



Impressions

Issue 3

Stay Connected to the Bureau of Oral Health and Dental Services

Spring 2016

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A message from DOHC Acting Chair, Chris Oakes

Welcome spring!

The Delaware Oral Health Coalition (DOHC) extends our gratitude to Dominion Dental Services, Inc., for donating 500 dental kits for the fourth consecutive year in recognition of Children’s Health Month. These kits are important for our outreach to early childcare centers to promote oral health awareness and age 1 visits.



Dental kits, donated by Dominion Dental Services, Inc.

The coalition marched forward into 2016 with a renewed focus on partnerships and the top priorities recommended during the 2015 Annual Meeting. Essentially, the DOHC partners developed the roadmap for taking the Delaware oral health plan from vision to reality.

With support from the University of Delaware’s Center for Disabilities Studies team, DOHC Action Groups identified strategies and resources needed to implement our top priorities. In the process, we discovered that many DOHC partner organizations were already engaged in activities that supported oral health and the DOHC priorities for 2016.

Some notable highlights include the innovative work of the Delaware Developmental Disability Council (DDDC). Last year, the council developed and launched a targeted oral health literacy campaign for persons with developmental disabilities. Recently, the group disseminated promotional packets — including brochures and a flash drive with a variety of flyers and short videos — to DOHC members, dentists, and

community stakeholders throughout Delaware to use in their own outreach activities. The DOHC applauds the DDDC for this creative campaign and for making oral health literacy a priority.

In addition, the Delaware TeleHealth Coalition held its first TeleHealth Conference in October, providing a full session and virtual demonstration of teledentistry, an emerging service option for individuals without local access to dental care.

Similarly, the Center for Disabilities Studies collaborated with a diverse network of partners to develop *The Plan to Achieve Health Equity for Delawareans with Disabilities*. Partners embedded oral health throughout this plan and named specific objectives for ensuring access to dental services for persons with disabilities.

We recognize there are many others who work daily to provide oral health and dental services to those in need and who make significant contributions to the individuals and communities they serve. The DOHC would like to support these activities and invites those individuals to join us in our continuing efforts to ensure optimal oral health for all Delawareans. To learn more about the DOHC, visit the Delaware Oral Health Coalition website.

Mark your calendar and plan to attend the 2016 DOHC Annual Meeting on Oct. 7, 2016 at Dover Downs in Dover, DE. We look forward to seeing you there and another year of successful collaboration.

Chris Oakes, ADRC Project Manager/Planner for the Delaware Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities (DSAAPD), serves as acting chair of the DOHC.

Now Available: Oral Health Toolkit for Non-Dental Professionals



Improving oral health for all Delaware residents is one of Delaware's greatest public health and wellness opportunities. Dental disease is virtually 100 percent preventable, yet it is one of the most common chronic conditions in Delaware and across the United States.

This is a battle we can win, but it cannot be done by dentists alone.

As trusted sources of information, there is no better messenger than health, civic, and community service organizations like yours. We need a broad range of support to make oral health a priority.

Together, we can deliver oral health resources with the power to truly improve the quality of life for so many of our residents. This is why we developed a simple toolkit to help you easily make oral health part of your organization's everyday activities. The oral health toolkit was made possible with a grant from the DentaQuest Foundation.

Goals of the Oral Health Toolkit:

- Integrate oral health into a wide range of non-dental organizations by providing free and customizable web-based tools.
- Share best practices, success stories, and partner contributions to create an active community of oral health champions.
- Connect oral health with overall health and increase the well-being of the communities where we live and work.

Toolkit Materials:

These easy-to-use tools will help you empower your clients to take control of their oral health. They are free and can be customized to meet the specific needs of your organization.

Get started today. Visit www.DelawareOralHealthToolkit.org to download the following materials:

- Implementation Guidelines & Best Practices
- Evaluation/referral worksheet
- Oral Health 101 webinar
- Dental Resource Guide
- Educational brochures
- Newsletter articles

Brushing for Brighter Smiles serves more than 250 children

The Brushing for Brighter Smiles Program, made possible by a grant from the DentaQuest Foundation, finished another fantastic year. This year, the program served more than 250 children statewide from underserved, low-income families and children with disabilities.

The children who participated learned the importance of personal oral hygiene, utilizing the American Dental Association (ADA) curriculum. That was followed by an interactive discussion with Howard the Puppet, who was born with Cerebral Palsy.

Children also learned about Cerebral Palsy and how an individual with the condition might have difficulty with a regular toothbrush and therefore benefit by using an

adaptive toothbrush. Children also watched a short ADA video titled "Dudley Visits the Dentist," and learned about a typical dental office visit.

A dental hygienist demonstrated the proper method of brushing and flossing by using an oversized model of teeth and a toothbrush. After the presentation, each child had an opportunity to demonstrate his or her newly learned skill to the dental hygienist. Each child was rewarded with a "goodie bag" that included a toothbrush, toothpaste, brushing timer, dental floss, stickers, and dental health information for parents. Teachers received folders containing oral health information and presentation to continue promoting oral health education in class.



Hygienist Corner

Oral Health During Pregnancy

There is so much to think about before, during, and after pregnancy, including your oral health. Left untreated, severe gum disease may be associated with pre-term birth and low birth weight. That is why taking good care of your teeth during pregnancy is more important than ever.

A study shows that children whose mothers have poor oral health and high levels of oral bacteria are at greater risk for developing tooth decay and gum disease, compared with children whose mothers have better oral health and lower levels of oral bacteria.

Dental care

Plaque remaining on your teeth can irritate the gums, making them red, tender, and likely to bleed easily. Due to fluctuating hormones, pregnant woman might experience an exaggerated response to plaque called “pregnancy gingivitis,” a reversible mild to moderate inflammation of the gums. If left untreated, gingivitis may lead to more serious periodontal (gum) disease, which can ultimately result in tooth loss. Dental treatment during pregnancy is safe, effective, and essential to your overall health.



- Visit your dentist for professional dental care before, during, and after pregnancy.
- Brush your teeth with fluoridated toothpaste at least twice a day and clean between teeth daily with floss or an interdental cleaner.
- If you vomit, rinse your mouth with a teaspoon of baking soda in a cup of water to stop acid from eroding (damaging) your teeth, wait 30 minutes, and then brush your teeth.

Diet and nutrition

Eating a balanced diet throughout pregnancy is important to provide the correct amounts of nutrients to nourish both you and your baby. Did you know that your baby’s primary teeth (baby teeth) begin to form between the third and sixth months of pregnancy? It is important that you receive sufficient amounts of nutrients such as calcium, protein, phosphorous, and vitamins A, C, and D that are essential for proper teeth development.

During pregnancy, many women have the desire to eat between meals. While this is a normal craving, frequent snacking may increase the risk of developing tooth decay and gum disease.

- Eat fewer foods high in sugar like candy, cookies, cakes, and dried fruits.
- Choose snacks that are low in sugar: fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat yogurt, and cheese.
- Drink water or low-fat milk instead of juice, fruit-flavored drinks, or sodas.

Helpful Resources

American Dental Association: www.ada.org

Delaware Oral Health and Dental Services: <http://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/hsm/ohpfirstsmilede.html>

Association of State & Territorial Dental Directors: www.astdd.org

New York State Oral Health Care during Pregnancy and Early Childhood: <http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/0824.pdf>

National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center: http://mchoralhealth.org/materials/consensus_statement.php

Improving Access to Oral Health Care for Delawareans with Disabilities

Adults with disabilities in Delaware experience significant disparities in oral health and access to oral health services. According to *The Plan to Achieve Health Equity for Delawareans with Disabilities* in 2015, 58.6 percent of adults with disabilities received their last dental visit within the past year, compared to 72.8 percent of adults without disabilities. According to the Delaware Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) in 2010, 62.3 percent of adults with disabilities reported having their teeth cleaned within the past year, compared to 76.4 percent of adults without disabilities; 7.9 percent of adults with disabilities reported having all their permanent teeth removed because of tooth decay or gum disease, compared to 3.3 percent of adults without disabilities.

The Center for Disabilities Studies at the University of Delaware has received funding through the Division of Public Health (DPH) to begin to address these disparities. The first step is to collect information on oral health, experiences with dental care, and unmet needs from adults with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities. The following types of disabilities are targeted in this survey: blind and visual impairments; deaf and hearing impairments; physical disabilities; and mild intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The information will be used to develop training for dentists and oral hygienists in Delaware. The goal is to help them become more sensitive to the needs and preferences of people with disabilities, which can improve access to oral health care and services among Delawareans with disabilities. The survey will be distributed in April 2016. Contact Katie Rosch Hegedus at 302-831-3206 or khegedus@udel.edu if you or someone you know wishes to participate in this survey. We greatly appreciate your assistance.

2016 Oral Health Student Drawing Contest Winners

The Bureau of Oral Health and Dental Services is pleased to announce the five winners of its 2016 Oral Health Student Drawing Contest. Each winner received a Philips Sonicare™ toothbrush. All submitted entries received a dental care bag, which included a toothbrush, toothpaste, and floss.



Triniti Benitez-Rogers, Age 9,
W. Reily Brown



Madeline Francis, Age 9,
W. Reily Brown



Haley Jones, Age 7, Light House Christian School



Mekhi Jones, Age 7, Light House Christian School



Eden Midgett, Age 7, Light House Christian School