


## Key Canadian Dental Public Health Headlines

Covering developments in Canada, the U.S., and globally These stories touch on major policy shifts, challenges in access to care, and evolving debates around public health interventions.

From the continued rollout of the Canadian Dental Care Plan to Nunavut's ongoing struggles with dental wait times, and from fluoride policy changes in Utah and Florida to global discussions on integrating oral health into public health systems From the continued rollout of the Canadian Dental Care Plan to Nunavut's ongoing struggles with dental wait times, and from fluoride policy changes in Utah and Florida to global discussions on integrating oral health into public health systems.

### Canadian Dental Care Plan Continues National Rollout

The Canadian Dental Care Plan, a government-funded initiative aimed at providing dental services to uninsured Canadians, is progressing with its phased implementation. Following the initial rollout in December 2023 targeting seniors over 87, the program expanded in May 2024 to include individuals aged 65 to 69. As of March 2025, the plan is set to extend benefits to all eligible Canadians with a net family income below \$90,000, aiming to cover approximately 8.5 million people. The program addresses preventive, diagnostic, restorative, and other essential dental services, with a fixed-fee schedule varying by province. Despite some concerns from dental professionals regarding fee structures and administrative processes, the plan represents a significant step toward universal dental care in Canada.

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### Children's Dental Wait List in Nunavut Down, But Still Concerning

Nunavut's Health Minister John Main has reported that while wait times for children's dental surgeries have improved, they remain a serious concern. Children in need of urgent dental care often require treatment under general anesthesia, and access to these services has been historically limited due to workforce shortages and high demand. The government is working to improve access by increasing specialist visits and expanding service capacity.

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## United States

### Utah Set to Ban Fluoride in Public Water Systems

Utah is poised to become the first U.S. state to prohibit the addition of fluoride to its public water systems. Governor Spencer Cox has announced plans to sign the bill, which will take effect in May 2025. Proponents argue for individual choice and question fluoride's benefits, while opponents, including the American Dental Association, warn that the ban could lead to increased tooth decay, particularly among vulnerable populations.

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### Debate Over Water Fluoridation Intensifies in Florida

Bartow, Florida, has become a focal point in the national debate over water fluoridation. Local leaders, including Mayor Trish Pfeiffer, are advocating for the removal of fluoride from the

city's water supply, citing health concerns and a desire for personal choice. This movement reflects a broader trend, as some communities nationwide reconsider the practice of water fluoridation amidst discussions about potential health risks and individual autonomy.

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## **Global**

### **World Oral Health Day 2025 Highlights Ongoing Challenges**

On World Oral Health Day 2025, the World Health Organization's Regional Office for Africa highlighted ongoing challenges in oral health across the continent. Despite some advancements, only 17% of the regional population has access to essential oral health care services. The WHO emphasized the need for improved disease prevention measures, including increased use of fluoride and efforts to reduce sugar consumption, to address the significant disparities in oral health outcomes.

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### **Global Symposium Focuses on Integrating Oral Health into Public Health Systems**

The 2025 Global Oral Health Symposium, hosted by the Johns Hopkins Center for Global Health and the Solidarity Dental Foundation, convened experts to discuss the integration of oral health into broader public health systems. The event underscored the importance of recognizing oral health as a critical component of overall health and explored strategies to address global oral health challenges through collaborative efforts.

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These developments highlight the growing recognition of oral health as a public health priority and the ongoing challenges in ensuring access to quality health care worldwide.