

Evaluation data from North Dakota's school-based sealant program demonstrate oral health concerns for children who are American Indian and Alaska Native

The North Dakota Oral Health Program (OHP) established a school-based dental sealant program (SEALIND) in 2012. This program offers dental sealants, fluoride varnish applications, oral health education, dental screenings, and dental referrals for students in grades K-12. Although the program has had a positive impact on overall oral health in North Dakota (ND), evaluation data show growing concerns for children who are American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN).

3 out of every 5 students who are AIAN (60%) had untreated decay or rampant decay (cavities) compared to only 36% of their non-AIAN peers during the 2021-2022 school year.

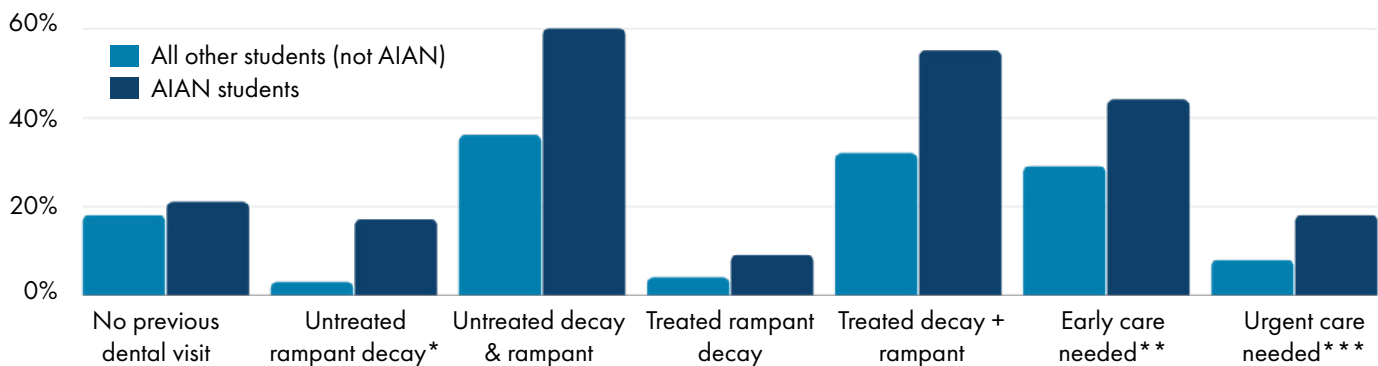


About 6% of people living in ND are AIAN.^a

However, **41% of students served by SEALIND were AIAN** during the 2021-2022 school year.

a. U.S. Census, 2021

Higher percentages of students who are AIAN need treatment for decay



* Untreated rampant decay includes decay present on seven or more teeth.

** Early care needed includes decay present without pain or swelling. Refer to a dentist for treatment.

*** Urgent care needed includes pain, infection, large decay, abscess, or draining. Immediate referral for treatment.

Recommendations

SEALIND continues to provide care where it is needed most. However, work must continue to allow AIAN communities in ND to identify culturally appropriate solutions, and to allow space for communities to identify opportunities to improve oral health outcomes on their own terms.

Learn more about SEALIND at: hhs.nd.gov/SEALIND

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