



dental health
services victoria
oral health for better health

Our Strategic Direction

2022

A future where
every Victorian is
disease and
cavity-free





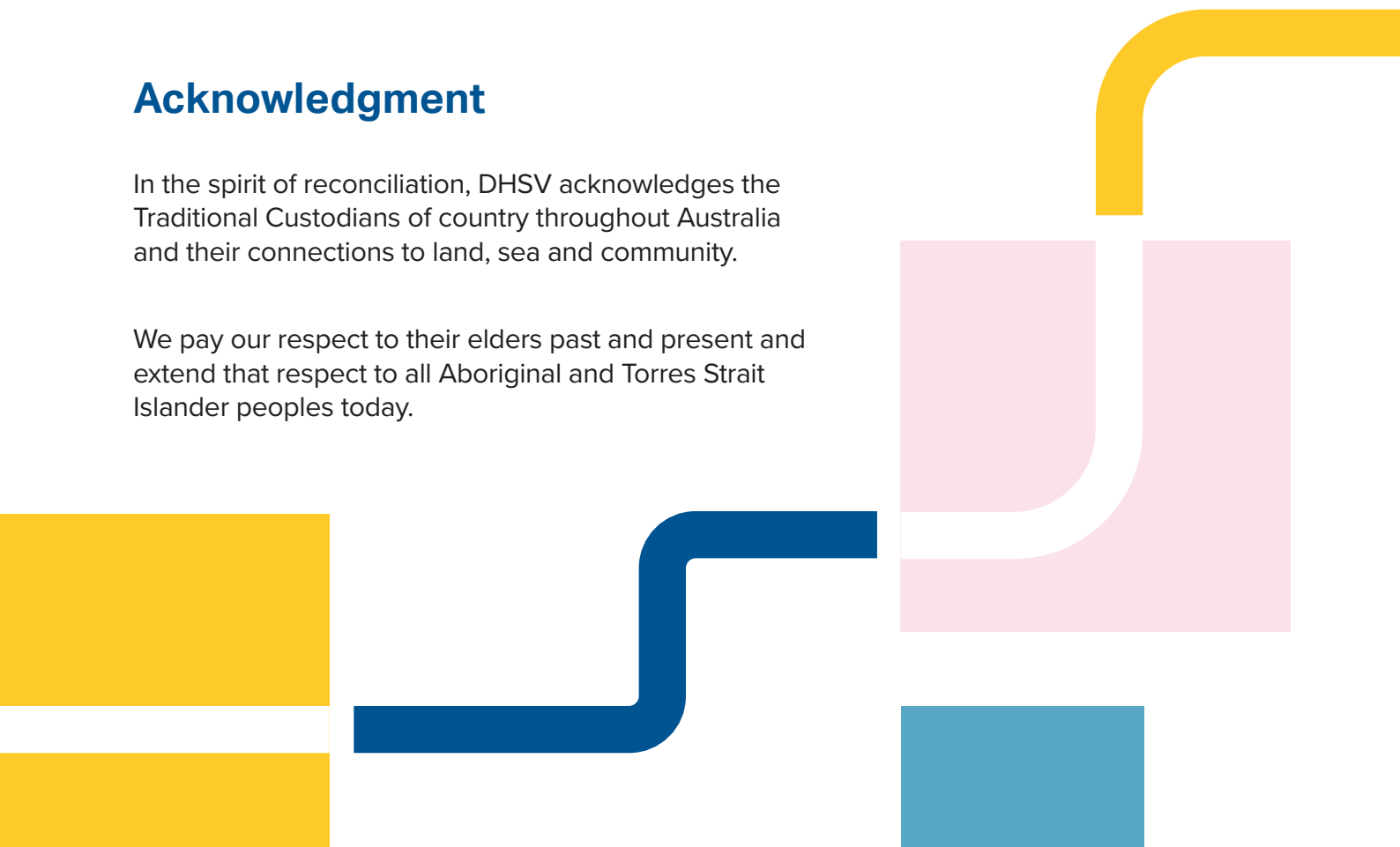
Contents

Introduction	1
About Us	2
Our Values	3
Our Vision	4
Our Mission	12
Our Strategy	13
Our Programs	19
Glossary	20
Our Strategy on a Page	21

Acknowledgment

In the spirit of reconciliation, DHSV acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community.

We pay our respect to their elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.





Introduction



**David
Stevenson**
Chair



**Susan
McKee**
CEO

From the Chair and CEO

We are proud to present the Dental Health Services Victoria (DHSV) Strategic Direction. This is the organisational compass that will unite our consumers, community, staff, and partners with a bold vision – a future where every Victorian is disease and cavity-free.

In developing this plan, we asked how we could place the consumer at the centre of a new, more advanced, and effective oral health system that makes a real difference to the lives of Victorians. A year of extensive consultation helped us think, reflect, revise and finalise what you see here. The insights and feedback provided by our Board, senior management, staff, consumers, and partners, including the Victorian Department of Health, community dental agencies, universities, and leading healthcare bodies, have been incredibly valuable. We thank everyone who played a part in setting our direction for the future.

Over the last few years, DHSV has become a global leader in integrating the principles of value-based healthcare. These principles will continue to guide us in creating an integrated oral health system that is technologically advanced and focused on improving the health outcomes that matter to patients. To this end, we have also developed an Annual Business Plan which supports our strategic direction by going into greater detail and identifying our priorities for the next twelve months.

As we empower people to make positive changes at home, provide world-class care for those in need, and lead reform with our partners, we will continue to create a workplace culture where people feel respected, valued, and part of something truly meaningful. We thank our staff for their ongoing commitment and support. Their dedication is critical to ensuring our strategy is effective – we couldn't do this without them. The pandemic has reminded us that working in public health is challenging, but knowing we are making a real difference in people's lives makes every setback, stumble, and hard day worth it.

Our strategic direction is the very definition of a group effort. We hope that you can see your ideas and aspirations reflected in these pages, and that it inspires you to keep striving, learning, innovating, and embracing change for the benefit of the community.

All of us have a valuable role to play in turning this plan into a reality.

The direction is set. The path is clear. The community need us. Let's get to work.



About Us

Dental Health Services Victoria

Established in 1996, Dental Health Services Victoria is the lead oral and dental health agency in the state. Through The Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne and in partnership with our community dental agencies throughout the state, we provide oral and dental health services for all Victorians. We also run critical oral health promotion programs, invest in oral health research, advise the government on oral health policy and support the education of current and future oral health professionals throughout Victoria.

Our people are the lifeblood of our organisation – without them no vision can be imagined, no strategy can be actioned and no care can be delivered. We are building an organisational culture that embraces diversity, champions equity, and supports our people to thrive.

As a public health service, DHSV is also aware of our broader social and environmental responsibilities. We are committed to improving access to health services for those most vulnerable, creating health equity, building an organisation that embraces diversity and is safe and welcoming for all, as well as minimising our impact on the environment.

DHSV contributes to the delivery of key oral health strategies of the Victorian Action Plan to Prevent Oral Disease 2020–30 and the National Oral Health Plan 2015–2024.

The Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne

The Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne (RDHM) provides general, specialist and emergency dental care to all eligible Victorians. It is also a teaching hospital, which means patients may be treated by various oral health students or specialists in training. RDHM provides a range of dental services to eligible members of the public.

Community Dental Agencies

Dental Health Services Victoria partners with over 50 community dental agencies across the state. These agencies provide general and emergency oral and dental health care to their local communities. They play an integral role in the training of oral health professionals and in the roll out of the Smile Squad school dental program.





Our Values

Our people are respected, valued, and are part of something truly meaningful. We believe that by collaborating, being accountable and respectful, we can improve every person's oral and dental health and assist them to transform their lives for the better.

Accountable

Be accountable to the people we care for and those we work with

Because we are each responsible for our choices, actions and behaviours.

Transform

Transform ourselves and our organisation to achieve better health outcomes

Because we want to be the best that we can be.

Respect

Act with respect towards every person or idea we encounter

Because embracing diversity creates better outcomes for our patients and colleagues.

Collaboration

Embrace collaboration with all partners that help us to achieve our goals

Because working together helps us create value that wouldn't be possible through individual effort alone.



Our Vision

**A future
where
every
Victorian
is disease
and cavity-
free**



A future where every Victorian is disease and cavity-free

Our oral and dental health make an enormous contribution to our overall health and wellbeing. They are far more important than most of us realise.

Poor oral health can cause pain, suffering and distress. It can also impair the ability to eat leading to a poor diet; it can disrupt speech, sleep and productivity; affect self-esteem and employment prospects; and impact relationships.

The ability to eat, sleep, speak and smile without pain or embarrassment is fundamental to our physical, mental and social wellbeing.

The conditions that poor oral health can contribute to include heart disease, birth complications and pneumonia.

Other conditions linked to oral health include eating disorders, rheumatoid arthritis, diabetes, certain cancers and even immune disorders.

Oral disease is among the most prevalent diseases in our community and also a costly health condition to treat; yet it is one of the most preventable.

Dental conditions are the highest cause of all potentially preventable hospitalisations in children 0–9 years, predominantly because of tooth decay. Gum disease is the fifth most common health problem and more than 200 Victorians die of oral cancer each year.

We want to change that.

We want a future where every Victorian is disease and cavity-free.

We want a future where every Victorian understands that most oral disease is preventable and that good oral health is better health.

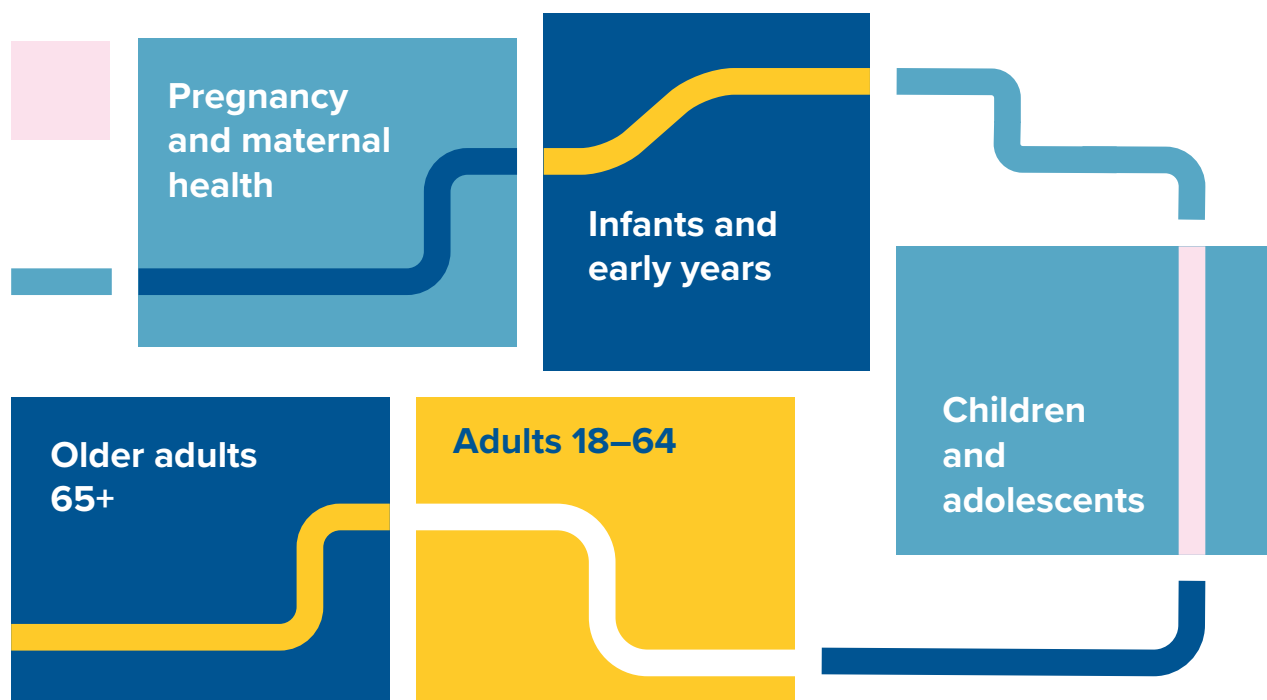


Creating change

Improving access, changing behaviour and eliminating disease

Oral health is a lifelong challenge that requires care and attention with a tailored approach to each stage in the life course. At every age and stage of life, dramatic change is required to improve access to oral and dental healthcare, eliminate disease and create behavioural

change that sees all of us embrace better oral health. Making that future happen requires a massive collective effort. It requires us to focus on improving oral and dental health across the life course:



How we get there requires shifting our focus to prevention and supporting people to take charge and improve their oral health.

As a measure of our progress, we focus on improving two critical outcomes across every demographic – access to care and the incidence of dental decay.

Access to care is about improving Victorians' ability to receive oral and dental healthcare whenever they need it. Dental decay measures

how many Victorians present with oral disease or cavities that require treatment. Across every demographic, we aim to achieve universal access to care and zero dental decay for everyone.

We recognise that our vision of every Victorian being disease and cavity-free is a bold one, and we know we have a long way to go. But we also believe it is achievable and know that we are making progress.



Improving the oral and dental health of pregnant people

Pregnancy is a unique period during a person's life and is characterised by complex physiological changes that can adversely affect oral health. At the same time, oral health is key to overall health and wellbeing and an important component of a healthy pregnancy.

Providing oral health advice to pregnant people has long-term benefits on the improved oral health of all members of the family.

The challenges we face

We currently have limited data on pregnant people, but we do know that many don't routinely participate in a preventative oral health program administered by oral health professionals.

Dental access

34%

of the eligible Victorian female population have accessed public dental care in the last two years.

Dental decay

66%

of pregnant people presenting to public dental clinics have dental decay.



Improving the oral and dental health of infants

Infants' primary (baby) teeth are essential for many reasons. They play a vital role in a healthy diet, learning to speak and showing a child's unique personality. Plus, they keep the correct spaces for the permanent teeth to move into later.

The challenges we face

Parents remain concerned about their children's oral health, and approximately 4 in every 1,000 infants are hospitalised for dental decay treatment.

Dental access

14%

of the eligible population aged 0–4 years have accessed public dental care in the last two years.

Dental decay

26%

of the eligible population aged 0–4 years presenting to public dental clinics have dental decay.





Improving the oral and dental health of children and adolescents

The oral health of children has improved in Victoria. However, despite significant improvements in tooth decay experience in children, over half of Victorian children have signs of tooth decay.

The Victorian Government's major commitment through the Smile Squad program provides free oral health care to all Victorian public primary and secondary school students. Smile Squad saves families time and money, and setting our children up for a lifetime of good oral health.

The challenges we face

Child and adolescent oral health is a major concern with only 32% of children aged 5–17 years receiving fissure sealants and 17% receiving topical fluoride treatment.

Dental access

30%

of the eligible population aged 5–17 years have accessed public dental care in the last two years.

Dental decay

61%

of the eligible population aged 5–17 years presenting to public dental clinics have dental decay.





Improving the oral and dental health of adults 18–64

More than 90 per cent of Victorian adults have had or currently have tooth decay, while one-third of Victorians have avoided or delayed visiting a dental professional due to cost.

The challenges we face

Oral cancer affects 14 in every 100,000 Victorians and remains the 9th most common cancer in men and the 12th most common in women.

Dental access

30%

of the eligible population aged 18–64 years have accessed public dental care in the last two years.

Dental decay

93%

of the eligible population aged 18–64 years presenting to public dental clinics have dental decay.





Improving the oral and dental health of adults 65 plus

Oral health is a significant factor affecting older people's quality of life, overall health and wellbeing. Tooth loss, tooth decay (dental caries), gum disease (periodontitis), dry mouth (xerostomia) and oral cancers are commonly experienced by older people.

The challenges we face

Almost 20% of our population is aged 65 years plus and 58% of them suffer from gum disease, with the likelihood increasing among people with lower incomes.

Dental access

19%

of the eligible population aged 65 years plus have accessed public dental care in the last two years.

Dental decay


95%

of the eligible population aged 65 years plus presenting to public dental clinics have dental decay and 20% have no teeth at all.






Our Mission



**To deliver
the world's
best oral
and dental
healthcare**



To realise our ambitious vision, we need to continue to build a learning organisation that researches and implements world leading practices in oral healthcare.



Our Strategy

Empower Care Lead

Improving oral and
dental health for
every Victorian



Making our vision a reality

Empower. Care. Lead.

Oral health is an essential part of our overall wellbeing and quality of life. It includes our ability to speak, smile, smell, taste, chew, and swallow and our ability to convey emotions and feelings through facial expressions. More than just the mouth, our oral health also contributes to our overall physical and mental wellbeing. It helps to shape our ability to socialise and be included in society.

Dental health is a field of oral health that primarily concerns itself with the teeth and gums. These are often where the first signs of poor oral health present themselves in the form of gum disease and tooth decay.

We will do three things to move us closer to a future where every Victorian is disease and cavity-free:



Empower

Focus on
prevention
and early
intervention



Care

Deliver world-
class oral
and dental
healthcare

Lead

Reform,
build and
improve oral
healthcare
through key
partnerships

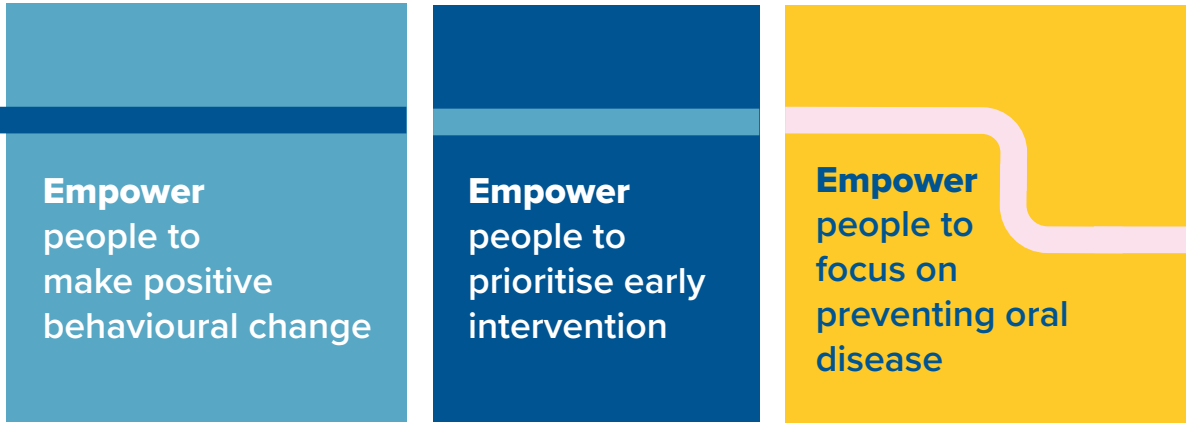
The combination of Empower, Care, Lead guides the activities of our people, the focus of our partnerships, our standards of performance and embodies the very essence of our strategy.



Empower

Focus on prevention and early intervention

We will support Victorians to take charge of their oral and dental health so they can transform their lives for the better. We will do this by prioritising resources, services, and educational programs that empower Victorians in three key ways:



Empower
people to
make positive
behavioural change

Empower
people to
prioritise early
intervention

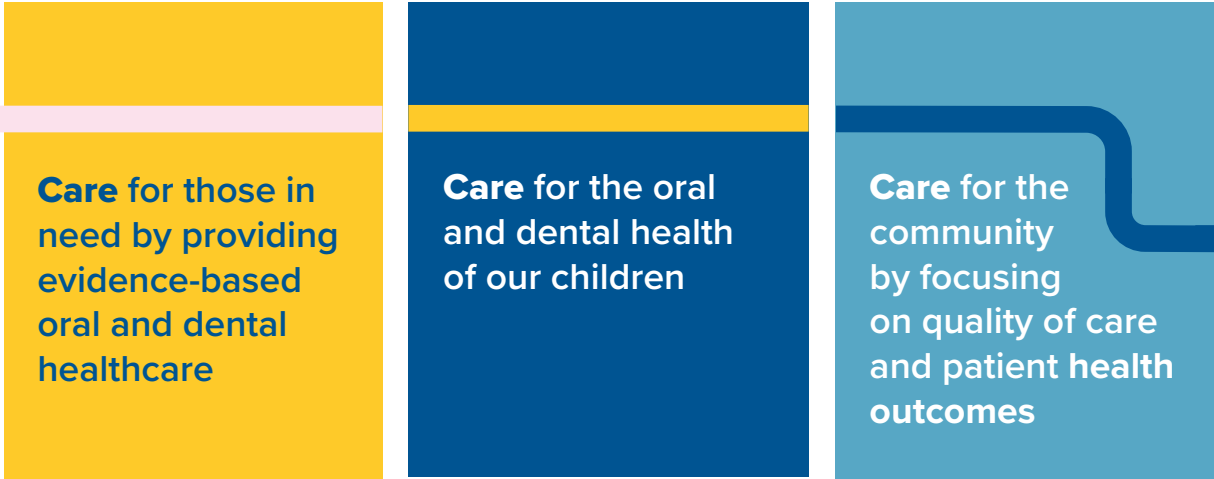
Empower
people to
focus on
preventing oral
disease

Most oral disease is preventable. Shifting our focus to early intervention and prevention, and empowering Victorians to make positive behaviour changes, will move us closer to a disease and cavity-free Victoria.

Care

Deliver world-class oral and dental healthcare

Using the principles of value-based healthcare ensures our care is person-centred, informed by evidence and focused on outcomes. We provide the right care, by the right person, in the right place, at the right time.



Care for those in need by providing evidence-based oral and dental healthcare

Care for the oral and dental health of our children

Care for the community by focusing on quality of care and patient health outcomes

Delivering these services relies on the dedication of our staff and our community partners. To ensure they are supported in delivering these high quality services we will provide a safe and supportive environment in which they can work, learn and grow.




Lead

Reform, build and improve oral healthcare through key partnerships

A key part of our strategy to improve oral and dental healthcare is to build strategic partnerships to change how healthcare is delivered.

In partnership with our community dental agencies, tertiary education providers, oral health professionals and other healthcare providers, we will work together to:



Lead reform to improve the oral and dental health system

Lead the improvement of oral and dental health outcomes by extending our reach and impact

Lead the development of evidence-based oral and dental healthcare

Lead best practice training and development in partnership with education providers



Together with our key stakeholders, we operate a range of programs aimed at improving oral and dental health through education, prevention and early intervention.

Smile Squad

Smile Squad is a Victorian Government program that provides free dental care to all Victorian public primary and secondary school students. Smile Squad is led by DHSV and the Department of Health, with input from the Department of Education and Training. The program is managed by DHSV, and examinations and treatment are provided by community dental agencies across the state.

With a strong focus on education and prevention, Smile Squad wants every student seen to walk away with the tools and knowledge they need to eat well, drink well and clean well – for life.

Smiles 4 Miles

Smiles 4 Miles aims to improve the oral health of children and their families in high-risk areas across Victoria. Tooth decay is Australia's most common health problem. Smiles 4 Miles assists early childhood services to encourage and promote good oral health habits and healthy eating among children in their care.

Healthy Families, Healthy Smiles

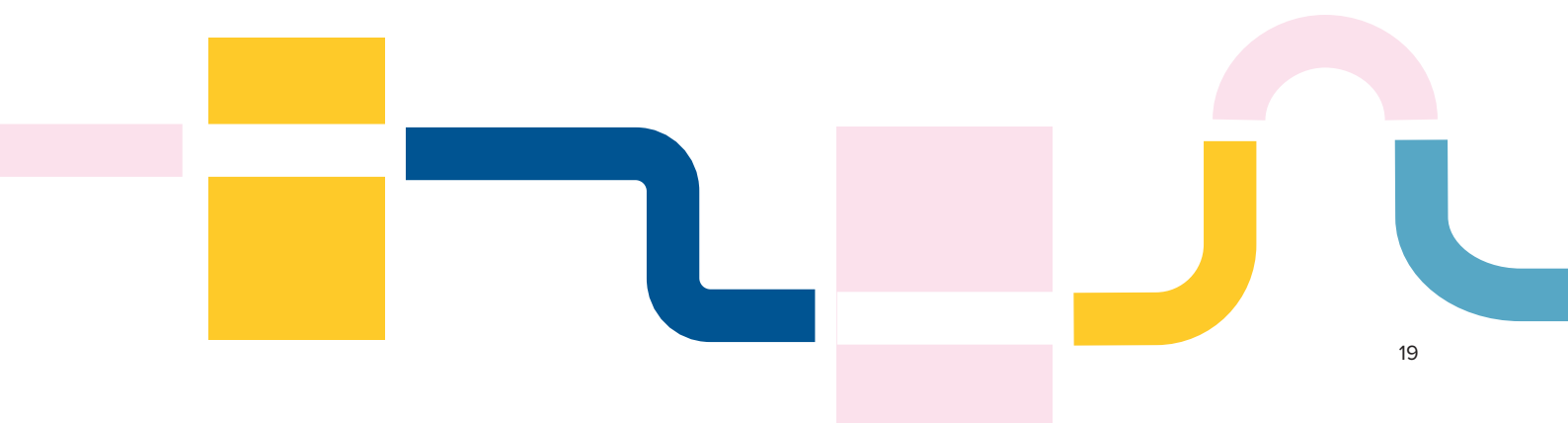
Healthy Families, Healthy Smiles aims to improve the oral health of Victorian children aged 0–3 years and pregnant women by building the capacity of health and early childhood professionals to promote oral health. The program has a range of training and professional development packages and resources for professionals working with young families to support better oral health.

The Victorian Oral Cancer Screening and Prevention Program

The Victorian Oral Cancer Screening and Prevention Program empowers health professionals in primary care to identify and support people at risk, recognise suspicious lesions, and refer appropriately. Evidence-based training, information and tools are offered to Victorian oral health professionals across community and private practice.

Smokefree Smiles

Smokefree Smiles empowers oral health professionals to consider a client's lifestyle when providing care. Oral health professionals can engage clients in meaningful conversations about their health by incorporating the principles of value-based healthcare in a person-centred model of care.





Community dental agencies

Community dental agencies are the public health organisations across Victoria that have a funding agreement with DHSV to deliver public dental services.

Early intervention

Early intervention includes:

- detecting and treating disease in its early stages to halt or slow its progress, encouraging personal strategies to prevent recurrence, and implementing programs to return people to their original health and function to prevent long-term problems
- identifying and providing effective early support to children and young people who are at risk of poor outcomes.

Fissure sealants

A fissure sealant is a coating placed over the tooth grooves designed to prevent tooth decay by providing a barrier against bacteria.

Person-centred

A person-centred approach is where the person is placed at the centre of the service. Person-centred care is respectful of, and responsive to, the preferences, needs and values of the individual. The person is actively included in their own care, and support provided should be coordinated, tailored to their needs and unique circumstances, with a focus on achieving their goals.

Topical fluoride treatments

Fluoride treatments can be applied in many ways, including gels and varnishes. They are designed to strengthen teeth, preventing and slowing down tooth decay.

Value-based healthcare

Value-based healthcare is a set of principles that support organisations to provide care that delivers outcomes that are important to the patient at the most appropriate cost. The following VBHC principles support organisational decision making:

- care is designed with and around the patient
- the right care is provided, to the right person, at the right time, in the right place by the right provider
- value is used to measure effective and efficient resource utilisation
- continuous measurement is utilised to improve care and remove unwarranted variation
- prevention and early intervention are prioritised at an individual and population level
- care is integrated, coordinated and based on risk.



We see a future where every Victorian is disease and cavity-free

At DHSV, we believe that by collaborating, being accountable and respectful, we can improve every person's oral and dental health and help them to transform their lives for the better.

Our mission is to deliver the world's best oral and dental healthcare, and our strategy is to Empower, Care, and Lead Victorians closer to our vision of a disease and cavity-free future.

Empower

Focus on prevention and early intervention

- Empower people to make positive behavioural change
- Empower people to prioritise early intervention
- Empower people to focus on preventing oral disease

Care

Deliver world-class oral and dental healthcare

- Care for those in need by providing evidence-based oral and dental healthcare
- Care for the oral and dental health of our children
- Care for the community by focusing on quality of care and patient health outcomes

Lead

Reform, build and improve oral healthcare through key partnerships

- Lead reform to improve the oral and dental health system
- Lead the improvement of oral and dental health outcomes by extending our reach and impact
- Lead the development of evidence-based oral and dental healthcare
- Lead training and development in partnership with education providers



dental health
services victoria
oral health for better health

GPO Box 1273L Melbourne VIC 3001
www.dhsv.org.au
www.twitter.com/vicdental
www.facebook.com/dentalhealthvic