



SFG Future Direction & Strategy

January 2025

Overview

The Santa Fe Group (SFG) is a nonprofit, action-oriented think tank committed to improving lives through oral health. SFG’s approach is collaborative, communicative, and catalytic, with a suite of initiatives designed to advance health equity and whole person health. SFG brings creativity, innovative problem-solving, and timely attention to issues affecting health and wellbeing across the lifespan, emphasizing that oral health is essential to overall health. SFG and its partners work to transform key components of the health ecosystem through strategies that include cross-sector convenings, science-driven advocacy, leadership development, and centering person, community, and stakeholder voice.

Over the past 25 years, SFG has taken on many critical issues — from oral health education reform to dental benefits in Medicare — utilizing a diverse array of strategies. As it looks toward the next 25 years, SFG is reaffirming its foundational commitments. Based in a review of past and current initiatives, as well as an assessment of the evolving landscape, SFG has identified two long-term priorities and a set of strategic areas and approaches. Guided by this strategic framework, and undergirded by strong organizational structures and operations, SFG is well positioned to have an even greater impact in the coming years.

SFG Mission: To improve lives through oral health.

Future Direction: Our Guiding Stars

Health Equity: We work toward a society in which all people have fair and just opportunities and resources to attain the best possible physical, mental, and social well-being. In line with Healthy People 2030, we recognize that achieving this vision of health equity “requires valuing everyone equally with focused and ongoing societal efforts to address avoidable inequities, historical and contemporary injustices, and social determinants of health – and to eliminate disparities in health and health care.”



Whole Person Health: We work toward a society in which oral health is an integrated part of whole person health. This means that oral health promotion and the prevention and treatment of oral, dental, and craniofacial diseases are embedded in enhanced public health and health care systems and policies. From interprofessional training and coordinated medical/dental care to holistic community-based initiatives and expanded payment systems, such integration supports community wellbeing, quality of life, and economic viability.



Strategic Areas

SFG has established five strategic areas where it will focus its efforts towards health equity and whole person health. These areas are interconnected components of a health ecosystem that too often separates oral and general health in the domains of care, education, financing, and policy.

Strategic Area 1: Workforce Development

SFG works to build a strong, interprofessional health workforce with innovative leadership that can advance the systemic integration of oral health as an essential component of overall health.

Strategic Area 2: Integration

SFG works toward seamless, bi-directional integration of oral and general health care, with structures in place to support interprofessional care coordination and communication.

Strategic Area 3: Access to Care

SFG works to increase access to care through the integration of comprehensive dental benefits in Medicare and Medicaid, with the right incentives in place to support oral health promotion as well as disease prevention and treatment.

Strategic Area 4: Technology

SFG works toward thoughtful consideration and adoption of new and emerging technologies that support person-centered, integrated health initiatives and systems.

Strategic Area 5: Population Health

SFG works to increase attention to, and resources for, the health priorities of populations with unmet oral health needs such as older adults, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and young children.



Strategic Approach

SFG advances health equity and whole person health through a set of four core strategies, sometimes taking the lead and at other times supporting or catalyzing work led by partners. These strategies are tools in the SFG “toolbox,” which can be used individually or in combination to move change forward in the areas outlined above.

Strategy 1: Partnering & Convening

SFG maintains a broad-based network of partners and collaborates to convene summits, webinars, and other spaces in which diverse stakeholders can share knowledge and develop strategies for action.

Strategy 2: Promoting Science-Based Policy



SFG works with its members and partners to inform, promote, and advance meaningful public and health system policy changes, based in up-to-date research.

Strategy 3: Centering Person, Community, and Stakeholder Voice

SFG seeks to learn from and with individuals and communities facing health challenges to identify priorities, build on existing community efforts, and engage in collective problem solving.

Strategy 4: Building Leadership

SFG empowers emerging leaders in the field who bring fresh and innovative perspectives to the work, offering mentorship, public platforms, and other support.

SFG’s Strategic Framework

