

Focus On Oral Health



A newsletter for North Dakota's oral health community

Autumn/Winter 2012-2013

Dakota Oral Care Workshop held

A Dakota Oral Care (DOC) Workshop was held on September 4 in Bismarck, jointly sponsored by the North Dakota Dental Association, the North Dakota Indian Affairs Commission, the North Dakota Department of Health and DentaQuest, and coordinated by KAT Communications. The goal of the six-hour workshop was to bring tribal community members together to discuss and create pathways to improving oral health in tribal communities. Sixty people including tribal community members, speakers, facilitators, and support personnel attended the workshop. They represented each of North Dakota's tribal communities: Standing Rock, Three Affiliated Tribes, Spirit Lake, Turtle Mountain and the Trenton Indian Services Area.

Scott Davis, Executive Director of the North Dakota Indian Affairs Commission, opened the workshop which was comprised of three keynote presentations, a breakout session and a wrap-up/summary session. Keynote presenters included:

- Peggy Peters and Teri Renville of Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate of the Lake Traverse Band spoke on the topic of "Cavity Free in 2-0-1-3."
- Dr. Terry Dwelle, North Dakota State Health Officer, spoke on the topic of "Community Engagement and Oral Health Behaviors."
- Dr. Roger Davies, Chief Dental Officer for the Standing Rock Service Unit, spoke on the topic of "Oral Health Status in the Aberdeen Area."

Four focus groups were established, based on tribal affiliation, for the workshop breakout sessions. The goals of the groups were to focus on making oral

health a priority for American Indians and discuss how to improve education, access and prevention.

The final workshop session brought the four focus groups together for an overview of the group discussions. An initial review of participant's comments indicated developing trends, including:

- General lack of oral health care awareness.
- Fear of dentists based on the services previously received.
- Shortage of oral health-care providers.
- Need for improved communication and collaboration.

The next step for the group includes visits to each community to see how help can be provided in the areas of prevention, education and access.



Participants at the Dakota Oral Care Workshop participate in a break-out discussion.

DentaQuest grant update

North Dakota is one of 18 states receiving continued DentaQuest Foundation Oral Health 2014 Initiative grant funding (\$150,000 per year for two years). After several Task Force meetings and community forums, a strategic plan for implementation was developed. The plan includes two priority goals for implementation:

1. Increase medical-dental collaboration
2. Increase prevention and public health infrastructure

One step that addresses these priority goals involves offering online training in the Smiles for Life curriculum areas of Caries Risk

Assessment, Fluoride Varnish and Counseling, and Geriatric Oral Health. Health-care providers can receive training online and begin offering fluoride varnish applications to children in the clinic setting.

Another step being taken to address the priority goals is continued and increased work being done on-site for residents in long-term care facilities. Through DentaQuest and Health Resources and Services Administration funding, Bridging the Dental Gap has been working in local facilities and plans to expand services as funding allows.

There were many more needs identified than could be included in the implementation plan. The Task Force recommended/requested that the North Dakota Oral Health Coalition continued to explore action with regard to the following public policy issues:

- Develop low interest loan funds for equipment replacement/purchase.
- Increase Medicaid reimbursement.
- Secure core funding for safety-net dental clinics.
- Continue assessing mid-level provider expanded services.
- Increase availability and use of dental homes.
- Increase dental screenings by physicians.

The poster features a photograph of a female dental professional in blue scrubs smiling and holding a young child who is holding a teddy bear. The text on the poster reads: 'North Dakota Nurses You Can Help Kids Smile. Did you know health-care professionals in North Dakota can apply fluoride varnish to help prevent cavities in children? Smiles for Life offers training at www.smilesforlifeoralhealth.org. Click Fluoride Varnish Module 6. Online Training! 1 contact hour available. For more information, go to www.ndhealth.gov/oralhealth/programs.htm and click Smiles For Life, or call 800.472.2286 (press 1). NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH'.

Coalition News



North Dakota Oral Health Coalition updates:

BSS for Older Adults – The Public Health Hygienists completed the Basic Screening Survey in selected long-term care facilities throughout the state. Results are in progress.

Missions of Mercy project – A new Missions of Mercy project is being planned for October 2013 on the Standing Rock American Indian Reservation.

Elderly Care Program – Bridging the Dental Gap safety-net dental clinic staff currently visits two different long-term care facilities for two days per month and have had more than 550 patient visits. Plans are to expand the program to more facilities.

Legislature – An oral health legislative reception will be held the second week in March. Anyone who would like to have a booth at the reception is invited to contact the North Dakota Department of Health, Oral Health Program, at 701.328.2356.

The next meeting of the North Dakota Oral Health Coalition will be held in March. If you are interested in joining the coalition, please contact Ashley Kopp at 701.328.2356 or akopp@nd.gov.

North Dakota Regional Public Health Hygienists

Jamie Blumhagen, R.D.H.

Hollie Harrington, R.D.H., B.S.

Marlene Hulm, R.D.H.

Helen Rosencrans, R.D.H.

For assistance with oral health needs in your school or community, please contact the North Dakota Department of Health's Oral Health Program at 701.328.2356 or akopp@nd.gov.

Spotlight on State Public Health Hygienists: Hollie Harrington

The North Dakota Department of Health's Oral Health Program employs four Public Health Hygienists (PHH) who provide oral health care around the state. Over the next four issues of *Focus On Oral Health*, we will introduce you to these hygienists. The PHH being featured in this issue is Hollie Harrington.

What is your hygienist background?

I have been a registered dental hygienist since 1993 and have been employed with the state as a PHH since 1994. I graduated with an associate's degree from North Dakota State School of Science.

What are your PHH duties and in which area of the state do you work?

My duties as a PHH include educating public health nurses, pediatric doctors and their staff members, long-term care facility medical staff members, Head Start children, and elementary school students. I also work as a clinician in public schools where I apply fluoride varnish and sealants on consenting students. I have completed media appearances and have worked with the Oral Health Coalition and DentaQuest to promote and advocate for increased access to dental care for underserved residents of our state. I travel to cities that are located east of Highway 281; north to the Canadian border, south to the South Dakota line, and east to the Red River.

I work about 100 hours per month as a PHH and I work at least one day per week at a local dental office to keep my skills current and my private practice experience up to date. No week is ever the same. The variety keeps it challenging and interesting!

You've had some national and state recognition. Tell us about that.

I had an article published in a national dental hygiene magazine in February 2012. I also was selected to attend a leadership conference in Chicago because of my grant application. I was awarded money through the Wrigley Foundation to



be used for dental services for North Dakota veterans who live in the Veteran's Home and cannot afford their care. I have served as president of the North Dakota Dental Hygienists Association. Recognition and awards are great, but I don't do my job for the recognition it may bring. I do it because it is the right thing to do! Many others share my philosophy and ambition to help.

What are you passionate about?

I have a passion for oral health services for underserved populations. I work for a dentist that takes Medical Assistance, so we see many people that could not afford dental care if it was not for that program. I also know many individuals that fall between the income guidelines or have too much pride to ask for dental care or help.

I also am passionate about education. I would like to see a dental education program in all public schools for grades K through 12. The curriculum would include oral health care, healthy snacks, functions of the teeth, the decay process, etc. If we could send an educator to selected schools to teach about oral health, the number of dental problems in kids would hopefully slowly decrease.

Parting thoughts?

It is time to clean up your "dirty" mouth. Start brushing twice a day!



A Carousel of Smiles event was held in Hazen on August 11, with Dr. Priscilla Jelsing, Dr. John Chase and several other volunteers providing services to Mercer County residents. In total, 142 services were provided – dental sealants, fluoride varnish, exams, cleanings, extractions and fillings. More than \$16,000 in dental care was donated during the day to more than 350 people.

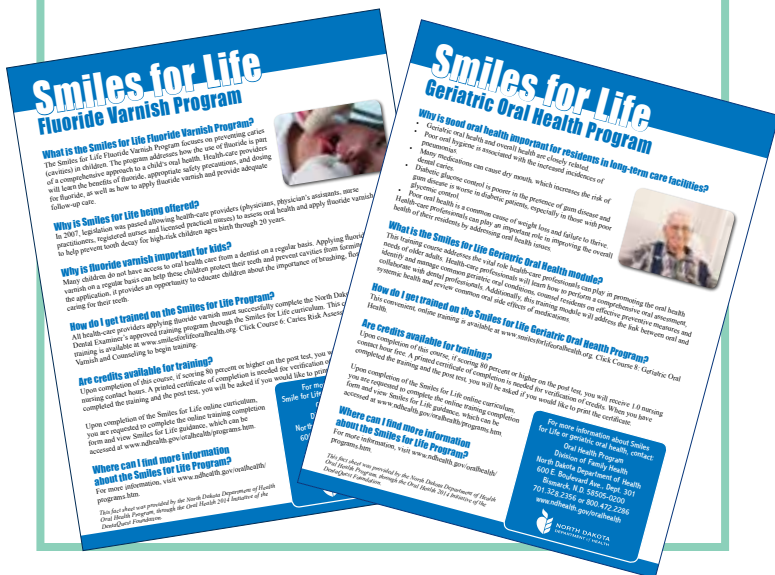
Oral Health Program
 Division of Family Health
 North Dakota Department of Health
 600 E. Boulevard Ave., Dept. 301
 Bismarck, N.D. 58505-0200

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Resources Available

Two new fact sheets are now available detailing the Smiles for Life online training program – Fluoride Varnish training and Geriatric Oral Health training. Go to www.ndhealth.gov/oralhealth/NDSmilesForLife.htm to learn more about the Smiles for Life training curriculum.



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 North Dakota Department of Health
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 Bismarck, N.D. 58505-0200
 701.328.2356
www.ndhealth.gov/oralhealth
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State Health Officer: Dr. Terry Dwelle
 Deputy State Health Officer: Arvy Smith
 Division Director: Kim Mertz
 Program Coordinator: Kimberlie Yineman
 MCH/Oral Health Epidemiologist: Gregg Reed
 Administrative Assistant: Ashley Kopp
 Communications Consultant: Cameo Skager

