

Example of a Statement of Need

In the only statewide survey of California’s children¹, conducted in 1993-94, the following findings for *preschoolers in rural areas* emerged:

- Of the preschool children with early childhood dental caries (ECC), 34.9% were Latino, 6.5% African American, and 29.4% Caucasian.
- 34% of the Head Start children had ECC vs. 28.5 of the non-Head Start children
- 13.8% of the Head Start children and 12% of the non-Head Start preschoolers had urgent treatment needs; 59.4% of the Head Start children had no treatment needs compared to 50.98% of the non-Head Start children.
- 81.6% of the Head Start children had visited a dentist vs. 40.8% of the non-Head Start children.
- The following table shows the extent of dental decay, comparing Head Start and non-Head Start preschoolers

	Mean # teeth affected	Caries free	1-4 teeth	5-8 teeth	9+ teeth
Head Start	4.10	41.9%	21.4%	24.2%	12.5%
Non-HS	2.97	43.9%	28.0%	19.2%	9.0%

2001-02 PIR data² from Head Start programs in Eastern Slope counties indicate:

- less than 40% of children had a “dental home”
- less than 1 in 4 children received preventive dental services
- about 60% needed dental treatment.

Denti-Cal data are as follows:

Annual Utilization of Dental Services (percentage with 1 or more dental visits)
by Medi-Cal Enrollees, Ages 0-5, CY 2002³

<u>Alpine</u>	<u>Inyo</u>	<u>Lassen</u>	<u>Modoc</u>	<u>Mono</u>	<u>Plumas</u>	<u>Sierra</u>	<u>State Avg.</u>
25.6%	23.5%	17.3%	35.1%	20.7%	19.5%	20.4%	23.4%

Many of the dental services for low-income children in the seven counties are provided in community clinics that participate in the Medi-Cal program.

Regional Challenges

There are a number of issues facing most of the counties in the Eastern Slope. These issues relate to access to services, an insufficient dental work force and lack of an oral health infrastructure to meet oral health needs and demand for care. Another critical issue is sustainability, as many of the counties have difficulty maintaining services and funding, and cannot meet the increasing demand for care. Examples of issues shared by a number of counties, as learned through local surveys and experiences, include:

- Public’s lack of understanding of the importance of oral health, resulting in families failing to make oral health appointments or not keeping their appointments
- Lack of understanding of the etiology of dental caries and effective preventive measures
- Lack of a formal referral or case management system for dental care
- Insufficient dental workforce including dentists, dental hygienists and pediatric dentists.

Estimates of Dental Workforce by County ⁴

	Alpine	Inyo	Lassen	Modoc	Mono (est.)	Plumas	Sierra
General Dentists		9	16		5 FTE / 2 part-time	17	1
Pediatric Dentists		0	0		0	0	0
Dental Hygienists		10	9		7 FTE / 3 part-time	15?	2

- Many members of the dental workforce not wanting to provide services to children; interest in continuing education on that topic is unknown.
- Of the limited providers who will see children, some stipulations of only treating “cooperative” children
- Additional barriers for children with special needs/disabilities and providers not being confident in treating them
- Providers who use advanced behavioral techniques such as conscious sedation or general anesthesia not practicing in the area
- Lack of dentists participating in the Denti-Cal or Healthy Families programs
- Transportation for services and specialty care only available on a limited basis
- Winter storms and road closures creating dangerous driving conditions with some areas inaccessible
- Great distances between communities and oral health services, or if services available at all, not necessarily centrally located
- Insufficient numbers of children in each county to compete for funding or other resources as individual counties (see following table)

Number of Children 0-5, and ethnic breakdown by county⁵: * all figures except Lassen county are from CA DOF, census 2000 for children < age 5

Percent	Alpine	Inyo	Lassen	Modoc	Mono	Plumas	Sierra
White %	45.9	52.3	70	66	58	80	84.6
Latino %	18.0	28.4	14	24	36.3	11.9	12
Nat Am %	27.9	12.6	3	5	1.7	3.9	
Multiple %	6.6	5.1	3	3	2.5	3.5	3.4
All other %		1.6	10	2	0.4	.7	
Total 0-5	61	961	1700	528	727	929	147