

# ACCESS *update*

Fall 2009

## MAC Van Helps Boston Kids Go Back to School

For the second year in a row, the Massachusetts Dental Society (MDS) Foundation Mobile Access to Care (MAC) Van provided free dental screenings to 48 children at the 2nd Annual Boston Public Schools Back-to-School Jamboree held on Saturday, September 5, 2009. (For an update on the MAC Van, please see “Continuing on the Road to Improving Access to Care” on page 4.) The event took place on City Hall Plaza and was hosted by Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino, the Boston School Committee, and Boston Superintendent of Schools Carol R. Johnson. Approximately 8,000 Boston school students and their parents spent a beautiful afternoon on City Hall Plaza enjoying this year’s Back-to-School Jamboree, which featured games, dancing, performances, prizes, and health care services.

MDS members Mahpareh Marefat, DMD, and Abol Massih Tehrani, DMD, as well as members of the 2008–2010 MDS Leadership Institute class, volunteered their services for the day on the MAC Van as part of an ad hoc research project they are completing for the Leadership Institute. The leadership class is currently working on an assignment that involves developing a framework for the creation of the Community Service Guide for Districts, a Web site that will help dentists across Massachusetts learn how to effectively take part in community outreach programs.

“Participating in the Jamboree gave us hands-on experience that we can leverage to create our blueprint for the districts,” says Dr. Marefat. “It was a terrific experience.”

Children received free dental screenings onboard the Van and went home with a letter for their parent or guardian



Dr. Tehrani and dental hygiene student Nicole Chase take a break on the MAC Van.

outlining the findings of the dental exam. The patients who indicated that they did not have a dentist but had MassHealth coverage were provided with a list of MassHealth providers in their area. The patients who indicated that they did not have a dentist or MassHealth were given an application for the MDS MassDentists CARE (Combining Access with Reduced Expense) Program, which provides access to a dentist for children whose families do not qualify for MassHealth. Each child also received a goodie bag filled with a toothbrush, toothpaste, dental floss, a toothbrush holder, and stickers. The total dollar value of the services rendered was \$3,648.

“The MAC Van was glad to be a part of the Boston Public Schools Jamboree; it was a great way for children to receive dental screenings while preparing to head back to school,” says Ellen Factor, assistant director of membership, district relationships, and access programs. “The event also allowed families to obtain important oral health information.”

In addition to Drs. Marefat and Tehrani, a big “thank you” goes out to MDS member Renu Maewall, DMD, and her dental assistant Simin Bastani, who also volunteered their services for the day. Dr. Maewall brought along her husband, Sanjiv, and sons Avik and Ankit to help distribute oral health information to Jamboree attendees. Also helping out at the event were dental hygiene students Kayla Duggan and Nicole Chase from Mount Ida College.

These dental professionals gave up a day of the Labor Day holiday weekend to provide care to underserved children. By receiving dental screenings and educational materials at no cost, some of these children may have gone back to school with a bigger smile than ever before.

For more information about the MDS Foundation, please visit [www.mdsfoundation.org](http://www.mdsfoundation.org).



Dr. Maewall (center), her husband, and two sons take a break from distributing oral health information with dental assistant Simin Bastani and dental hygiene students Kayla Duggan and Nicole Chase.

*“Oh, I thought this van was taking us to the dentist!”*

— A 7-year-old boy treated on the MDS Foundation Mobile Access to Care (MAC) Van, expressing his disbelief over a fully functioning dental clinic on wheels.





## MassHealth Member Spotlight

ACCESS UPDATE has been speaking with MDS member dentists across the state regarding their experiences as MassHealth providers. Eric Chen, DMD, a general dentist in Holyoke, has been a MassHealth member since 1990.

### Q. What motivated you to join MassHealth?

A. I believe that you cannot treat patients differently based on the type of insurance they have and refuse to treat them. If they live in the community, we have an obligation to treat them.

### Q. What were your expectations when you joined?

A. At first, I considered this a form of community service. Then I realized that without drastic administrative improvement of the program and full support of the dental community, people will not get the care they deserve and suffering will continue.

### Q. What do you like most about the program?

A. Most patients are compliant to your comprehensive treatment plan since there's no co-pay requirement, unlike self-paying patients, who often dictate what needs to be done and when they want it based on financial considerations.

### Q. What do you think could still be improved upon?

A. A lack of participation from the specialists, especially endodontists and periodontists, has a great impact on the continuation and consistency of the treatments provided. Fee enhancement to both specialists and generalists is necessary to achieve this goal, as well as the "Drive to 65" [the MDS's goal of having 65 percent of its membership become MassHealth providers.]

### Q. Is there any one experience with a MassHealth patient that stands out in your mind and that made you think to yourself, "This was the right thing to do"?

A. I remember a patient from Martha's Vineyard I treated in the late 1990s. She was in her late 30s, already in need of full mouth extractions and a complete set of dentures due to years of neglect and lack of dental care. She left home around 5:00 a.m. to catch the ferry, then drove to Holyoke for the appointment. That's close to 400 miles round-trip and up to seven hours in traffic each visit for dental care! She did all this in six visits because she couldn't find a dentist on the Vineyard or Cape Cod area who would accept MassHealth. At that time, close to one million MassHealth members were denied basic dental needs due to lack of access.

### Q. How much personal satisfaction have you received from helping people in need?

A. It's hugely rewarding knowing that you made a difference in another person's life. They can get back on their feet and improve the quality of their lives all because of you.

### Q. Based on your experience, what's the one thing you would say to a colleague to encourage him or her to join?

A. Every dentist can help. Start by locating one family in your community and offer them appointments. Join us—you can make a difference!

## Tufts' Division of Special Care Offers a Dental Home

Students and graduates of the Tufts University School of Dental Medicine (TUSDM) incorporate a wide range of training into their education, including treating children and adult patients. They are also, however, learning to treat—and give dental homes to—special-needs patients throughout the Commonwealth.

The Tufts Division of Special Care in Dentistry is a collaboration among TUSDM, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, and the Department of Developmental Services. TUSDM offers a postgraduate General Practice Residency (GPR) Program, where five to six dental residents per year cycle through the Division of Special Care in Dentistry, spending approximately 40 percent of their time working with special-needs patients.

"The GPR Program provides unique comprehensive training opportunities in the special-needs population and has provided access to care for thousands of patients since its inception," says MDS member Gina M. Terenzi, DMD, director of the GPR program. "Our goal is that all program graduates continue to incorporate special care and educate others in special care throughout their careers in the communities they choose to serve."

In addition to the residency program, the Tufts Dental Facilities (TDF) provide comprehensive oral health services at eight clinics located throughout the state. The TDF clinics, located in Amherst, Baldwinville, Hathorne, Palmer, Shrewsbury, Taunton, Waltham, and Wrentham, provide comprehensive dental services to special-needs children, adults, and geriatric patients who might otherwise not receive dental care. Recent state budget cuts may threaten the busiest clinic, however: the Fernald Developmental Center in Waltham, which houses one of the Tufts Dental Facilities, is slated to close in June 2010.

The clinics are each specially equipped to be fully handicapped-accessible, with wide hallways and oversized operatories to accommodate wheelchairs and gurneys. All TUSDM students are also required to perform a special-care rotation while in dental school. Performed during their fourth year of education, students spend a week fully immersed at one of the three largest TDF clinics in the state—Taunton, Waltham, or Wrentham.

There are approximately 9,000 patients active in the system per year, and roughly 95 percent of the patients have MassHealth. The majority of the patient population comes from various care facilities in the Commonwealth, including state homes

The Tufts Dental Facilities are designed with oversized operatories to accommodate wheelchairs and gurneys, such as the wheelchair this patient is being treated in.



and community-based centers. Specially trained dentists at the facilities treat patients with a wide range of mental and physical disabilities, such as Down syndrome, autism, blindness, deafness, and Huntington's disease.

Through the TDF clinics, the GPR program, and the special-care rotation, students at TUSDM are exposed to patients from all walks of life. By caring for patients with special needs, dental students and postgraduate residents at Tufts are able to give dental care and a smile to those who may have previously gone without treatment.

For more information, please visit <http://dental.tufts.edu>.

## Boston University Dental Students Bring Smiles to Summer Picnic

A summer picnic usually involves hot dogs and hamburgers on the grill, ice cream, and games for the kids. But for the Boston Public Health Commission's Healthy Baby/Healthy Child (HBHC) Program, children and their families also received oral health screenings and educational information from students at the Boston University Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine (GSDM).

The HBHC initiative is a community-based program designed for Boston mothers and families who are expecting a baby and/or have children under the age of five. By focusing on healthy pregnancies, positive birth outcomes, family unity, and oral health, the program strives to educate mothers, children, and families, while providing a variety of health care services. Through a network of community-based organizations and neighborhood health centers, women and their children receive educational information and health care services.

Part of this valuable program includes a Summer Enrichment Program, a seven-week series of recreational and educational activities for families during the months of July and August. The HBHC summer picnic at Stony Brook Reservation, which straddles West Roxbury and Hyde Park, was the program's end-of-summer event. Student volunteers from GSDM's Division of Community Health Programs provided activities and free oral health screenings to children at the picnic.



Mom Chyna Loving and daughter Essence receive oral health education from BU student Rehab Alabduljabbar, DPH '12, and puppet Roo Roo.

"We try to create an inviting dental table and offer dental arts and crafts, oral health information relevant to this group, toothbrushes, toothpaste, floss, and dental screenings in a fun and interactive way," says GSDM Oral Health Promotion Director Kathy M. Lituri, RDH, MPH. "Our aim is to engage the children and parents in conversations about oral health and to assess and address any oral health issues or concerns they may have."

The volunteers at the picnic were able to interact with children and their parents, offer oral health advice and instructions on tooth-brushing techniques, and perform no-cost dental screenings for the children. While the picnic marked the end of the summer season for these families, it also hopefully marked the beginning of a lifetime of good oral health.

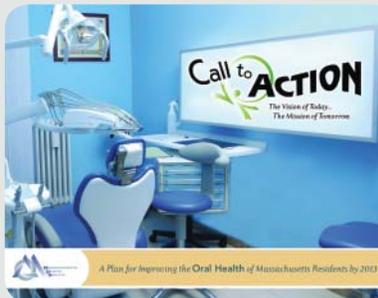
## MDS Develops *Call to ACTION* Grassroots Strategy

This year was an important one for the Massachusetts Dental Society (MDS), as the *Call to ACTION: The Vision of Today...The Mission of Tomorrow*, a detailed plan for improving the oral health of all Massachusetts residents within five years, was unrolled to nearly 5,000 MDS member dentists, as well as legislators, schools, community groups, and other interested parties. To further the mission of this important document, the MDS Council on Public Affairs (CPA) has launched a grassroots strategy effort that involves interested member dentists who will spread the word about the *Call to ACTION* across the state.

The *Call to ACTION*, detailed in a 24-page booklet that took more than a year to research and produce, outlines the steps that the MDS will take within the next five years to improve oral health in the state with the help of state legislators and other stakeholders. These steps include

increasing MDS member dentist participation in MassHealth, proposing legislation requiring dental exams for all children as they enter school for the first time, and enhancing the oral health structure of the state and creating new dental auxiliary positions.

The grassroots strategy, developed by the CPA with the assistance of the MDS Committee on Communications as well as the MDS's political consulting group, Capitol Consulting, will involve interested member dentists across the state. These dentists will speak on important *Call to ACTION* issues in their communities, either through local cable TV access programming or by writing letters to the editor to their local newspapers.



"Through our grassroots outreach initiative, the Massachusetts Dental Society partners with member dentists who volunteer to serve as ambassadors for the *Call to ACTION* in their communities," says Laurie K. Curtis of Capitol Consulting Group. "These spokespersons are the personal voice of the *Call to ACTION* as they advocate with local media, community groups, and colleagues in the cities and towns where they live and practice."

The dentists will have training resources to allow them to better interact with the media and their communities on important oral health issues. Those interested will also conduct peer outreach to colleagues in their area of the state.

"While dentists provide the backbone of oral health services for the Commonwealth, we do so in an unassuming, often unrecognized or under-recognized manner," says MDS member Paula K. Friedman, DDS, who is chair of the CPA. "As a result, public policymakers are often unaware of our role in maintaining and restoring oral health across the aging continuum."

The *Call to ACTION* serves to remedy that, as it places dentists at the forefront of oral health issues that impact everyone from children to an aging population. The grassroots strategy enables dentists to continue to spread the word about the document's mission to those in their profession and in their communities.

"We are proud of the successes that we have accomplished and look forward to increased participation across the dental profession in advancing oral health as a key-stone for a predictor of overall health," says Dr. Friedman.

For more information on the *Call to ACTION*, please visit [www.massdental.org/calltoaction](http://www.massdental.org/calltoaction).



## 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 MDS Foundation Mobile Access to Care (MAC) Van during July, August, September, and October 2009.

### Dentists

Dr. Evette Bakhit  
 Dr. Peyman Beigi  
 Dr. Betsy Disharoon  
 Dr. Jean Douillette  
 Dr. Jim Drew  
 Dr. Finn Esrason  
 Dr. Ian Fessler  
 Dr. Mark Finkelstein  
 Dr. Paula Friedman  
 Dr. Neela Gandhi  
 Dr. Yelena Gutnichenko  
 Dr. Deborah Himelhoch  
 Dr. Krista Kane  
 Dr. David Katz  
 Dr. Ann Kirk  
 Dr. Cara Lund  
 Dr. Renu Maewall  
 Dr. Mary Marefat  
 Dr. Arnold Nadler  
 Dr. Nan Niland  
 Dr. Kristin Olsen-Smith  
 Dr. Diana Pardo  
 Dr. Dennis Pezzolesi  
 Dr. Mamatha Polavarapu  
 Dr. Nooruddin Pradhan  
 Dr. Thomas Puschak  
 Dr. Sujatha Revur  
 Dr. Marilyn Rivero  
 Dr. Anubha Sacheti  
 Dr. Jay Schwab  
 Dr. Abol Tehrani  
 Dr. Mary Terkoski  
 Dr. Richard Tutin  
 Dr. Katy Vitiello  
 Dr. Kevin Wendell  
 Dr. Susan Wu  
 Dr. Rebecca Zakelj  
 Dr. John Zarrella  
 Dr. Marc Zauderer

### Dental Hygienists

Marcia Kaufman  
 Holly Petruzzo

### Dental Assistants

Yajaira Aguasvivas  
 Lindsay Baker  
 Simin Bastani  
 Diane Boggs  
 Yudelka Casado  
 Kim Cook  
 Mary DeMaina  
 Kelsey Lamoureux  
 Susan Lipsett  
 Carol Marenholz  
 Ellie Moura  
 Jane Myung  
 Elizabeth Reimers  
 Ariany Silva

### Dental Hygiene Students

Nicole Chase  
 Kayla Duggan

### Community Volunteers

Ankit Maewall  
 Avik Maewall  
 Sanjiv Maewall

Thank You

## Massachusetts Dental Society

Two Willow Street, Suite 200, Southborough, MA 01745-1027  
 (508) 480-9797 • (800) 342-8747 • Fax (508) 480-0002  
[www.massdental.org](http://www.massdental.org)

Address service requested

PRSRT STD  
 US POSTAGE  
 PAID  
 WORCESTER MA  
 PERMIT NO. 2

## Continuing on the Road to Improving Access to Care

With the completion of the MAC Van Program, including grant and corporate funding as a three-year project, the MDS Board of Trustees recently appointed a Task Force to identify new opportunities for the mobile dental unit in order to continue to provide care to even more populations in need.

As a result, the Task Force recommended that the MDS make the Van available to other institutions, such as the dental schools, to give students more of an opportunity to serve the growing oral health needs of children and adults. Expanding the Van program beyond the MDS to the dental schools and to existing community outreach programs also addresses important goals highlighted in the Society's *Call to ACTION* by supporting access-to-care opportunities for dental students and at community health centers.

With this new direction, the MDS will not be coordinating the MAC Van's activities in each MDS district. Instead, when the Van is not being used by other institutions, the mobile unit will be made available by request to the districts for either clinical or oral health promotional purposes, providing that the district assumes operational and logistical responsibility for these programs. The Van will continue to give our

members opportunities to volunteer their time and talent to residents in their own communities through district-sponsored activities.

Since its three-year project launch in February 2007, the MAC Van has provided care to more than 4,000 patients, resulting in nearly \$1 million in free care. During this time, more than 500 dentists have volunteered their services on the Van.

The MAC Van staff and the MDS Foundation greatly appreciate all the support our members have given to the Van. We look forward to your continued participation in a wide range of other MDS-sponsored programs in the future to improve the oral health of all residents of the Commonwealth. Meanwhile, the Society's Leadership Institute ad hoc group is currently working to develop other ways members can volunteer their services.

Specific information on how MDS districts can now utilize the Van will be made available on the Society's Web site by the end of November. For questions or more information, please contact Ellen Factor, assistant director of membership, district relationships, and access programs, at [efactor@massdental.org](mailto:efactor@massdental.org) or visit [www.massdental.org/mac.van](http://www.massdental.org/mac.van).

