

ACCESS *update*

Summer 2009

Oral Health Officials Convene to "Put the Mouth Back in the Body"

During the morning of Tuesday, June 16, 2009, approximately 160 oral health advocates from across Massachusetts and as far away as Washington, DC, convened at the Omni Parker House Hotel in Boston to discuss a topic that the Massachusetts Health Policy Forum hadn't previously covered: oral health. The Massachusetts Dental Society (MDS) and the DentaQuest Foundation (formerly the Oral Health Foundation) cosponsored the event, which was attended by MDS member dentists, staff, dental school professionals, and other community leaders dedicated to the oral health of Massachusetts residents.

This particular Forum was entitled "Putting the Mouth Back in the Body: Improving Oral Health Across the Commonwealth" and featured two panels of distinguished and knowledgeable speakers who discussed the current state of oral health in Massachusetts, as well as the direction the Bay State needs to take to improve oral health for all its residents.

"The continued collaboration of organized dentistry, the state legislature, regulatory boards, and other agencies is critical in addressing the access-to-care issue," says MDS President Dr. David Samuels, who moderated the first panel.

All attendees received a copy of the Forum's position paper and Executive Summary, which outlined oral health care disparities in the state and current advances in state legislation. Panelists included the cochairs of the State Legislative Oral Health Caucus, Massachusetts Senator Harriette Chandler and State Representative John Scibak. MDS members Dr. Catherine Hayes, professor and chair of the department of public health and community services at Tufts University School of Dental

Medicine, and Dr. Judith Jones, professor and chair of the department of general dentistry at Boston University Goldman School of Dental Medicine, also presented. Officials from the nation's capitol and

other executives invested in oral health comprised the remainder of the panels. Each session also included a question-and-answer period that engaged the audience and had interested parties lining up to voice their opinions and pose additional questions.

The Massachusetts Health Policy Forum is a nonprofit collaboration of the Schneider Institutes for Health Policy at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University in Waltham. The Forum is dedicated to progressing the health care system in the Commonwealth by invoking discussion and research through symposia on various health-related topics. The Forum publishes issue briefs on each topic, as well as follow-up conference findings.

For more information about the Massachusetts Health Policy Forum, please visit <http://masshealthpolicyforum.brandeis.edu>.



State Senator Harriette L. Chandler (D-Worcester) addresses those gathered at the Massachusetts Health Policy Forum at the Omni Parker House Hotel in June.

A Dental Visit . . . A One-Year-Old's Best Birthday Present

By the Office of Oral Health, Massachusetts Department of Public Health

The American Dental Association recommends that a child's first visit to the dentist occur within six months of the eruption of his or her first tooth, and no later than the child's first birthday. Results of a 2008 Massachusetts Department of Public Health survey showed that just 2.1 percent of dentists reported seeing children under 12 months of age for their first visit, and more than 50 percent of dentists reported seeing a child at 3 years of age or older for the child's first dental visit.

Head Start, a comprehensive early education program for children from birth to 5 years

of age who come from families with incomes below the poverty level, is invested in children's overall health and has mandates in regard to dental care. Federal regulations require all children enrolled in Head Start in Massachusetts to have a dental examination by 12 months of age and twice yearly thereafter. In recent years, the Massachusetts Head Start Program has cited difficulty in conforming to the federal regulations regarding dental care, due in part to the difficulty in accessing dental providers, especially for those children enrolled in Early Head Start programs.

Early dental care is necessary for a lifetime of healthy smiles, but for children at highest risk for dental disease—such as those from low-income homes and the developmentally delayed—early dental care is especially important. The majority of children enrolled in Head Start are also enrolled in MassHealth. By becoming a MassHealth provider, you can help children receive the early dental care they need. Dentists can play a key role in a child's overall health—and it all starts with that first dental visit, the best birthday gift a child can receive.

"I brush my teeth, but we don't own any floss."

—An 8-year-old girl treated on the MDS Foundation Mobile Access to Care (MAC) Van



Pittsfield Dental Offices Open Wide for Free Care Day



Dr. John-Michael Stewart (left) takes a break from treating patients to greet Pittsfield Mayor James M. Ruberto.

"We live in a place where a lot of folks choose to pay for heat instead of their teeth," says Dr. Stewart. "These are not people who could have this done if they made an effort. These are people who simply cannot do this on their own."

This was the third New England-based Project 31 event. The next free dental care event was held on July 25, 2009, in Bennington, Vermont.

The following MDS members also donated their time and participated in the free dental care day:

Michael Dominov, DDS
Robert J. Edwards, DDS
Alan Gold, DDS
Jon Gotterer, DMD
Edwin Helitzer, DMD
Eric Holmgren, DMD, MD
Scott Lightfoot, DDS, MS
Michael Wasserman, DDS
Louis Yarmosky, DDS
Steven Yarmosky, DDS

as well as dental assistants, dental hygienists, and office volunteers, donated eight hours of their time to treat patients on a first-come, first-served basis.

"The patients are so appreciative. There is a huge population of people working who financially do not qualify for MassHealth and whose employers do not offer dental insurance," says Dr. Stewart. "A majority of these people want to have a nice smile to give them the self-confidence that will carry them into a job interview."

Patients who received treatment filled out release forms and had their blood pressure taken, along with a complete health history. Basic restorative work was performed, including X-rays and extractions. Approximately \$170,000 worth of free care was provided by the volunteer dental team members.

"They all feel so rewarded," says Oral Surgery Associates Office Manager Paula Sherman, regarding the volunteers. Sherman and Dee Crane, office manager for Pittsfield dentist, and MDS member John George, DDS, helped coordinate the event.

The Pittsfield Rotary Club and other community sponsors also helped with event publicity and donations. A van was contributed by a local automotive dealer to shuttle patients to the offices of MDS members Drs. Charles St. John and James P. (Pat) Carsell for less-invasive dental treatment.

For more information, visit the International Team for Implantology's Web site at www.iti.org.



The waiting room at Oral Surgery Associates quickly fills up as adults wait for free dental treatment.

By 5:00 in the morning on Saturday, May 2, 2009, a line of people was quickly forming outside in the predawn light in Pittsfield. These adults, however, were not in line for U2 concert tickets or the latest iPhone. Instead, they were waiting for something far more valuable—free dental care that they may have otherwise gone without.

Approximately 200 adults received dental treatment at the offices of Oral Surgery Associates, organized by Massachusetts Dental Society member John-Michael Stewart, DMD. Arranged in conjunction with Project 31—a venture established by the International Team for Implantology to help adults obtain much-needed dental care—the day offered free treatment to those in need. Area dentists,

Mobile Access to Care (MAC) Van Update

MAC Van Helps "Happy Campers"

Nestled in Westwood, Massachusetts, on 1,100 acres of unspoiled woodlands, winding streams, extensive hiking trails, and scenic ponds sits a retreat for many Massachusetts children. Hale Reservation is home to the Hale Day Camp, which partners with nine other camp organizations to provide a summer experience for children who might otherwise not have the opportunity to attend summer camp. These children come from urban communities such as Dorchester and Roxbury, as well as suburban communities like Waltham and Needham.

This summer, the Massachusetts Dental Society Foundation Mobile Access to Care (MAC) Van joined the Hale Day Camp to provide dental services to underserved camp attendees. In total, 75 children from the Bird Street Community Center in Dorchester, the Waltham Boys and Girls Club, and the Watertown Boys and Girls Club received care. A large "thank you" goes out to MDS member Dr. Jay Schwab for helping to facilitate the MAC Van connection at Hale Reservation. Dr. Schwab not only brought the location

to the MDS's attention, but also volunteered his time to treat the children. MDS member dentists Drs. Iveta Iontcheva-Barehmi, Ray Martin, and Diana Pardo, also volunteered their time, as did dental assistant Elizabeth Reimers.

"We could not have performed these services without the dedication of our volunteers, who took time out of their summer to help these children," says MAC Van Program Manager Ellen Factor.

From the MAC Van Program's inception in February 5, 2007, through July 31, 2009, the Van has provided \$878,986 of free care to 4,060 patients. The time donated by all the volunteers is valued at more than \$322,000. Please join your colleagues and consider donating your time or a financial contribution to support the MDS Foundation MAC Van.

Contact Ellen Factor at efactor@massdental.org or call (508) 480-9797, ext. 228 to find out how you can get involved. You can also donate online at www.mdsfoundation.org/giving.





MassHealth Member Spotlight

ACCESS UPDATE has been speaking with MDS member dentists regarding their experiences as MassHealth providers. Charles Silvius, DDS, a general dentist in Revere and secretary of the MDS, has been a MassHealth member since 2008.

Q. What motivated you to join MassHealth?

A. There were two factors that influenced my decision to participate in the MassHealth Program. First, I felt a moral imperative to help those less fortunate. Second, I knew in dealing with legislators that they are largely unaware of the amount of free or discounted treatment that dentists already provide to the public. The only parameter that the legislature considers is the number of dentists who participate in MassHealth. Therefore, if we want to influence legislation, we need to be seen as a group who will play an active role in solving the access-to-care problem.

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

A. A great deal. It's the main reason most of us become dentists.

Q. What were your expectations when you joined?

A. As a dentist who left the Medicaid Program years ago due to myriad problems with that "broken" system, I had low expectations for the new MassHealth.

Q. What do you like most about the program?

A. Clearly, helping patients who otherwise would not receive care is the most gratifying aspect of being a dentist in the MassHealth Program.

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. Not really any one experience. Several times, I have treated children knowing that this was going to be the first step in a life of good dental health for these youngsters.

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

A. The state could allow Doral [the program's third-party administrator] more autonomy to run the program modeled on a conventional insurance company.

Q. How has being able to limit the number of MassHealth patients you treat helped you to manage your participation in the program and benefited your practice?

A. It's the singularly most important change in the program. I can participate without fear of being inundated.

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

A. Try it—you'll like it!

MDS Foundation—Increasing Access to Care

In alignment with its Mission Statement, the Massachusetts Dental Society Foundation is developing new initiatives to explore ways of increasing access to oral health care. By forming an endowment, the MDS Foundation will be able to strengthen the "dental safety net" in Massachusetts. The Foundation seeks to help fund programs, such as expanded dental services at community health centers and dental care for the elderly. In order to increase funding, we need continued support from our member dentists and industry leaders.

This year brought new efforts to plant the seeds of philanthropy. In addition to our annual golf tournament in June, we have launched cultivation opportunities, as well as recognition programs and events in order to grow our major donor base.

Spring Cocktail Reception

On March 19, 2009, more than 40 major donors and their guests gathered at the Hyatt Regency in Cambridge to share success stories about the MDS Foundation and listen to plans about the future from Foundation President Dr. Richard LoGuercio and Dr. Alan K. DerKazarian, the first member of the Founder's Society (donation in excess of \$25,000).

2009 Golf Tournament

On June 29, 2009, the MDS Foundation hosted the 8th Annual Golf Tournament Fundraiser at Turner Hill Golf Club in Ipswich. More than 130 golfers enjoyed a day of golf on the spectacular course, and an additional 25 guests joined the group later in the day for the dinner and auction. The event was a huge success, raising more than \$53,000 for the Foundation.

Friends of the MDS Foundation

The Friends of the MDS Foundation celebrate dentists, friends, organizations, and businesses who put themselves on the front line to provide access to care for children, working families, and the elderly across Massachusetts by generously contributing at Recognition Club levels.



A list of benefits, as well as ways to donate, can be found by visiting the Foundation Web site at www.mdsfoundation.org.



Massachusetts Dental Society

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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 April, May, and June 2009.

Dentists

Dr. Lichelle Aldana
Dr. Arthur Balian
Dr. Norman Becker
Dr. Robert Blake
Dr. Kerri Bourgeois
Dr. Hanif Butt
Dr. Thomas Cahill
Dr. Susan Camacho
Dr. Anne Marie Clancy
Dr. Diba Dastjerdi
Dr. Chris DiPietro
Dr. Catherine Do
Dr. Linda Drennen
Dr. Michael Eidelman
Dr. Russell Forman
Dr. Anabel Franciskato
Dr. Geraldine Garcia-Rogers
Dr. Anthony Giamberardino
Dr. Bruce Goldman
Dr. Kevin Grace
Dr. Eli Factor
Dr. Cynthia Fox
Dr. David Handsman
Dr. Barbara Hauschka
Dr. Yogita Kanorwalla
Dr. Maria Kritsineli
Dr. Richard LaFauci
Dr. Donald LeMay
Dr. Peter McAllister
Dr. Vivek Mehta
Dr. Arnold Nadler
Dr. Charles Nemser
Dr. Jill O'Connell
Dr. Kristin Olsen-Smith
Dr. Sara Perkins
Dr. Nicholas Perrotta
Dr. Fred Perry
Dr. Dennis Pezzolesi
Dr. David Piech
Dr. Barbara Preussner
Dr. Paul Raymond
Dr. James Reid
Dr. Stephen Scannell
Dr. David Schmid
Dr. Robert Shamey
Dr. Ed Swiderski
Dr. Kathryn Vitiello
Dr. Jessica Walter
Dr. Sheri Weldon
Dr. Kevin Wells
Dr. Rebecca Zakelj
Dr. John Zarrella

Dental Assistants

Sharon Ambrose
Jessica Bessette
Kim Cook
Angelica Corcoran
Mitzie Czyzewski
Mary Ellen Daigneault
Shelley Delyer
Betzaida Diaz
Lauren Eddy
Karen Fitzsimons
Paula Flynn
Diane Gardner
Nicole Gaudet
Mona Hatami
Mary Ellen Hutchinson
Victoria Inamorati
Debbie Ingalls
Trisha Mieczkowski
Maria Mustone
Sharon Nemser
Heather Parris
Yen Pineiro
Kim Purcell
Joanne Redfield
Jessica Rivera
Ellen Rizzuto
Cheryl Robbins
Cathy Rossi
Emily Scott
Jasna Selman
Marlene Soden
Melody Spring
Amanda Stasio
Linda Syriac
Holly Therien
Cindy Tourville
Ann Wynn
Sandra Yarkey

Graduate Students

Dr. Mohamed Ahmed
Dr. Hooman Arjomand
Dr. Aurora Alva
Dr. Asma Alyahya
Dr. Michelle Anderson
Dr. Kat Dorosti
Dr. Arash Goli
Dr. Gülsün Gül
Dr. Catherine Kalis
Dr. Niloo Khalessch
Dr. Ian Kott
Dr. Jorge Landa
Dr. Luana Santos
Dr. Theresa Spignese
Dr. Milad Vanili
Dr. Santhosh Veeranna
Dr. Tae-Rim Yoon
Dr. Sarah Zawawi

Dental Hygienists

Tiffany Bairos
Virginia Burns
Cheryl Fahey
Frieda Friedman
Lisa Greenbush
Debbie Hurlley
Maggie Ricardo
Shannon Stockwell
Holly Theriah
Elaine Trotter

Dental Program Gives Island Kids Some "Vineyard Smiles"

The island of Martha's Vineyard off the southeastern coast of Massachusetts is a beautiful summer retreat. But for many of the island's year-round residents, access to oral health is a challenge, especially for children. However, one local access program is trying to change that.

Vineyard Smiles is a program of Island Health, Inc., in partnership with the Vineyard Health Care Access Program. The DentaQuest Foundation provided an initial planning grant in 2005 to conduct a dental needs assessment of low-to-moderate-income children and adults on Martha's Vineyard. The assessment showed that for the underserved, access to dental care on the island was limited, and the oral health of many was poor. Getting off-island to receive necessary dental care can be time-consuming and expensive for many families.

"There's very limited fluoridated water on the island," notes Vineyard Smiles

Program Director Sarah Kuh, talking about the state of oral health on the island. "Most [families] are on well water. Also, there were no MassHealth dentists for some time."

The Vineyard Smiles Program was developed to provide school-age children with access to a dentist on a regular basis, in an environment where they already feel comfortable—their school. The oral health services are provided by Commonwealth Mobile Oral Health Services (CMOHS), which is based in Lakeville. CMOHS visits five elementary schools and one high school on the island on 50 out of 180 school days. Students in prekindergarten through 12th grade receive free dental cleanings, sealants, X-rays, fluoride varnishes, extractions, and some restorative work, all at a portable dental station that can be easily transported from one school to the next.

In addition to dental visits, an oral health curriculum is taught to those in kindergarten through second grade through the Vineyard Smiles Program. As part of "Tooth Tutoring," a dental assistant goes into the classroom to teach children about brushing and flossing, healthy snacks, and the importance of fluoride.

The mother of one child treated by the program is very grateful for Vineyard Smiles. "It has been a huge relief for working families, who cannot afford dental insurance and who struggle to provide good preventive dental care," she says. "Offering the services at the schools is a tremendous benefit."



For more information about the Vineyard Smiles Program, please call (508) 696-0020.