

---

# ORAL HEALTH

---

## ORAL HEALTH

The Hawaii State Oral Disease Prevention Program grant ended on August 31, 2018. The grant funding was used to improve basic state oral health services, including support for program leadership and limited support staff, monitoring oral disease levels and risk factors for oral disease, developing strong partnerships, educating state residents on ways to prevent oral diseases, and developing and evaluating prevention programs. Although the oral health program was a critical part of the State of Hawaii Department of Health, the State of Hawaii Dental Health Division was eliminated as part of the 2009 budget restrictions.

The State of Hawaii Department of Health does fund and maintain the Hospital and Community Dental Services Branch (HCDSB). This branch serves approximately one thousand, fifty-seven adults on an annual basis. The HCDSB provides comprehensive community safety-net dental care services to vulnerable and underserved populations in Hawaii that have limited or no access to dental treatment including patients that are aged, blind and disabled. These populations include persons with severe chronic mental illness, frail elderly persons who are medically fragile, and individuals with significant intellectual and developmental disabilities, and would otherwise not receive dental treatment through private dental providers or community health centers.

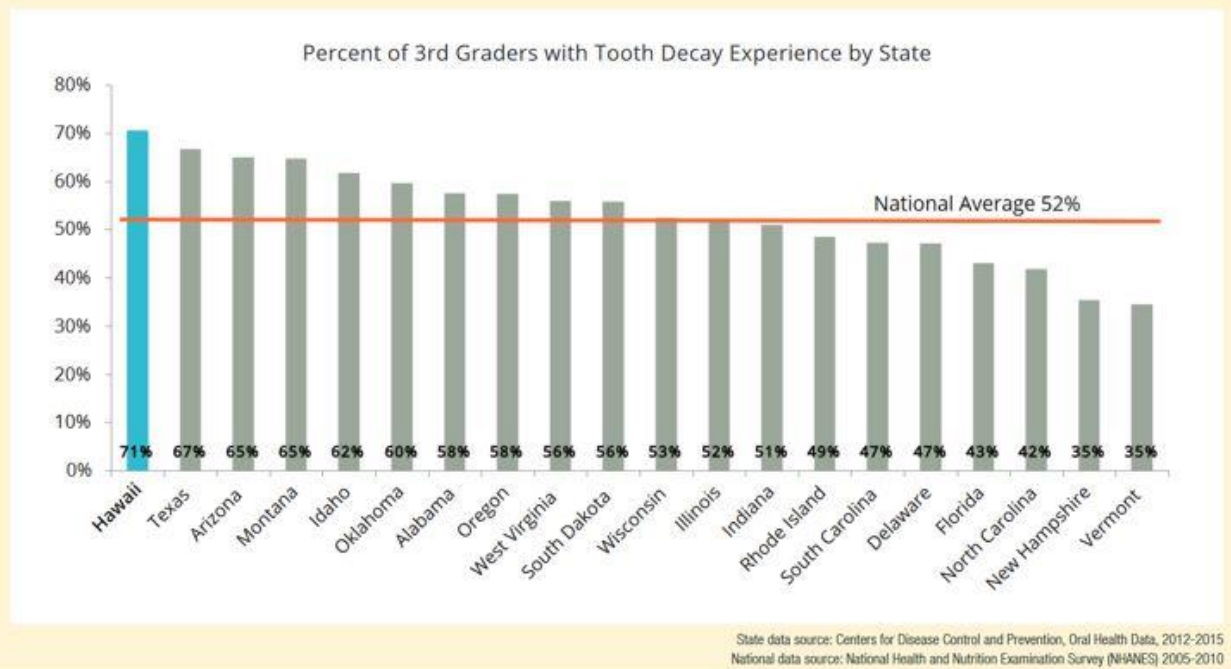
The State of Hawaii Department of Health partially funds the Hawaii Oral Health Coalition. The Hawaii Oral Health Coalition (<https://www.hiphi.org/hawaii-oral-health-coalition/>) exchanges mutually beneficial resources and direct change at multiple levels through advocacy, improved access, education, workforce development and oral health surveillance. There are local coalitions on Hawaii Island, Kauai and Maui. The Hawaii Oral Health Coalition working committees include Advocacy, Workforce Development, Data & Surveillance, and Prevention & Access.

Due to the absence of a true statewide oral disease prevention program, Hawaii's oral health status continues to suffer. Negative staggering statistics are highlighted as key findings in the following reports.

The Hawaii Smiles 2015 Report (<https://health.hawaii.gov/about/files/2013/06/Hawaii-Smiles-Report.pdf>) showed that Hawaii had the highest prevalence of tooth decay among third graders in the United States.

See below.

**KEY FINDING #1: HAWAII HAS THE HIGHEST PREVALENCE OF TOOTH DECAY AMONG THIRD GRADERS IN THE UNITED STATES. MORE THAN 7 OUT OF 10 THIRD GRADERS (71%) ARE AFFECTED BY TOOTH DECAY; SUBSTANTIALLY HIGHER THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE OF 52%.**



The 2017-2018 Oral Health of Hawaii's Low-Income Head Start Children Report (<https://health.hawaii.gov/about/files/2022/04/The-Oral-Health-of-Hawaii-Low-Income-Head-Start-Children.pdf>) showed that tooth decay is a significant health problem for Hawaii's low-income preschool children.

See below.

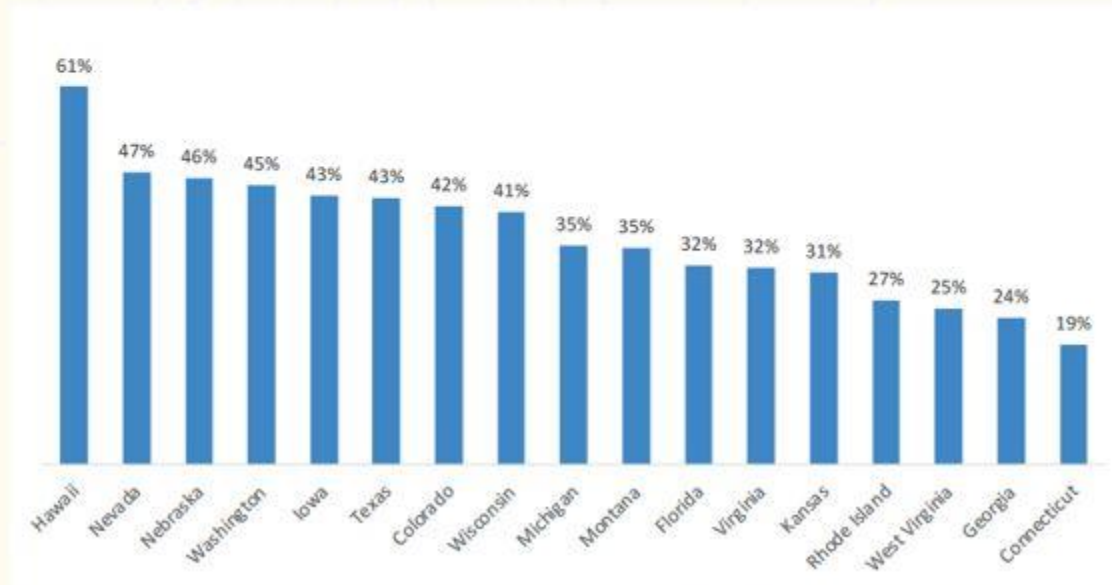
### Key Finding #1

*Tooth decay is a significant public health problem for Hawaii's low-income preschool children. More than 6 out of 10 Hawaii Head Start children aged 3-5 years (61%) have already experienced tooth decay, the highest prevalence for any state that has collected similar data.*



**6** out of **10**  
children

Percentage of Head Start children aged 3-5 years with tooth decay.  
Hawaii compared to other states with similar data.



The 2017-2018 Oral Health of Hawaii’s Low-Income Head Start Children Report (<https://health.hawaii.gov/about/files/2022/04/The-Oral-Health-of-Hawaiis-Low-Income-Head-Start-Children.pdf>) showed that among Hawaii’s Head Start children, the prevalence of tooth decay is highest for those living in Kauai County, while the prevalence of untreated decay is highest in Honolulu and Kauai counties.

See below.

### Key Finding #7

*Among Hawaii’s Head Start children, the prevalence of tooth decay is highest for those living in Kauai County, while the prevalence of untreated decay is highest in Honolulu and Kauai counties.*

Hawaii’s Head Start Children Aged 3-5 Years With Tooth Decay and Untreated Decay by County

