



Sarasota County Health Department | Florida Department of Health
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MEDIA NOTE: B-roll video of the Sarasota County Health Department's dental clinic is available upon request.

North Port area children to receive preventive dental care

Local low-income and uninsured children from five North Port elementary schools will soon be receiving preventive dental care through a three-year \$95,000 grant award that the Sarasota County Health Department (SCHD) received from the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Foundation (BCBSF).

"A healthy smile is the hallmark of good health. We are thrilled to have the funding available for this program which will begin in April," said SCHD School Health Supervisor Linda Glover.

"Second-grade students whose parents provide consent will be transported from North Port area elementary schools to the SCHD's North Port Health Center to get a dental exam and receive dental sealants," she added. "These plastic coatings, which act as a barrier protecting the teeth against decay-causing bacteria, are usually applied to chewing surfaces of the back teeth."

Last year, Glenallen Elementary School served as a test site for the program, which allowed local health and school officials to work through the logistics of offering these dental services. About half of the second-grade students (47 total) participated. The grant will allow approximately 220 children in the North Port area, who may not otherwise access these services, to get dental sealants this school year.

"It's not uncommon for people to think that 'baby teeth' don't matter; however, by the second grade, children are getting their first molars. So, getting sealants applied at this age is optimal in reducing the risk of tooth decay and damage to their permanent teeth," said SCHD pediatric dentist Zaida Marcano, D.D.S.

The Sarasota County Health Department provides children who qualify a range of dental care services. These include preventive cleanings and fluoride treatments, exams, x-rays, sealants, space maintainers, extractions, stainless steel crowns and front tooth root canals.

These services are available to those who have Medicaid and are under the age of 21.

For information about eligibility, service sites and appointments, visit www.sarasotahealth.org or call 941-861-2900.

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