



To: Partners and Stakeholders

From: Laura Robbins, From the First Tooth/MaineHealth and
Becca Matusovich, Partnership for Children's Oral Health

Date: October 2018

Subject: Partnership for Children's Oral Health & From the First Tooth Announcement

Dear Partners,

The work of children's oral health is taking on a new shape in Maine. [From the First Tooth](#) (FTFT), an initiative led by MaineHealth and funded by the Sadie and Harry Davis Foundation, has been working closely with Maine pediatric and family medicine practices for the past 10 years to provide training and support to integrate oral health assessments and fluoride varnish for young children into primary care. As part of a natural evolution, From the First Tooth has joined other partners to build a broader effort to address the challenges of children's oral health under the umbrella of the newly-formed [Partnership for Children's Oral Health](#) (the Partnership). The Sadie and Harry Davis Foundation has committed multi-year operational funding to launch and develop the backbone support organization for the Partnership and to seed-fund implementation strategies. Additional investments for Partnership activity will come from a range of funding sources.

FTFT has trained approximately 75% of primary care practices in Maine that serve children. The percent of MaineCare children who received at least four fluoride applications by four years of age in 2011 was 8%, and by 2017 (the most recent year for which MaineCare data is available), 28% had been reached. In addition, the percent of children ages 12-23 months with at least one well child visit in a calendar year who have received at least one oral evaluation and/or fluoride varnish in their primary medical care settings in 2011 was 15%, and increased to 32% by 2017. While this is a great accomplishment, there is still work to be done. Under the Partnership, FTFT will continue to advance dissemination and adoption through in-person and virtual training, quality improvement support, technical assistance, and distribution of patient education material. FTFT will produce a Standard of Care protocol to assure consistent implementation and tracking in primary care settings across the state.

[Before the First Tooth](#) (BTFT) was launched in 2015 with a grant from the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) to augment the populations targeted by FTFT. BTFT provides education for expectant mothers and new parents on how to best take care of their families' teeth and how to find dental services in their community. This initiative has focused on piloting an oral health assessments,

oral health education for pregnant women and process for dental referrals into prenatal care. After the HRSA grant is completed, the work from BTFT will be incorporated into ongoing FTFT implementation.

To prepare for the work ahead, FTFT recently welcomed two new staff members. Audrey Patin, RDH, CHES joined the team in the role of Program Manager. She has been a Registered Dental Hygienist since 2009 and worked in clinical and community settings serving the most vulnerable populations in Maine and New Hampshire. Additionally, Cori Holt, MBA joined the team in the role of Program Manager for BTFT. Cori brings considerable experience in quality improvement, project management and grant management.

The Partnership for Children's Oral Health is a network with a shared mission to eradicate Maine children's dental disease. Action teams are being formed to engage individuals with expertise and experience across key sectors and lead the implementation of priority strategies. Work that will be done under the Partnership Action Teams include:

- Catalyzing innovation in treating and preventing dental disease
- Ensuring dental homes for all kids, young adults, and pregnant women
- Integrating oral health into primary care and prenatal care
- Expanding school-based and community-based prevention
- Strengthening community navigation supports

As FTFT and BTFT come under the umbrella of the Partnership for Children's Oral Health, the prenatal and pediatric prevention initiatives will be key leaders in building the Partnership's action team on integrating oral health into primary care and prenatal care, while also making connections to the broader work across all relevant action areas of the Partnership. The important implementation work of FTFT and BTFT will continue to be led and administered by MaineHealth, in close collaboration with the Partnership for years to come. If you have any questions please feel free to reach out to Becca Matusovich, Executive Director of the Partnership for Children's Oral Health - beccapcoh@gmail.com or Laura Robbins, Director of BTFT & FTFT - lrobbins@mainehealth.org.

Sincerely,

Laura Robbins & Becca Matusovich