding data needs, capacity and restorative needs projections, financial modeling, and Project evaluation planning. COHN tracks partner invoicing for participation in the collaborative process and for provider equipment sub-awards. Providers and SOHP partners continue to work on streamlining processes for state invoicing and data reporting to ensure timely provider reimbursement for foundational prevention care in schools served by the Project. The Project facilitates partner meetings most months to ensure timely information sharing, strategy brainstorming, review of communication and data tools, activity status checks.

This project is supported, in whole or in part, by federal award number 21.027 awarded to Cumberland County by the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

Cumberland County School Oral Health Project: YEAR 2 REPORT

(For more background on this project, see the [Project Infosheet](#) and [Year 1 Report](#))

Year 2 Introduction:

Now completing its second year of operation, the Cumberland County School Oral Health Project (Project) is a collaborative partnership of local oral health providers (Greater Portland Health, Mainely Teeth), Cumberland County Public Health Department, Maine Center for Disease Control (MCDC)'s School Oral Health Program (SOHP), Partnerships for Health (PFH) and Children's Oral Health Network of Maine (COHN).

The Project's purpose is to build infrastructure for and access to comprehensive oral health services for all schools in the county. It is also testing ways to implement a collaborative approach to building comprehensive and sustainable oral health services in school settings and developing tools that can be shared with other regions across the state. The Project has had the support of the Cumberland County Public Health Department (County) with federal American Rescue Plan Act funding for two years with one more year remaining, which will end September 2026.

Action Summary:

- **Partner Collaboration:**
 - After completion of the first Project year, the group has moved into an implementation phase and adjusted meeting structures accordingly. Full partner group meetings are held every other month and alternating months are allocated for small group meetings focused on provider implementation and troubleshooting.
 - Partners met at an in-person retreat in August 2024 to develop Year 2 Priorities, including continued expansion of comprehensive oral health care to more Cumberland County (CC) schools.
 - Maine Department of Education colleagues were invited to participate in project meetings to strengthen communications with schools (especially school nurses).
 - SOHP and PFH, our evaluation team, continue to collaborate on a shared database.

- **Provider Capacity Building:** A major upfront cost of building oral health infrastructure is in the mobile equipment needed for delivery of school-based services. In Year 2 the two project providers purchased equipment and tools to be deployed by 11 hygienists and 3 dentists delivering school oral health services in Cumberland County schools, plus specialized dental equipment for an operatory at Mainely Teeth's Portland clinic specially designed to be accessible for children with special needs needing complex dental treatment that can't be delivered in a school setting. By the end of Year 2, the total amount spent in equipment subawards to the providers was \$313,697. The type of equipment purchased has included mobile hygiene chairs, XRays, tools for hygienists delivering care in schools, tools for dentists providing restorative care on mobile vans or in school clinics, equipment to outfit an accessible dental operatory for kids with disabilities.

- **State Support:** SOHP has continued to partner with providers and provide financial support for delivery of foundational oral health services. In 2024-2025, SOHP agreements supported services for all students by providing funding for oral health supplies and data collection.

- **Data analysis & tools** (provided by evaluation partner, Partnerships for Health):
 - Two financial simulators were finalized; these are tools to enable policymakers, payers, funders and community-based organizations to evaluate costs, revenues, reach, workforce needs, and projected return-on-investment.
 - Through collaboration with the SOHP, the evaluation team developed the structure of an Oral Health Trajectory Model. When completed, this model will quantify the extent to which preventive care at schools reduces the need for in-office or specialist dental services.

- **Outreach to Cumberland County schools:**
 - The Project launched a second major round of blanket outreach (by email) to Cumberland County school district leadership to jump start a new season of provider outreach to schools not yet served. After an initial outreach effort, follow-up continued by the Project and the County with providers taking the lead in searching for new school connections and following up with contacts (either school nurses or administrators).

 - 26 schools joined the project during Year 2.

Total schools served as of the end of project Year 2:

Of 89 schools in Cumberland County, 68 (76%) are now being served by the project

of Students attending Schools Served by the Project: 28,697

of Students attending Schools Not Served by the Project: 9,601

- **Materials developed** for dissemination and posting:
 - School Nurse Checklist to explain oral health comprehensive services in schools
 - Revised project infosheet
 - Year 1 Successes (summary of data showing progress)

- **Streamlining student enrollment:**
 - With a focus on reaching all students who need access to care, providers are pursuing strategies to reduce enrollment barriers, such as using an online sign-up system.
 - Provider data on school-based oral health services delivered in school year '24-'25 are being analyzed in fall 2025 by Partnerships for Health and will show actual current uptake status in CC schools.
 - Depending on school year 2024-25 data results, partners will identify additional strategies to streamline student enrollment processes in Year 3 of the Project.

Looking ahead to Year 3 of Project:

Project focus will be on continuing provider follow-up with CC districts and schools which are not yet covered for oral health services; reviewing data results, developing and identifying strategies to increase enrollment in services by families and school nurses; completing additional data analyses (including projections of future decay, and uptake and referral data), and developing tools and plans to sustain the newly built CC oral health services infrastructure beyond the grant period.