



At-a-Glance

Access to Dental Care

Many Ohioans who cannot access dental care in the private sector rely on community dental programs known as the Dental Care Safety Net. The Ohio Department of Health Oral Health Program (OHP) serves as a resource to these programs by offering programs through local health departments, and public and non-profit partners.

Safety Net Dental Care Programs

Safety net dental care programs provide dental care to people covered by Medicaid and offer sliding fees, reduced fees or free care to patients who don't have dental insurance or can't afford to pay a private dentist. The dental "safety net" includes public dental clinics, dental care provided to schoolchildren and mobile/ portable dental care programs (e.g., mobile dental vans). These programs provide basic dental care such as exams, X-rays, fillings, extractions, root canals and dentures.

The OHP maintains information on safety net dental programs in Ohio, including a map, list, and brochure. All information is published on the [OHP webpage](#).



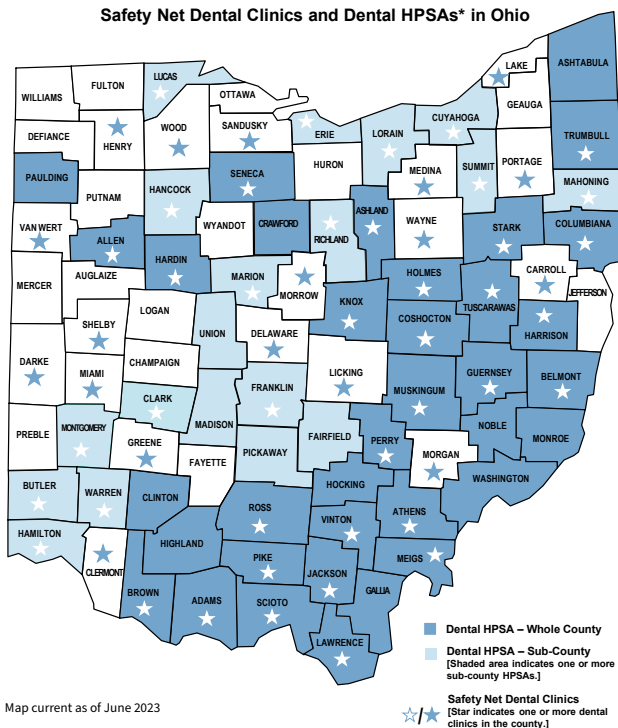
Assisting Safety Net Dental Care Programs in Recruiting Dental Care Professionals

Dentists and dental hygienists may qualify for loan repayment for their professional training by working in dental safety net clinics. The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) makes potentially eligible dentists, dental hygienists and dental/ dental hygiene students aware of state and federal loan repayment programs that are available to them. In addition, ODH administers the Ohio Dentist and Ohio Dental Hygienist Loan Repayment Programs.

ODH also assists local communities in applying for federal designations as dental Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs), which may be necessary for a clinic or dental office to be an eligible worksite for a provider to receive loan repayment.

Dental professionals interested in loan repayment, or communities wishing to apply for a dental HPSA, should contact the Ohio Department of Health Primary Care Office at PCRH@odh.ohio.gov.

Safety Net Dental Clinics and Dental HPSAs* in Ohio



*A dental HPSA (health professional shortage area) is a federally designated geographic area, population or facility with a shortage of primary dental health care providers.

Funding and Technical Assistance for Safety Net Dental Care Programs

ODH provides funding to several of Ohio's dental safety net clinics to help offset the cost of uncompensated care. Funding supports diagnostic, preventive and therapeutic services for Ohioans who have low incomes and who are uninsured for dental care. The OHP conducts periodic comprehensive site reviews of safety net grant subrecipients and provides technical assistance to agencies interested in starting new or improving operations of existing safety net dental clinics.

Dental OPTIONS

OPTIONS, the **O**hio **P**artnership **T**o **I**mprove **O**ral health through access to **N**eeded **S**ervices, is a case management program that links eligible people with dentists who have volunteered either to donate care or to provide care for reduced fees. OPTIONS is a partnership between ODH and the Ohio Dental Association. The OHP administers OPTIONS and provides funding for needed dental lab work.



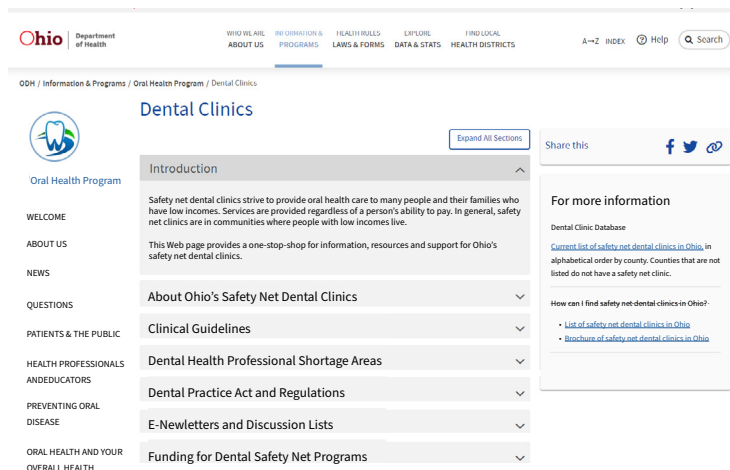
Before treatment

After treatment



Online Information for Safety Net Dental Care Programs

The OHP maintains information about Ohio's safety net dental clinics on its website that features a wide array of tools useful to Ohio's dental clinics.



In addition, the online [Safety Net Dental Clinic Manual](#) provides extensive information on clinic development, operations and sustainability.

Diversion of Emergency Department (ED) Visits for Nontraumatic Dental Conditions (NTDC)

The OHP is working to develop a protocol and training for ED staff to triage patients who present in the ED for NTDCs and make timely referrals to local providers for definitive oral healthcare.

Promoting Oral Health as Overall Health

The OHP works to improve oral health for all Ohioans and promote oral health as an essential component of overall health.

Ohio Department of Health • Oral Health Program

246 North High Street • Columbus, OH 43215

<https://odh.ohio.gov/know-our-programs/oral-health-program/welcome>