



# ANNUAL UPDATE 2023

Mission: To promote and support the integration of oral health into primary care for all children in Maine.

Visit: [www.fromthefirsttooth.org](http://www.fromthefirsttooth.org)

Report updated: January 2024

# SUPPORTED BY



Children's  
Oral Health  
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## 2023 PROGRAMMATIC OVERVIEW

From the First Tooth is a statewide children's oral health initiative that works with primary care practices to integrate preventive oral health care into the well-child visit for children ages 6-months up to 21 years. FTFT provides technical assistance to practices as they work to integrate oral health evaluations, fluoride varnish application, parent and caregiver education, and referral to a dental provider.

In 2023, in addition to providing practices with technical assistance, FTFT reimaged Bruce the Dental Health Moose. Originally an oral health educational campaign championed by the Maine CDC in the 1980s, FTFT relaunched Bruce the Dental Health Moose in the primary care setting as a pilot project providing families with oral health kits. The pilot project was initiated in response to physician feedback that they are seeing patients and families without the necessary tools at home to maintain a healthy oral health routine. Many physicians see patients who are unable to access a traditional dental home. When established in a dental home it's an expected part of the preventive dental visit to receive a toothbrush, toothpaste, and dental floss.

The pilot aims to increase equitable access to dental supplies by distributing kits to families during the well-child visit. The Bruce the Dental Health Moose kit contains a toothbrush for each family member, toothpaste, dental floss, oral health educational material, and a fun mirror cling to remind families to brush. The project was piloted at nine primary care sites and was well received by both families and physicians.

Additionally, in 2023 the FTFT program partnered with the statewide Let's Go program and the MaineHealth Child Health Service Line to enhance and streamline its database through the onboarding of the database management software, Salesforce. This shared database allows for collaborative updating of practice contact information and more accurate tracking of programmatic data over time.

Lastly, FTFT started to explore and provide technical assistance on silver diamine fluoride (SDF) treatment to primary care practices that serve pediatric patients. SDF is a topical treatment that helps slow and stop the progression of tooth decay and can be applied either by a dental or medical provider. FTFT partnered with two primary care practices to test onboarding SDF treatment as part of the well-child visit for patients with active tooth decay.

# BRUCE THE DENTAL HEALTH MOOSE KITS



"The kit opened the door to discuss oral health habits."

- Site Clinical Champion



The contents of the Bruce the Dental Health Moose family kits were developed in collaboration with From the First Tooth (FTFT) partners. The educational material includes information on how to care for each family members teeth starting at infancy through adulthood. In addition, the educational material contains tips and tricks for parents on how to make toothbrushing fun for the whole family. The Bruce the Dental Health Moose bifold is available in five languages including Arabic, French, Portuguese, Somali, and Spanish, and can ordered for free through the FTFT website.

Each participating primary care practice was sent a QR code poster to the Dental Steps for ME oral health video library. The Dental Steps for ME library, sponsored by the Children's Oral Health Network of Maine and created by MCD Global Health, catalogs a series of oral health education videos that correspond to each well-child visit. Providers are encouraged to display the QR code in patient waiting areas and within the examination room for caregivers to view while waiting to see the provider.

As part of the pilot, participating sites identified a site clinical champion to provide implementation guidance to all providers and ensure adequate supplies. In total, the nine participating sites distributed over 2,000 kits to families over the six-month pilot period. Site champions commented that the kits provided not only an opportunity to discuss the patient's oral health but also the oral health habits of siblings and parents.

## Contents of Kit

- Toothbrush for each family member
- Toothpaste
- Dental floss
- Educational material
- Mirror cling for bathroom mirror

Over  
**2000**  
kits distributed!

## Pilot Sites

- Aardvark Pediatrics
- Augusta Family Medicine
- Bucksport Regional Health Center
- Maliseet Health & Wellness Center
- Maine Medical Partners- Clinic Pediatrics
- Northern Light Health Pediatric Primary Care- Bangor
- Northern Light Health Pediatric Care- Presque Isle
- Pen Bay Pediatrics
- Southern Maine Health Care Sanford Pediatrics



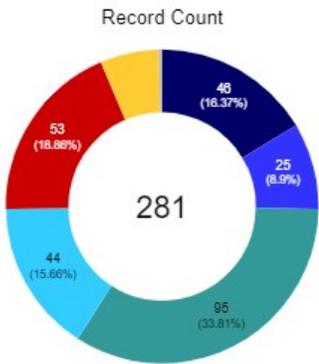
# ENHANCED DATA TRACKING

Since the From the First Tooth's (FTFT) inception, the program has maintained a database of all participating primary care offices and clinical champion contacts. Throughout the years the Excel-based database grew to include additional primary care sites and multiple spreadsheets to track all programmatic data. Although accurate, the database became cumbersome and an administrative burden.

Salesforce creates a one-stop shop profile for each primary care practice that allows for easy tracking and viewing of the following information:

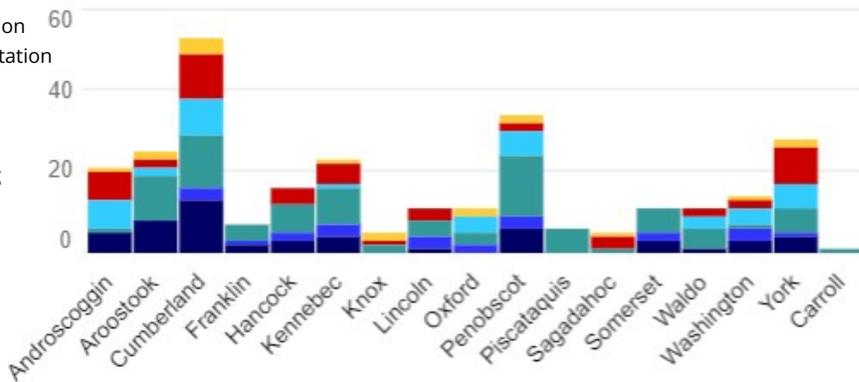
- Practice contact information including primary care Practice Manager and FTFT Clinical Champion
- FTFT implementation status
- All practice interactions with the FTFT program including email correspondence and ordering of educational material
- FTFT trainings and number of staff trained

Additionally, Salesforce allows all programmatic data to be integrated into an interactive real-time data dashboard.



FTFT maintains a database of 281 primary care practices and assigns each practice a program implementation status

- Full Implementation
- Partial Implementation
- Hardwired
- Ever Trained
- Loss to Follow-up
- Non-Participating
- Practice Closed

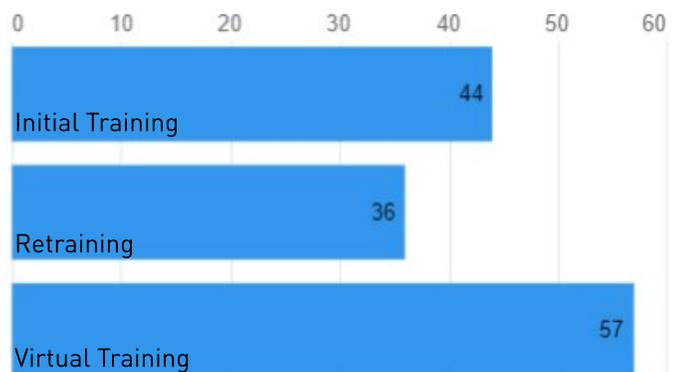


Number of practices by implementation status by county

# 137

staff trained in 2023

number of primary care staff trained by training type



# SILVER DIAMINE FLOURIDE

Silver diamine fluoride (SDF) is a topical medicament that is used to arrest tooth decay. Traditionally used within dentistry, SDF is now available for application within the primary care setting and reimbursable through MaineCare. Primary care practices serving pediatric patients across the State of Maine have started to express interest in SDF treatment to combat tooth decay. From the First Tooth is partnering with a limited number of primary care practices to provide technical assistance to integrate this treatment within the well child visit.

Although the decayed areas will be darker after treatment, research shows that SDF can stop around 80% of cavities from needing a traditional filling (1). It recommended by the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry as part of a caries arrest management plan can be used by qualified providers in a medical home (2). Given the workforce shortage within Maine's dental system and limited pediatric dentists accepting new MaineCare patients, offering SDF in the medical home has the potential to turn the tide on dental disease in Maine.



1. Zhi, Q. H., Lo, E. C., & Lin, H. C. (2012). Randomized clinical trial on effectiveness of silver diamine fluoride and glass ionomer in arresting dentine caries in preschool children. *Journal of Dentistry*, 40(11), 962-967.
2. Policy on the Use of Silver Diamine Fluoride for Pediatric Dental Patients. (2023). *The Reference Manual of Pediatric Dentistry*

## 2024 PREVIEW

In 2024, From the First Tooth will prioritize three special projects. The first priority is to aid primary care practices to integrate silver diamine fluoride (SDF) into the well-child visit. FTFT will adapt existing fluoride varnish implementation tools and guide templates to assist practices in integrating SDF.

Secondly, after receiving positive feedback from the nine primary care sites implementing the Bruce the Dental Health Moose pilot, FTFT will expand the pilot to an additional 11 sites. In total, 20 sites statewide will distribute family oral health kits containing a toothbrush for each family member, toothpaste, floss, and educational material.

Lastly, From the First Tooth will conduct a check-in with all 281 primary care practices identified as serving pediatric patients. These check-ins will ensure up-to-date FTFT implementation status in the Sales Force database, and will identify new or emerging needs for training or technical assistance.



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