# Delivering Meals and Oral Health

In an effort to help homebound seniors brush up on their oral health care, the Massachusetts

Dental Society (MDS) recently partnered with four local Meals on Wheels programs to provide more than 4,000 toothbrushes and denture brushes to low-income seniors who participate in the meal delivery program.

So far, the MDS has partnered with Bristol Elder Services of Fall River; Elder Services of Cape Cod and the Islands, Inc.; Greater Springfield Elder Services, Inc.; and Kit Clark Senior Services in Dorchester. In the future, the MDS hopes to partner with other Meals on Wheels programs in the state.

"Because oral health is tied to nutritional health, it is always part of the nutritional assessment of our seniors," says Linda Zevitas, nutrition program manager of Elder Services of Cape Cod and the Islands. "By donating toothbrushes and denture brushes to our program, the Massachusetts Dental Society is helping our seniors maintain healthy teeth and gums, which leads to better eating."

This initiative is part of the MDS Council on Access, Prevention, and Interprofessional Relations' *Lasting Impressions* program, which is designed to educate mature adults as to the importance of good oral health.

"Many seniors are on fixed incomes and therefore, may have difficulty accessing even basic oral care," says Robert Boose, EdD, executive director of the MDS. "Providing toothbrushes and denture brushes to an organization that distributes meals to these seniors seemed like a logical fit and a great way to help."

For information on *Lasting Impressions*, including a list of dentists who make home visits, please contact the Massachusetts Dental Society at **(800) 342-8747** or visit our Web site at *www.massdental.org*.



On July 24, 2007, the MDS Foundation Mobile Access to Care (MAC) Van traveled to Camp Harbor View, a camp for underprivileged children located on Boston Harbor's Long Island, to provide dental services to camp attendees.

This unique day camp—the result of a new partnership among the City of Boston, Camp Harbor View Foundation, Inc., and the Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston—opened in July as a safe haven for approximately 650 inner-city children. The program's mission is to provide a safe, dynamic, and challenging summer camp experience for Boston youths between the ages of 11 and 14.

The idea for the camp came about during a conversation between Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino and Jack Connors Jr., president of the Camp Harbor View Foundation. Mayor Menino expressed concern about the fact that violence among teenagers is a growing problem in many of the city's neighborhoods and is especially problematic during the summer months when school is out of session. He thought that an organized program that provided teens with a structured environment every day might help alleviate the problem. Together, they teamed up and raised \$10 million to support this project, according to a *Boston Globe* article.

"This was a very moving location to bring the

Van to," states Ellen Factor, MAC Van program manager. "Children who would have otherwise never had a true camp experience were having the time of their lives, and while they were there, the MAC Van team was able to provide them with much-needed dental services."

"I've never seen kids so happy to be in a dentist's chair," says Mr. Connors. "We are very grateful to the Massachusetts Dental Society for the MAC Van's visit to Camp Harbor View, and we hope that it will come back again next year."

Most likely, the children's need for basic dental services will still be there next year. "Many of the children treated at Camp Harbor View have dental problems consistent with children who do not have access to routine dental care," says Mark Roseman, DDS, MAC Van clinical consultant.

This year, the MAC Van had to limit the number of days that it visited the Camp due to the weight restriction on the bridge that connects Long Island to Quincy. Work is being done on the bridge to remedy the weight restriction issue for next summer, and alternative methods of delivering oral health care (e.g., mobile dental chairs) will also be addressed. The MAC Van will work closely with the Camp Harbor View Foundation over the course of the year to respond to the oral health needs of the children who attended the Camp this past summer.

"Thank you for taking care of my two-year-old daughter. I didn't know how I was going to be able to afford to take her to the dentist, and I had no way to get her there."

—A teenager from Fall River, August 2007



# MAC Van Treats 1,000th Patient

On October 2, 2007, the MDS Foundation Mobile Access to Care (MAC) Van reached a significant milestone: Treating its 1,000th patient. This milestone occurred at the Newton Creative Start, which is one of Communities United Inc.'s Head Start locations. This class of three-year-olds received a plaque commemorating the event, and each child received a dental puzzle and crayons in celebration.



Communities United Inc. is a private, nonprofit organization that operates quality preschool/child care programs at a reasonable cost to communities throughout Massachusetts, including Arlington, Brookline, Newton, Waltham, Watertown, and Woburn.

"Having the MAC Van come to our facility was wonderful," says Lori Howe, acting executive director for Communities United. "Many of these children lack the means to receive care. It was terrific to see the smiles on their faces as they left the Van.

"This is an amazing service that you are offering," she continues. "We were thrilled to be part of the 1,000th patient celebration."

Since its February 2007 launch, the MAC Van has traveled around the state providing free care to underserved children. If you are interested in volunteering your time on the MAC Van or would like to make a donation to help it continue in its mission to provide care to those in need, contact Ellen Factor, program manager, at (800) 342-8747, ext. 228, or email efactor@massdental.org.

# Sign Up and Give Kids a Smile

The American Dental Association's annual *Give Kids a Smile®* Day will be held Friday, February 1, 2008, and it's not too early to think about how you can participate and make a difference in a child's life.



Through this program, dental professionals around the country have been donating their time and resources to help children get the dental care they need but can't afford. The day also serves to raise awareness to policymakers and parents that oral health is integral to overall health.

According to the ADA, 2007's *Give Kids a Smile* Day resulted in 751,214 children receiving treatment from 14,315 participating dentists and 37,820 other volunteers, with an estimated \$72 million worth of care delivered.

To learn more about *Give Kids a Smile* or to sign up to participate in a program—or start your own program—visit the ADA Web site at *www.ada.org*. You can also contact the MDS at (800) 342-8747 or visit *www.massdental.org* for updates or information about local programs.

# Mobile Access to Care (MAC) Van Update

During the months of July and August, the MAC Van traveled to the following locations:

- Chelsea Boys & Girls Club
- Spanish Club (Leominster)
- Southborough Senior Center
- Medfield Senior Center
- Fall River Celebrates Festival
- Camp Harbor View (Boston)
- Lowell Boys & Girls Club

In addition to the nearly \$200,000 worth of services rendered on the MAC Van, approximately \$64,000 in time has been donated by dentists, dental hygienists, and dental assistants since the MAC Van's launch in February of this year.

In addition to its regular weekly schedule, beginning in late September and running through December the MAC Van will provide services every Friday at the Dorchester House Community Health Center. The Dorchester House has a long waiting time for appointments for children, so it is partnering with the MAC Van to address the needs of the children. One operatory on the MAC Van will be supported by the Dorchester House staff and the other operatory by MAC Van volunteers.

If you are interested in volunteering on the MAC Van for this program or providing patients with a dental home after they've received treatment on the MAC Van, contact Ellen Factor, MAC Van program manager, at (800) 342-8747, ext. 228, or email *efactor@massdental.org*.

## MAC Van Service Schedule\*

| Week                      | Location   |
|---------------------------|--|
| November 5, 2007          | Berkshire District/Berkshire Head Start  |
| November 12, 2007         | Cape Cod District/Cape Cod Community College and Cape Cod Boys & Girls Club                                    |
| November 26, 2007         | TBD  |
| December 3, 2007          | Worcester District/Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School and Worcester Boys & Girls Club |
| December 10, 2007         | Cape Cod District/Cape Cod Community College and Cape Cod Boys & Girls Club                                    |
| December 17, 2007         | North Metropolitan District/Chelsea Boys & Girls Club  |
| *Subject to change. Visit | www.mdsfoundation.org/macvan for schedule updates.   |

## Natick Dentists Launch Access Initiative

Massachusetts Dental Society dentists in Natick are partnering with the Natick Service Council to develop a unique pilot program to provide low-income families with access to oral health care.

Through a \$146,000 grant from the Metro-West Community Health Care Foundation, the Service Council recently created a program called *Supporting Smiles* to offer oral health services primarily to income-eligible adults and children who don't qualify for dental coverage under MassHealth. However, all Natick dentists participating in this project have also agreed to enroll as MassHealth providers so that they can offer services to those who do qualify under Medicaid. The grant is for a period of 18 months and is renewable for an additional two years.

"This program definitely addresses an important need in the community," explains Peter Delli Colli, DMD, an MDS member who has served on the Board of the Service Council for the past 10 years and who is spearheading the effort. "We felt that it was important for people in need to have access to the same dental services as those who can afford it."

Dr. Delli Colli, who personally called every dentist practicing in Natick and asked them to join the effort, says this approach worked with his colleagues. "So far, not one dentist has said no," reports Dr. Delli Colli, who adds that more

than 20 dentists have already signed up to participate, including enrolling in MassHealth. "I think that most dentists do some form of free care anyway, even if they don't publicize it. This way, they can contribute within a structure that allows them to provide services in their own community and to receive some reimbursement."

By participating in *Supporting Smiles*—which Dr. Delli Colli describes as "relationship-based"—patients will be encouraged to see a local dentist with whom they may have had a prior relationship. As part of the grant, a case manager has been hired by the Service Council to work with those seeking dental care. An office assistant/client advocate is also being recruited. In addition, the Service Council van will be available to take patients to and from appointments, if transportation is needed.

To qualify for the *Supporting Smiles* program, families can earn up to 300 percent of the federal poverty level. When enrolled, they are required to make a copayment for dental services, which will help keep them invested in their treatment relationship. Among the services being offered are routine exams, cleanings, and fillings; however, crowns, partials, and dentures are not included in the services provided as part of this program.

While patients may initially go to the dentist to address episodic dental issues, it is expected that through this access initiative, their relationship with the dentist will become long term.

"Dentists recognize that we are part of the solution to the access problem, so



Dr. Peter Delli Colli

this program is one way that we can collectively have a long-range, positive impact to improve the lives of these families," states Dr. Delli Colli, who estimates that nearly 250 patients will be treated once the project begins later this year. "But we also know that the dental needs will far exceed the number of people we can actually serve."

Now in its 45th year, the Natick Service Council is a charitable, community-based, non-profit organization that provides a wide range of assistance programs for the economically disadvantaged, including a Food Pantry.

For more information on *Supporting Smiles*, contact the Natick Service Council at (508) 655-1791 or visit **www.mynatick.org/servicecouncil.** 

# State Legislature Begins to Address Access-to-Care Issue

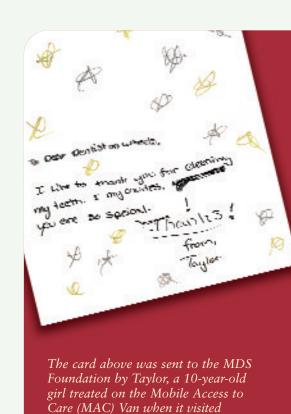
The Massachusetts Dental Society has been successful of late in bringing oral health matters, especially the access-to-care issue, to the forefront of the legislative arena. The legislature has acknowledged this important public policy by including budgetary language that required the promulgation of caseload capacity regulations and the implementation of a third-party administrator for the dental portion of MassHealth.

Beacon Hill leaders and the MDS continue to work on a host of issues to improve access, including an increase in state Medicaid reimbursement rates. When the adult program was restored last year as part of the sweeping Health Care Reform legislation, the reimbursement rates were not updated from 2002. The volunteer dental license bill, which the MDS

filed this year, would also help the access crisis. This bill would make it easier for retired dentists to volunteer their time and expertise in qualified, free-care programs.

Although dentistry has put forward several solutions to the access problem, it will take the effort of the legislative and executive branches of state government to truly formulate a comprehensive plan to expand and enhance access to care for all of the Commonwealth's residents.

For more information on the Society's legislative efforts to improve access to care, contact Bob Alconada, director of governmental affairs, at (800) 342-8747, ext. 233, or email balconada@massdental.org. For more updates on the MDS's legislative agenda, visit www.massdental.org/legislation/agenda.



Salisbury, MA, in August.



## Spotlight on Volunteers

The following MDS member dentists and staff generously donated their services and time to help make a difference in children's lives on the MAC Van during June, July, and August 2007.

Dr. Mario G. Aboujaoude

Dr. Robert Baskies

Dr. Norman Becker

Dr. Todd Belf-Becker

Dr. Michael J. Boschetti

Dr. Leo P. Corev

Dr. Louis DeVito Jr. Dr. John P. Fisher

Dr. John A. Gagliardi

Dr. Yvette O. Glina

Dr. Jeyasri Gunarajasingam

Dr. Philip B. Howells

Dr. Maria Kritsineli Dr. Donald Lemay

Dr. John R. McDonald

Dr. George A. Orfaly

Dr. Christopher R. Page

Dr. Nicholas A. Perrotta Dr. Paul A. Raymond

Dr. Philip M. Robitaille

Dr. Charles L. Silvius

Dr. David L. Steinhof

Dr. Mary Terkoski

### **Dental Assistants**

Darlene Ciulla Junko MacDonald Christina Costa Helen Macy Joy Fisher Mirela Pronjari Viki S. Silverberg Stacie Flener Michelle Thibault Cassie Frias Crystal LaFountain Janice Williams

### Dental Hygienists

Julie A. Bisleglia Adele Camara Virginia G. Burns

Gretchen Nahkala

### Postdoctoral Pediatric Residents

Dr. Ibtyhal A. Al-Amoudi

Dr. Emad A. Al-Badawi

Dr. Shadi Mohammadi Araghi

Dr. Moaz H. Attar

Dr. Abeer I. Basunbul

Dr. Guillermina M. Blandon

Dr. Laura Camacho-Castro

Dr. Jessica Chiang

Dr. Wesam Hussein Damanhouri

Dr. Htet Htet Dr. Shiow-Jiin Jaw

Dr. Elizabeth Jellock-Katz

Dr. Arathi Kumble

Dr. Hector R. Martinez Dr. Bettina Paehler

Dr. Kristin E. Seibel

Dr. Linda L. Tran

Dr. Gisela Velasquez

### Dental Hygiene Students

Gail Andrews Stacey Duretchan Patricia Hartford Lisa Koontz Stephanie Langford **Iennifer Stewart** 

# Senior Pilot Program Launched for MAC Van

The MDS Foundation Mobile Access to Care (MAC) Van has made great strides in providing free care to underserved children since its February inception. While treating children remains the primary focus of the MAC Van efforts, another segment of the population is also in need of help: senior citizens. As a result, the MAC Van has begun a pilot program to provide oral cancer screenings at area senior centers when time allows in the children's schedule.

Oral cancer is the sixth most common cancer in men, accounting for 34,000 newly diagnosed cases each year and 8,000 deaths, so it is important that seniors are screened. Oral cancer is responsible for more deaths than cervical cancer, Hodgkin's disease, and skin cancer. Less than half of all oral cancer patients are cured, because the disease usually isn't diagnosed until it is in its later stages.

"Early detection is key to positive outcomes. By evaluating seniors, we can detect early warning signs of potential problems and help to save lives," says Mary Jane Hanlon-Rogers, DMD, a consulting dentist for the MAC Van. "Additionally, in our role as health care providers, it is critical that we detect any suspicious areas as early as possible." Dr. Hanlon-Rogers was on the MAC Van at the Southborough Senior Center, where the first 10 seniors were screened for oral cancer in July.

During a visual oral examination, dentists look for suspicious spots or sores and con-



duct a brush biopsy on any suspicious sightings. The dentist uses a small brush to take a tissue specimen, which is then sent to a laboratory for analysis to determine the presence of precancerous or cancerous cells. The screening is a simple, painless procedure that takes less than 10 minutes to complete.

The MAC Van pilot program is being promoted on local senior citizen Web sites and through their newsletters and bulletins.

If you would like to volunteer to help on the MAC Van or want more information about the program, contact Ellen Factor at the MDS at (800) 342-8747, ext 228, or email efactor@massdental.org.

## **Massachusetts Dental Society**

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