

1 [Children’s Dental Health Month - February 2025]

2

3 **Resolution recognizing the month of February 2025 as “Children’s Dental Health**  
4 **Month” in the City and County of San Francisco.**

5

6 WHEREAS, Although 100% preventable, caries (cavities or tooth decay) is the most  
7 common chronic disease in children in the United States and can persist into adulthood and  
8 across the lifespan; and

9 WHEREAS, Oral health is essential to overall well-being and quality of life; and

10 WHEREAS, Tooth decay negatively impacts children’s nutritional intake, growth, and  
11 weight gain; and

12 WHEREAS, If left untreated, tooth decay can result in pain and infection affecting a  
13 child’s self-esteem in addition to their ability to sleep, eat, focus and attend school; and

14 WHEREAS, Research shows that poor oral health in children is significantly associated  
15 with absenteeism and poor academic performance; and

16 WHEREAS, In California, children miss an estimated 874,000 school days due to  
17 dental problems; and

18 WHEREAS, Poor dental health can be costly to families, the healthcare system, and  
19 the government; and

20 WHEREAS, The cost of emergency dental care is approximately 10 times more than  
21 the cost of early childhood caries preventive dental care (\$6,498 vs. \$660); and

22 WHEREAS, Preschool children enrolled in Medi-Cal that receive an early preventive  
23 dental visit are more likely to receive additional preventive services throughout childhood and  
24 have lower overall dental expenditures; and

25

1           WHEREAS, Tooth decay has been classified by the Surgeon General as the single  
2 most prevalent chronic childhood disease, more common than asthma and hay fever; and

3           WHEREAS, The Department of Public Health (DPH) provides community-based dental  
4 services and an annual citywide kindergarten dental assessment, and the DPH Maternal Child  
5 and Adolescent Health Section provides education, case management, community  
6 coordination, and advocacy for the most underserved and vulnerable residents in San  
7 Francisco; and

8           WHEREAS, Profound disparities persist, with children of color and low-income children  
9 experiencing untreated tooth decay at twice the rate than those of their White counterparts;  
10 and

11           WHEREAS, In the 2017-2018 school year, the rate of caries experience was 44%  
12 among kindergarten children in low-income San Francisco schools, which was nearly three  
13 times higher than the rate found among children from higher-income schools; and

14           WHEREAS, The rate of caries experience also varied by zip code, where  
15 neighborhoods such as Chinatown, Mission, and Bayview Hunters Point continue to bear the  
16 highest burden of tooth decay; and

17           WHEREAS, Tooth decay disproportionately impacts African American, Latino, and  
18 Asian children, with Asian children experiencing the highest rates of dental decay; and

19           WHEREAS, The mission of CavityFree SF is to achieve optimal oral health and  
20 eliminate oral health disparities for all San Francisco children by influencing policy and  
21 establishing systems that provide preventive services and treatment in dental, medical,  
22 school, and community settings; working with community partners to promote healthy  
23 behaviors; integrating oral health with overall health; and increasing access to oral health  
24 care; and

25

1           WHEREAS, Through three community-based Children’s Oral Health Task Forces  
2 (Chinatown, Mission, and Bayview Hunters Point), CavityFree SF engages with parents,  
3 caregivers, and community partners to strategize and promote the importance of oral health in  
4 a way that is most acceptable, appropriate, and effective for the communities experiencing the  
5 greatest disease burden; and

6           WHEREAS, In 2017, the SF Children’s Oral Health Collaborative, now known as  
7 CavityFree SF (founded in 2012), created the San Francisco Children’s Oral Health Strategic  
8 Plan (2020-2025) which outlines six strategies to accomplish its mission: Increase access to  
9 oral health care services in traditional dental settings for San Francisco children and pregnant  
10 women; increase access to oral health care services for San Francisco children and pregnant  
11 women outside of traditional dental settings; integrate oral health with overall health care;  
12 increase awareness and practice of optimal children’s oral health behaviors among diverse  
13 communities in San Francisco; develop and establish an ongoing population-based oral  
14 health surveillance system to address the oral health of San Francisco children; and provide  
15 coordination and oversight for the implementation of the Strategic Plan; and

16           WHEREAS, The American Dental Association recognizes February as National  
17 Children’s Dental Health Month; now, therefore, be it

18           RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors recognizes the outreach  
19 efforts by CavityFree SF to communities bearing the greatest burden of tooth decay; and, be it

20           FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco will continue to  
21 support outreach, education, and oral health programs for children, in addition to  
22 strengthening prevention strategies; and, be it

23           FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors recognizes the  
24 month of February 2025 as Children’s Dental Health Month in the City and County of San  
25 Francisco.