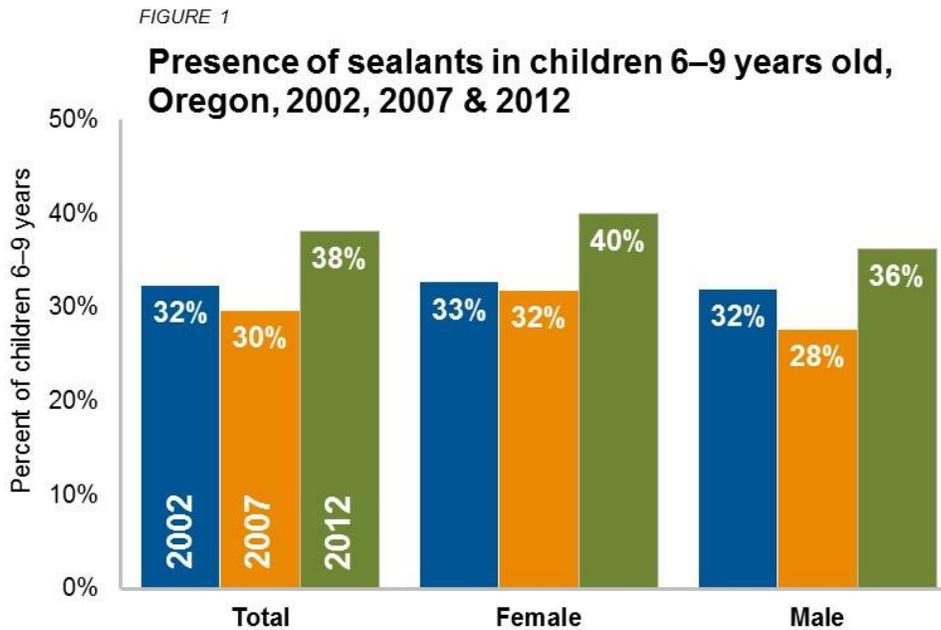


Maternal and Child Health

Dental sealants

Dental sealants are thin liquid coatings applied to the chewing surfaces of the back molar teeth to prevent tooth decay (cavities). The coating flows into the deep pits and grooves of the tooth “sealing out” bacteria and food debris that cause cavities. This highly effective, safe and low-cost intervention prevents about 50%–80% of decay in the treated teeth for at least 2 years, and protection lasts for about nine years¹. When permanent molars begin to develop in first and second grades, children should get dental sealants at a dental visit or from a school dental sealant program. Children should get sealants again when the next permanent molars begin to develop in sixth and seventh grades.

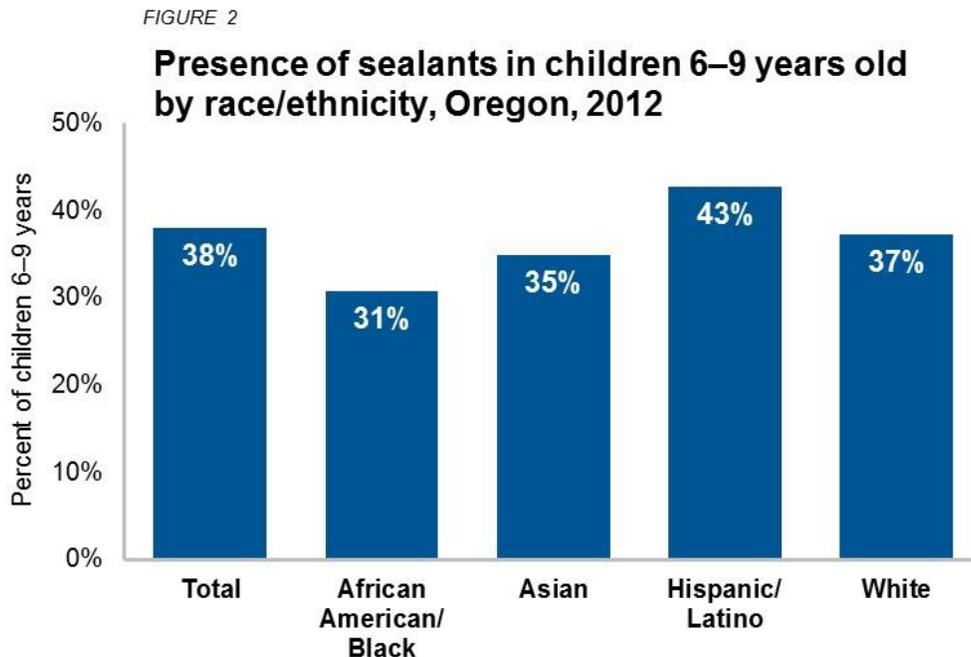
The number of Oregon’s school-age children receiving dental sealants increased from 2002 to 2012, with a slight decrease in 2007 (Figure 1). In 2012, 38% of 6- to 9-year-old children had dental sealants, representing about 48,000 children in 1st to 3rd grades. Oregon has already surpassed the Healthy People 2020 target for dental sealants for 6- to 9-year-olds.



Source: Oregon Smile Survey, 2002, 2007 and 2012

¹ <http://www.thecommunityguide.org/oral/supportingmaterials/RRschoolsealant.html>

Substantial oral health disparities exist for Oregon’s children based on geographic residence, household income, and race and ethnicity. Children from low-income families and certain racial and ethnic populations are at higher risk for tooth decay, but do not receive dental sealants that protect against cavities at the same level as higher-income children or white children (Figure 2).



Source: Oregon Smile Survey, 2012

To help eliminate disparities, interventions such as school-based dental sealant programs are recommended since they can reach children from low-income families who are less likely to receive private dental care. During the 2015-16 school year, 88% of eligible elementary schools and 65% of eligible middle schools were being served by a school dental sealant program².

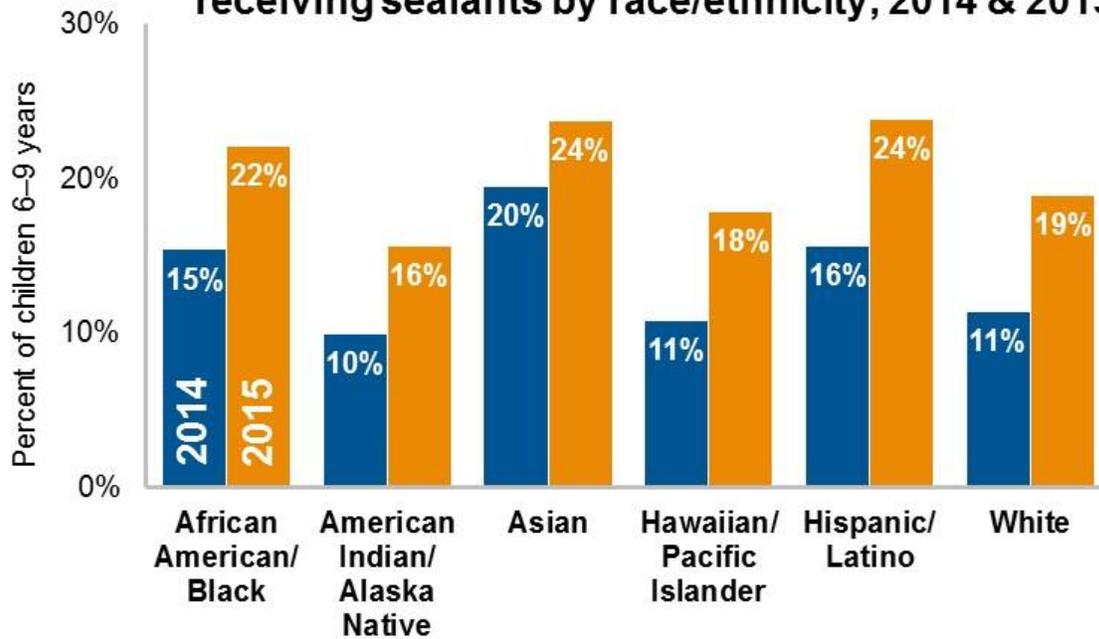
In Oregon, concerted efforts are being made to increase dental sealants for our Medicaid population. The percent of children ages 6-14 who received a dental sealant on a permanent molar in the past year increased 65% since 2014³. While increases have been observed across all racial and ethnic populations from 2014 to 2015, disparities continue to exist (Figure 3).

² Oregon Health Authority, Oral Health Unit.

³ Oregon Health Authority. [Oregon's health system transformation: CCO metrics 2015 final Report](#). June 2016.

FIGURE 3

Children age 6–9 years on Oregon Health Plan receiving sealants by race/ethnicity, 2014 & 2015



Source: Oregon Health Authority, CCO Metrics 2015 Final Report

Additional Resources: [2012 Smile Survey CCO Dental Sealants Metric Report](#)

About the Data: Data source is the Oregon SMILE Survey which is done every five years (2002, 2007 and 2012). Trained dental hygienists screen children in 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades from a statewide representative sample of elementary schools in Oregon. Oral screening includes: 1) any cavities in primary or permanent teeth that are treated or untreated (health status); 2) untreated tooth decay in primary or permanent teeth (access); 3) decay in >7 teeth that is treated or untreated (severity). Dental sealants is a new incentive measure for OHP CCOs beginning in 2015. Data source for CCO metrics are administrative (billing) claims. These numbers reflect children receiving new sealants and does not include those that are not candidates for sealants (e.g., those already sealed, not yet erupted, or with active decay).

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[Oregon State Health Profile](#)

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