Special Smiles Clinical Director

Special Olympics Health
MADE POSSIBLE BY Golisano FOUNDATION

Special Smiles is the dental health discipline of Special Olympics Healthy Athletes® that provides athletes with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to take charge of their oral health. **Special Smiles provides comprehensive oral health care information, offers free dental screenings and instructions on correct brushing and flossing techniques to Special Olympics athletes.** This also includes issuing preventative supplies, like toothpaste, toothbrushes and fluoride varnish.

Purpose & Goals

The goal of Special Smiles is to create awareness and improves access to dental care for Special Olympics athletes and people with IDD. This is achieved by:

- Developing a body of knowledge about the oral health care needs of children and adults with disabilities.
- Providing a list of regional dental professionals who care for people with IDD to all athletes who participate in Special Smiles.
- Raising dental professionals' awareness of the oral health concerns of people with IDD, including difficulties involved in accessing care. Administering routine dental care to promote the maintenance of clean teeth.

Importance & Impact

Special Smiles screenings have found that a large percentage of Special Olympics athletes in the U.S. are unaware of the condition of their oral health, and experience the following conditions:

- **46%** have gingival signs
- **44%** have untreated tooth decay
- **13%** have mouth pain

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