

Item Title: Accept Funding from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services for the Dental Health Program

Specific Action Requested:

That the Board of Commissioners accepts \$150,000 of state revenue and expenditures in the General Fund from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Rural Health for the Community Health Grant.

Item Summary:

Purpose: In accordance with North Carolina General Statute 160A-17.1 the Board of Commissioners must approve all grant agreements from the state.

Background: The Wake County Public Health Dental Program provides access to high-quality, comprehensive dental care for uninsured and underinsured Wake County residents ages 0 through 20. Services include a full range of preventive and restorative treatments essential to improving and maintaining oral health among vulnerable children and adolescents. Preventive services include comprehensive and periodic examinations, dental cleanings, radiographs, fluoride varnish, dental sealants, and silver diamine fluoride applications.

Restorative services include tooth-colored restorations, simple extractions, pulpotomies on primary teeth, stainless steel crowns, and space maintenance devices. The program also delivers oral health education focused on proper oral hygiene practices, nutrition counseling, and the impact of diet on oral health. The Wake County Public Health Dental Program has demonstrated strong effectiveness in reducing barriers to care for children in Wake County and improving oral health outcomes across the population it serves.

During Fiscal Year 27, Wake County Public Health can serve over 1,000 patients using the \$150,000 in funding.

Strategic Plan: This action supports Community Health and Wellbeing Goal 3: By 2029, 5% more residents asked will indicate low barriers to healthcare and behavioral health services, such as access to providers, insurance coverage, affordability and appointment wait times.

Fiscal Impact: This allocation provides an additional \$150,000 of annually renewed revenue and expenditure in the General Fund for the Dental Health Program. No county funding is required.

Additional Information:

The Wake County Public Health Dental Program is dedicated to improving oral health

outcomes for children across Wake County. In addition to providing clinical care, this grant funding supports both internal collaborations and external community partnerships that expand our reach throughout the county.

One key internal collaboration is with Wake County Public Libraries through the Books & Smiles program, which reinforces the American Academy of Pediatrics’ Brush, Book, Bed campaign. In FY 2026, this partnership has reached more than 150 children through events held at six library locations.

Grant funding has also increased access to care through the Regional Smiles program. Regional Smiles delivers preventive dental services—exams, cleanings, radiographs, and fluoride varnish—at four regional center locations: Wake Forest, Fuquay-Varina, Zebulon, and Cary. A dental team visits each site monthly to provide essential care for residents who may not be able to travel to our primary Raleigh location. To date in FY 2026, more than 170 preventive dental visits have been completed across the four centers.

Additionally, this funding has enabled the development of meaningful community partnerships with organizations such as NC Pre-K, Neighbor Up, and WCPSS Ready to Learn. These collaborations, along with community outreach events, since initial grant funding have resulted in 5,709 screenings and over 21,000 oral health education encounters with families.

Continued grant support will sustain and strengthen Smiles for Wake, Regional Smiles, and our community outreach initiatives, ensuring that Wake County children have access to vital dental services and oral health education.

The funds will be used for Dental Clinic personnel and supplies.

The table below displays the funding amounts that Public Health has been awarded from NCDHHS to deliver preventive dental care services over the last five fiscal years along with the number of services provided and the number of families served.

Program	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026
Community Health Grant DHHS	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000
Preventive Dental Services Provided	755	746	1,161	1,393	1,257
Dental Screenings Provided	591	904	665	682	430*
Families Served	641	566	901	1,100	998
Estimated families turned away due to limited program capacity	240	240	240	240	240

* Due to a delay in contract execution for FY 2026, dental screenings did not begin until October 2025.

Attachments:

1. FY27 Contract – NC DHHS
2. Budget Memo - FY2027 Human Services