



# The Bellwether

Leading Local Efforts to Improve the Nation's Oral Health

A Newsletter of the  
American Association  
for Community  
Dental Programs

Issue No. 1

September 2007

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## News from the Chair

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the American Association for Community Dental Programs' (AACDP's) newsletter. This newsletter is produced by the National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center at the request of the AACDP executive committee. We welcome your submissions, suggestions, and questions. Contact us at [info@aacdp.org](mailto:info@aacdp.org).

AACDP's business meeting was held on May 1, 2007, in Denver, CO, during the 2007 National Oral Health Conference (NOHC). Highlights of the meeting include the following:

Meeting participants elected officers for the upcoming year. The officers include **Larry Hill**, chair; **Maureen Oostdik-Hurd**, chair-elect; **Jackie Campbell**, secretary/treasurer; and **Myron Allukian**, **Amos Deinard**, **Kathleen Endres**, **Judy Gelinias**, **Katrina Holt**, **Carrie Janszen**, **Sharon Perlman**, **Nancy Rublee**, and **Scott Wolpin**, executive committee members.



**Amos Deinard** volunteered to serve as planning committee chair for AACDP's 2008 meeting. **Maureen Oostdik-Hurd** agreed to serve as co-chair and to serve as chair the following year. **Amos Deinard** is also serving on the 2008 NOHC planning committee and is spearheading the development of AACDP's contract for meeting services with the American Association of

Public Health Dentistry (AAPHD) and the American Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors. Meeting participants expressed interest in convening a half-day program on the Saturday preceding the 2008 NOHC, in partnership with the Medicaid/SCHIP Dental Association.

In follow-up to a symposium, *The Dental Therapist and the Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner: What Impact Will They Have on Access?*, convened during the 2006 NOHC, AACDP passed a resolution in support of the Alaska Dental Health Aide Therapist (DHAT) initiative. For more information about Alaska's DHAT initiative, see the article titled *Alaska's Dental Health Aide Therapist Program* in this issue. ■

# 2007 American Association for Community Dental Programs Meeting

**A**ACDP's meeting was held on Sunday, April 29, 2007, in Denver, CO, preceding the 2007 NOHC. The meeting provided an opportunity to honor an AACPD member and to present several dynamic and informative sessions.

**Myron Allukian, Jr.**, presented the AACPD Lifetime Achievement Award for Outstanding Achievements in Community Dental Programs to **Major W. Tappan** for directing exemplary community oral health programs in Denver, CO, while serving as the city's dental director and for his many contributions to improving the oral health of America's communities.

The educational sessions began with **Jim Sutherland**, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Office of Performance Review/Denver Regional Division, presenting information on HRSA's Health Disparities Collaborative oral health pilot, which serves as a model for perinatal oral health and for the prevention and treatment of early childhood caries.

**Barbara Steinberg**, Drexel University College of Medicine, shared her expertise on adolescent and adult females' oral health issues. Her presentation focused on oral health and medical considerations when treating females.

**John Rossetti**, HRSA's Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB), presented an update on HRSA initiatives, including the Office of Head Start/MCHB intra-agency agreement for Head Start activities and the release of *Seal America: The Prevention Invention*, 2nd edition.

**Maureen Oostdik**, Madison Department of Public Health, and **Nancy Rublee**, Price County Health Department, provided an update on Wisconsin's new dental hygiene legislation.



A panel representing several Denver, CO, area programs discussed how they are working to address access to oral health care in Denver and across Colorado. The panel included **Linda Reiner**, Caring for Colorado Foundation; **Major Tappan**, formerly with Denver Department of Health and Hospitals; **Mary Allman-Koernig**, Kids in Needs of Dentistry; **Kara Cody-Carlson**, Dental Aid; and **John McFarland**, Salud Clinic.

The meeting concluded with a presentation by **Burton Edelstein**, Columbia University, who offered insights on working with policymakers to enhance local oral health program capacity. ■

## 2007 National Oral Health Conference

**A**ACDP co-sponsored the session, *Advancing Access to Oral Health Services: An Update on Recent Initiatives*, which addressed various programs and proposals including Alaska's DHAT initiative, the American Dental Hygienists' Association (ADHA) advanced dental hygiene practitioner program, and others. ■

## Save the Date!

The 2007 American Public Health Association (APHA) Meeting will be held on November 3-7, 2007, in Washington, DC. APHA's Oral Health Section will convene a panel discussion with the American Association of Retired People president, the American Dental Association (ADA) senior vice president, Special Olympics International senior vice president, and a member of Senator Edward Kennedy's office staff.

The 2008 NOHC will be held on April 28-30, 2008, in Miami, FL. Don't miss this unique opportunity to network with colleagues from local, state, and federal governments; foundations; academia; and local oral health programs. Find out what others working in programs are doing to address the same problems you're grappling with, and learn how they fund their efforts. ■

## Alaska's Dental Health Aide Therapist Program

Access to oral health care in Alaska is challenging because of the state's size and lack of infrastructure. Villages may be located many miles from each other, with few paved roads connecting them. Residents who get around using small planes, boats, all-terrain vehicles, snowmobiles, and dog sleds can find it difficult to reach locations that offer oral health care. A lack of dentists further exacerbates the access problem, thus making it difficult for families to establish a dental home.

In 2003, Alaska Native tribal health organizations and the Community Health Aide Certification Board developed the DHAT Initiative to deliver diagnostic and basic oral health care (e.g., simple extractions, local anesthesia, restorations using atraumatic restorative technique) in regions in Alaska delineated

by the Indian Health Service. In villages, community health aides provide demonstrations of proper brushing techniques, perform toothbrush prophylaxes, and apply dental varnishes.

The Rasmuson Foundation of Anchorage gathered representatives from the oral health community to observe the DHAT initiative on May 13-15, 2007. The group toured facilities in Anchorage (specialty care), Bethel (regional), Toksook Bay (sub-regional), and Kasigluk (village) to observe the delivery of oral health care. At the conclusion of the site visit, they recommended that a prospective study of DHAT be conducted to evaluate oral health outcomes and the initiative's impact on access to care. They also recommended that representatives from AAPHD, ADA, ADHA, APHA, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention collectively design the study to ensure buy-in of the findings. Efforts are currently under way to seek funding to design and conduct the study.

Adapted with permission from Deina A. Alaska trip—Amos Deina. *Oral Health Section Newsletter* (spring 2007). Available at no charge from the American Public Health Association Web site at [www.apha.org/membergroups/newsletters/section/newsletters/oral/spring07/Alaska+Trip-Amos+Deina.htm](http://www.apha.org/membergroups/newsletters/section/newsletters/oral/spring07/Alaska+Trip-Amos+Deina.htm). ■



# Kentucky School Health Program

The Northern Kentucky Health Department's Coordinated School Health Program staff is trained to provide technical assistance with a variety of health-education curricula and programming. Among other programs, the health department administers a dental sealant program for students who may not be receiving oral health care from other sources.

In 2004, the health department received \$32,000 from the state to begin the dental sealant program. The program was the result of 2 years of preparation by health department staff, local health professionals, school personnel, and community members.

A dental hygienist or a dental assistant from the health department presents students in grades 2 and 6 with an educational program about tooth decay and dental sealants. A volunteer dentist examines students' teeth, and then a dental hygienist place protective sealants on the students' molars. If tooth decay is found, students are referred to a dentist, and the school nurse or family resource center must follow up.

The dental sealant program has portable equipment that staff transports to each school. Staff set up the equipment on the first day of sealant placement and remove it when they have finished placing sealants.

Only schools with at least 40 percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price school lunches may participate. Dentists who participate in the program must accept Medicaid. Each dentist is asked to adopt three schools, and the dentists typically spend 2 hours in each school.

The state has pledged an additional \$16,000 a year to continue the program. Other funding comes from the local health department, Medicaid reimbursement, and fees. Students who are not eligible for Medicaid (regardless of whether they have insurance) or who participate in the State Medical Assistance/Medicaid Program pay a nominal fee for services.



For more information about the Northern Kentucky Health Department's dental sealant program, contact Carrie Janszen, Dental Hygiene Supervisor, at [carrie.janszen@ky.gov](mailto:carrie.janszen@ky.gov). For more information about the health department's Coordinated School Health Program, contact DaNelle Jenkins, Senior Health Educator, at [danelle.jenkins@ky.gov](mailto:danelle.jenkins@ky.gov). ■

## Resources

The Community Oral Health Programs discussion list is a forum for communication between local oral health directors and personnel. The list facilitates discussion about the operation of oral health programs and allows participants to explore potential solutions and share ideas. AACDP members may join the list at [www.mchoralhealth.org/cohp](http://www.mchoralhealth.org/cohp). lasso.

AACDP has developed two publications to help local public health agencies incorporate oral health into public health services.

*A Guide for Developing and Enhancing Community Oral Health Programs*  
[www.aacdp.com/Guide](http://www.aacdp.com/Guide)

*A Model Framework for Community Oral Health Programs Based Upon the Ten Essential Public Health Services*  
[www.aacdp.com/docs/Framework.pdf](http://www.aacdp.com/docs/Framework.pdf)

**HRSA's Health Disparities Collaborative (HDC)** is a national effort to eliminate disparities and improve health care for individuals receiving care from HRSA-supported health centers. The HRSA HDC has developed a systems-approach to organizational change, which can be applied to clinical, financial, and operational quality improvement. A pilot oral health collaborative is ongoing. Tools, measures, and a description of HDC team experiences can be found at [www.healthdisparities.net/hdc/html/home.aspx](http://www.healthdisparities.net/hdc/html/home.aspx).

**The National Network for Oral Health Access (NNOHA)** is a nationwide network of oral health professionals who care for individuals who visit migrant, homeless, and community health centers. The NNOHA Web site contains a collection of information, contacts, and resources for current and prospective members. More information is available at [www.nnoha.org](http://www.nnoha.org). ■

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