

# DESTINATION: IMPROVE THE PUBLIC<sup>1</sup> PERCEPTION OF ORAL HEALTH TO CREATE A MORE ACTIONABLE POLICY ENVIRONMENT TO ADVANCE ALL NETWORK GOALS

<sup>1</sup>Refers to community members, as well as individuals working in the social, public and/or private sector.



The Oral Health Progress and Equity Network (OPEN) is building power in states and communities to create the change needed to make our nation as healthy as it can be. We know that healthier mouths mean healthier people. And healthier people mean stronger communities. This DESTINATION is one of five on which OPEN is working collectively to achieve by 2020, in order to create a just oral health system – one where everyone has an equitable chance to thrive.

**Target: Oral health is increasingly included in health dialogue and public policy advocacy.**

## COMMUNITY TACTICS

- ❑ **Adapt framed messages** to be culturally and linguistically appropriate for different communities.
- ❑ **Incorporate framed messages** into oral health education and consumer advocacy training.
- ❑ **Expand support for and capacity of community partners** to advocate for policy change.
- ❑ **Build power through authentic community engagement** that mobilizes the public to advocate for systems change.
- ❑ **Encourage and support community residents** to join community governance committees and/or boards (advisory councils, citizen review boards, etc.).
- ❑ **Develop and maintain a story bank** (collection of ‘framed’ consumer stories) highlighting gaps in access and services.
- ❑ **Collect and share clinical experiences** highlighting service delivery changes that help improve oral health outcomes.
- ❑ **Use local oral health data** that demonstrate impacts on overall health outcomes to drive policy decisions.
- ❑ **Identify and/or develop pilot projects** to improve the public perception of oral health that can be taken to scale.

## STATE TACTICS

- ❑ **Support state and local organizations** to engage champions in state legislatures and administrations.
- ❑ **Partner with state organizations** such as the Department of Health, Primary Care Association and/or coalition to amplify the importance and value of oral health.

## NATIONAL TACTICS

- ❑ **Assess social and news media** to identify opportunities for effective engagement.
- ❑ **Influence messaging environment** opportunities such as public comment, reports, and briefs.
- ❑ **Include oral health-related questions in national surveys/polls** to understand and improve public perception and inform communication strategies.
- ❑ **Facilitate discussions with national organizations** about the social determinants of health as root causes of oral health disparities.
- ❑ **Engage with national health partners** who are working to promote health equity, as well as “non-traditional” partners, to begin including oral health in their policy and advocacy efforts and ensure oral health issues are regularly promoted.
- ❑ **Activate rapid-response process** to address federal policies.

## TACTICS THAT WORK ACROSS ALL LEVELS

- ❑ **Develop and utilize appropriately framed messages.**
- ❑ **Monitor and contribute to local oral health dialogue** in news media and social media.
- ❑ **Create partnerships to influence attitudes** in support of policy change.

## NOTES, IDEAS, AND PLANS

Check off the tactics you plan to use in getting OPEN to this goal. Work with your team, stakeholders and partners to design a pathway to action.


