

# Focus On Oral Health



A newsletter for North Dakota's oral health community

Winter 2011/2012

## Pediatric Dental Day at Spirit Lake – “a huge success”

The North Dakota Pediatric Dental Day, a project of the Head Start Dental Home Initiative, was held at Spirit Lake Reservation in Ft. Totten, N.D., at the Four Winds School on Sept. 30, 2011. More than 50 dental professionals and 40 volunteers from across North Dakota, and the country, came together to help the children of the Spirit Lake Nation. More than 1,100 dental procedures (worth nearly \$108,000) were performed on 232 children and other recipients. Recipients received dental screenings, cleanings, sealants, fluoride varnish, restorative care, education and prevention materials.

“Children in this area of North Dakota are like so many others, they lack access to regular dental care,” said Kimberlie Yineman, director of the North Dakota Department of Health’s Oral Health Program. “Dental caries and mouth pain often make it difficult for children to function in school and at home. The fact that this large group of volunteers came together to help these children is just amazing. Watching the kids and the families light up with smiles at the end of the day was definitely worth all the efforts that were put into organizing and managing the event.”

Dr. Brent Holman, director of the North Dakota Head Start Dental Home Initiative served as the event lead for the project. “We visited with all the tribal

areas in the state and all of them had dental needs, but Spirit Lake seemed to need the most help, including the need for specialty care,” said Holman. “They were losing the one dentist they did have, so we decided to bring the care to them.”

Special thanks need to be given to many different organizations and people. The America’s Dentists Care Foundation Missions of Mercy (a national non-profit organization based in Kansas) brought in all the equipment and Patterson Dental Supply donated supplies within North Dakota. Nine pediatric dentists, five general dentists, two oral surgeons, and 35 dental staff volunteered their services. A network of 20 to 25 volunteers also was recruited to help as Family Guides and the North Dakota State College of Science second-year dental hygiene students provided education and preventive services to the children and families.

Events that strive to address the unmet oral health needs of residents have been held in other states, with the help of America’s Dentists Care Foundation Missions of Mercy. North Dakota’s event is the first one held in conjunction with an American Indian reservation area, as well as specifically for children. Studies show that American Indian children have three times more dental disease than any other population.

By every measure, the Spirit Lake Pediatric Dental Day was a success, with the benefits going beyond  
*(continued on Page 2)*



## *Spirit Lake Dental Day (continued from Page 1)*

the treatment statistics. The excitement and buzz that was generated in the Spirit Lake Tribal community will hopefully help identify oral health as an important value for children and lead to preventive benefits for not only the children that were seen, but also the children that were not seen. It is hoped that the Spirit Lake Pediatric Dental Day will provide lessons in how to develop public/private partnerships to help American Indian children – children with high need for specialized treatment.

“The whole event was beyond everyone’s expectations – the number of kids who showed up, and the number of dental professionals and others who came to help,” said Holman. “We need to remember, though, that this one event is not a solution. This event needs to draw attention to the huge public health problem that exists across our state – the problem of children and adults who need dental care and either don’t have access to it, or can’t afford to pay for it. Private entities and community, state and federal programs need to work together to take care of our citizens who need help with their dental care.”



*For more photos and a video of the Spirit Lake Dental Day, visit [www.ndhealth.gov/oralhealth](http://www.ndhealth.gov/oralhealth) and click on the Spirit Lake Dental Day link.*

## Coalition News



North Dakota Oral Health Coalition updates:

**Ronald McDonald Charities Care Mobile** – Plans are to launch the Care Mobile services in late January.

**Dental Care for Elderly** – Bridging the Dental Gap clinic in Bismarck has started visiting area nursing homes and offering dental care for the residents.

**Oral Health Coalition 501(c)3 status** – The paperwork to designate the North Dakota Oral Health Coalition as a nonprofit entity has been completed.

**DentaQuest Task Force kick-off** – On Dec. 16, 2011, about 40 dental professionals, public health professionals and other interested volunteers met in Bismarck to begin discussions regarding the implementation of the DentaQuest Oral Health 2014 Initiative grant (see more information about the grant on page 3).

The next meeting of the North Dakota Oral Health Coalition will be held May 11 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. (location to be determined). If you are interested in joining the coalition, please contact Colleen Ebach at 701.328.2356 or [cebach@nd.gov](mailto:cebach@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 [cebach@nd.gov](mailto:cebach@nd.gov).

## **Healthy Smiles and Seal! North Dakota Programs begin work in schools**

The Healthy Smiles Fluoride Varnish and Seal! North Dakota Programs provided their first direct services in elementary schools on Sept. 12, 2011, with the students at Zeeland Public Schools being the first to receive fluoride varnish and dental sealants. To date, approximately 3,000 students at 46 schools across the state have received services through the programs.

The same schools will be revisited in the spring. Fluoride varnish will be applied to the students that previously received it and any students who were previously absent. Sealant retention checks will be completed on the sealants of the second- and sixth-grade students that were placed during the first semester.

Both the Healthy Smiles Fluoride Varnish and Seal! North Dakota Programs are provided at no cost to the students and are funded by a grant through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).



***Jamie Blumhagen, North Dakota Department of Health public health hygienist, poses with a student at Zeeland Public Schools who just received services. Students also received toothbrushes and oral health education.***

## **New grant awarded to North Dakota Oral Health Program**

The North Dakota Department of Health's (NDDoH) Oral Health Program has been awarded a grant from the DentaQuest Foundation to participate in its Oral Health 2014 Initiative. The multi-year initiative aims to eliminate disparities by supporting organizations that are building community partnerships.

Along with 19 other organizations in other states, the NDDoH will design and implement a plan that addresses the needs of underserved populations that have difficulty finding access to oral health care, either due to financial limitations or geographical limitations.

The NDDoH will work with the North Dakota Oral Health Coalition and many other partners, including medical and dental health professionals, business representatives, faith-based groups, community members, insurers, philanthropic groups, state and local policymakers and representatives of the various groups with oral health disparities to identify the reasons people lack access to oral health care and to develop a plan for how to solve those issues.

“Our goal is to develop a strategic plan to address oral health needs in the next decade,” said Kimberlie Yineman, director of the North Dakota Department of Health's Oral Health Program. “The plan will include a component to identify and implement evidence-based approaches to oral disease prevention. When resources are scarce, it is important to implement programs and approaches that we know work and develop sustainability for those efforts.”

The DentaQuest Foundation ([dentaquestfoundation.org](http://dentaquestfoundation.org)) invests in national and community-based efforts to improve oral health for everyone through its support of prevention and access to oral health care, and through its partnerships with funders, policymakers and community leaders.



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## Items Available

A brochure directed at pregnant women that highlights tips for keeping the mother's and the baby's teeth and gums healthy is available from the North Dakota Oral Health Program.

Copies of the brochure can be ordered by calling 701.328.2356 or e-mailing [cebach@nd.gov](mailto:cebach@nd.gov).



The Focus On Oral Health newsletter is published three times per year by:

**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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**Volume 5, Issue 3**

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