

## AN EXTRA MILE FOR A HEALTHY SMILE

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**Purpose:** An Extra Mile for a Healthy Smile brought awareness to elementary-aged students in rural areas lacking water fluoridation and adequate access to dental care. There was emphasis placed on the importance of oral hygiene instructions, oral aids, fluoride, and local resources. **Methods:** The target population were third-grade students from Belle Plaine, KS. An online data search in PubMed, Medline (EBSO), Cochrane Library, Centers for Disease Control (CDC) as well as the U.S. Census Bureau was performed to identify oral health awareness between August 2022 and November 2022. The method of delivery included PowerPoint presentation, flyers, educational activity, and a review of knowledge. Students' knowledge was gauged by fielded questions regarding basic oral health knowledge, conducted by the team. At the conclusion of the presentation an increase in knowledge was evident from the response of the participants. **Results:** The third-grade students from Belle Plaine, Kansas, gained more knowledge that regarded the importance of their oral hygiene, oral aids available, access to fluoride, and local resources that are available near their area. Results fielded from the third graders after the presentation resulted a significant increase in oral health knowledge. Majority of the students participated answered all questions correctly regarding brushing habits, diet, and fluoride. Which national policy would this project meet? **Implications:** An area of future research could be the correlation of decay prevention with alcohol-free mouthwash in children. This would aid the presentation by furthering the education given to underserved communities and another option to help aid oral health in the area. **Additional Materials:** Data was collected through the CDC, U.S. Census Bureau, and Kansas Department of Health and Environment, influencing the focus of the presentation. Flyers were distributed allowing for further knowledge to be extended to parents and where to find oral hygiene necessities.

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