



American
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ADHA Urges Lawmakers to Lift Restrictions on School-Based Oral Health Care Programs

CHICAGO (8-23-2018) - The American Dental Hygienists' Association (ADHA) urges state policymakers to remove unnecessary policies and regulations that impede access to care for our most vulnerable populations. According to a [recent brief by Pew](#), regulations blocking access to oral health care put children at risk — in fact, according to the 2016 paper “Vital Signs: Dental Sealant Use and Untreated Tooth Decay Among U.S. School-Aged Children” published in *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, if all 6.5 million low-income children who lacked sealants were to receive them, it would prevent 3.4 million cavities over four years. According to the National Institutes of Health, early childhood caries is the most common chronic childhood disease, disproportionately affecting children of low economic status.

ADHA applauds Pew for highlighting the state-by-state challenges facing registered dental hygienists who could provide dental sealants in school-based settings and agrees that current policies and regulations impede efforts to launch or expand school sealant programs that could deliver services to at-risk children. In fact, research and experience indicate that these rules and policies limiting direct access do not protect the public from unsafe dental practice, nor do they promote the efficient use of public resources. This is a public health issue, and that's why ADHA continues its ongoing advocacy efforts to lift these restrictions and to increase today's [42 direct access states](#) to all 50 states in the coming years.

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About the American Dental Hygienists' Association:

The American Dental Hygienists' Association (ADHA) is the largest national organization representing the professional interests of more than 185,000 dental hygienists across the country. Dental hygienists are preventive oral health professionals, licensed in dental hygiene, who provide educational, clinical and therapeutic services that support total health through the promotion of optimal oral health. For more information about ADHA, dental hygiene or the link between oral health and general health, visit ADHA at www.adha.org.