

ORALHEALTH_{ri}

A Quarterly Oral Health Newsletter of the Rhode Island Department of Health

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Acting Director, RI Department of Health

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Donald L. Carcieri
Governor

HEALTH NEWS

Mini-Grant for Elder Oral Health Project

The Oral Health Program, Office of Primary Care, RI Department of Health, in collaboration with the RI Department of Elderly Affairs, will implement the *Providence Senior Smiles Project*, an oral health promotion/disease prevention and surveillance project, at selected sites serving non-institutionalized elders in Providence. The mini-grant for the State-based Examples of Network Innovation, Opportunity and Replication (SENIOR) Grant Program is funded by the Association of State and Territorial Chronic Disease Program Directors, with support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Association of State Units on Aging, and Administration on Aging.

The *Providence Senior Smiles Project* seeks to identify unmet oral health needs, establish oral health promotion/disease prevention priorities, develop recommendations to address needs based on community resources, and strengthen interdepartmental/interdisciplinary partnerships for the benefit of targeted low-income and racially/ethnically diverse elders. It is anticipated that the project will provide a model that can be replicated in other areas of the state and favorably impact access to prevention services for seniors, thus reducing the burden of oral disease among targeted elders in RI. For more information, please contact Maureen Ross, Oral Health Program Director by phone [401-222-1171] or email [Maureen.Ross@health.ri.gov].

Collaboration in Action: Working with Family Advocates to Improve the Health of Rhode Island's Young Children and Families

By Larry Pucciarelli, Head Start Collaboration Director and Susan Libutti, Program Manager, Comprehensive Child Care Services, RI Department of Human Services

Rhode Island's Head Start/Early Head Start (HS/EHS) agencies and Comprehensive Child Care Services Program (CCCSP) are dedicated to helping young children succeed. HS/EHS, a comprehensive child development program serving children from birth to age five, pregnant women, and their families, seeks to foster success by providing a range of individualized services for children from low-income families in the areas of education, early childhood development, medical/dental/mental health, nutrition, and parent involvement. Most importantly, services are responsive and appropriate to each child's/family's developmental, cultural, and linguistic heritage and experience. Currently, more than 3,000 children participate in HS/EHS programs offered by agencies throughout the state [Cranston, East Bay, Kent County, Providence, South County, Tri-Town, and Woonsocket]. Funded by the federal Administration for Children and Families, the state's HS Collaboration Office at the RI Department of Human Services (DHS) coordinates state/federal initiatives and endeavors to strengthen families' connections to critically important issues, including children's oral health.

The innovative CCCSP, established by DHS as a result of Starting Right, the RI Early Care and Education Initiative, also supports families in preparing children (ages 3 years-kindergarten) for school success. The DHS Office of Child Care certifies four childcare networks that offer comprehensive services similar to HS to over 300 children in families below 108% of the federal poverty level (FPL). Traditional childcare settings typically do not offer this range of services, which may include health/nutrition/safety education, mental health services, support for children with disabilities, and family education/empowerment programs. While children from low-income families receive comprehensive services, the program impacts all 1,200 preschool children enrolled at CCCSP-certified childcare sites. For example, when the CCCSP mental health consultant observes preschool classrooms and recommends strategies to improve conflict resolution, all children at the school benefit.

Recognizing that children's oral health is essential to their ability to learn, play, speak, socialize, and succeed, the HS Collaboration Office and CCCSP, along with the RI

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HS Association, have been partnering with the Oral Health Program (OHP), Office of Primary Care, RI Department of Health. In January 2005, the partners collaborated to sponsor the Family Advocate Training Conference, which convened 120 family advocates/family workers from HS/EHS, CCCSP and AmeriCorps who work individually via regular home visits with the families of 3,500+ children living at/below the FPL. Family advocates provide counseling, help families access local community resources, report suspected child abuse/neglect, and assist in emergency or crisis intervention for families.

The purpose of the training was to increase the knowledge of best practices and prevention opportunities related to oral health, mental health, and childhood nutrition among family advocates who can convey and facilitate a better understanding of effective prevention practices among the families they serve. A recent UCLA/Johnson & Johnson study statistically supported this goal when a 38% reduction in emergency room use was found among HS parents

who were educated to recognize childhood illness by appropriately trained HS staff. Since the training, family advocates have been utilizing the training manual resources, along with the health promotion/disease prevention materials included on CD-ROM, directly with families during home visits and as a reference/resource guide in their day-to-day work.

The conference featured presentations from experts in three focal areas. Mark Lucier, DMD, Chief Resident at the Pediatric Dental Center, St. Joseph Hospital, provided an excellent overview of the normal development of primary/secondary teeth and eruption/exfoliation patterns, the warning signs of an unhealthy mouth, and effective oral disease prevention strategies. Haven Miles, MSW, LICSW, Early Childhood Clinical Consultant from The Providence Center, provided a wealth of information on how to work effectively with families by making strong connections with parents, which can lead to behavior changes in families. Kara Caron, MS, RD, State WIC Nutrition Coordinator, Division of Family Health, RI Department of Health, ended the day with a lively and informative overview of new approaches to child nutrition, battling "junk food" and childhood obesity, and how to support children and families who try new strategies at the dinner table. By the end of the presentations, it was clear that behavior change depends strongly on the integration and adoption of healthful education by parents, the prime educators of their children.

Endorsed by the RI Early Childhood Oral Health (ECOH) Coalition, the Family Advocate Training Conference was one of the promising strategies identified at a statewide oral health forum in May 2004 and included in the *RI Early Childhood Oral Health Action Plan*. The planning of the training conference provided an excellent opportunity to reinforce effective collaborative partnerships among key members of the ECOH Coalition. It is anticipated that the relationships built within the Coalition will be expanded and additional opportunities for effective integration of early childhood programs into statewide oral health efforts will arise.

Amended Dental Rules and Regulations Take Effect

The amended *Rules and Regulations Pertaining to Dentists, Dental Hygienists, and Dental Assistants* were filed with the RI Secretary of State on November 1, 2004 and became effective on November 21, 2004. The revised regulations may be viewed on the Secretary of State's website: www.rules.state.ri.us/rules/released/pdf/DOH/DOH_3215.pdf. Questions about the revised regulations may be directed to Ms. Gail Guiliano, Dental Board Administrator via e-mail [GailG@health.ri.gov] or telephone [401.222.1392]. Copies are available to any interested person by contacting the Division of Health Services Regulation at 401.222.1039. Copies are available also in Braille, large print, audiocassette, and electronic file.



National Oral Health Conference: May 2-4, 2005

The annual *National Oral Health Conference: Confluence of Research, Education and Practice* will be held in Pittsburgh, PA from May 2-4, 2005. Pre-conference sessions take place April 29 – May 1, 2005. Sessions will focus on issues and topics relevant to research, academia and programs highlighting how these areas of public health integrate toward achieving the goal of "Optimal Oral Health for All." More information can be found on the websites of the American Association of Public Health Dentistry (www.AAPHD.org) or the Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors (www.ASTDD.org). This is the 6th Joint Meeting of the ASTDD, AAPHD, and their sponsors, the Health Resources and Services Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Editorial Policy

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Comments? Questions?

Articles, ideas and announcements from readers are welcome. Contact the Oral Health Program at:

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New Tools to Help Combat Childhood Obesity

In response to the growing epidemic of childhood obesity in this country, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) has developed two DVDs to teach children and their parents about smart eating and physical activity and to educate clinicians about the best ways to prevent and treat obesity in children.

AHRQ partnered with FitTV, the newest network from Discovery Networks, to produce a fun and interactive DVD called *Max's Magical Delivery: Fit for Kids*. This 30-minute tool designed for families and children ages 5-9 offers fun ways to incorporate physical activity and healthy foods into children's daily lives. The DVD features healthy tips on ways parents can make incremental changes in the way their families eat and exercise each day, as well as entertaining and informative segments with an energetic cast of child actors. AHRQ is partnering with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), and others to distribute copies of the DVD to clinicians and promote use of the DVD to patients.

Produced in partnership with the Discovery Health Channel, a second DVD for primary care providers, *Childhood Obesity: Combating the Epidemic*, offers information on new methods for assessing and treating childhood overweight and obesity. It features a panel discussion with Donald Shifrin, MD, of the AAP obesity task force; Rick Kellerman, MD, from the AAFP board of directors; and Francine Kaufman, MD, who heads the Division of Endocrinology and Metabolism at Childrens Hospital in Los Angeles. This 55-minute program provides helpful clinical tools – such as body mass index measurement in children – in addition to tips for initiating and sustaining behavior change in children. The DVD also includes the children's version, *Max's Magical Delivery*.

To preview both DVDs or to order copies, go to www.ahrq.gov/child/dvdobesity.htm (publication no. 04-0088-DVD, children and parents, and 04-0089-DVD, clinicians). *Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, AHRQ Pub. No. 05-0008, October 2004, ISSN 1537-0224.*



Rhode Island Oral Health Access (OHAP) Project Update

Work towards transitioning the Medicaid dental benefits to a Dental Benefits Manager (DBM) delivery system continues. Most recently, the RI Department of Human Services (DHS) convened two subgroup meetings, which included detailed benefit analysis and discussion with a group of RI stakeholders, including the RI Dental Association, community-based dental centers, insurers and advocates. DHS has contracted with an actuarial firm with impressive experience in Medicaid dental program analysis in other states. They will provide crucial pieces of information as the project moves forward including evaluating the anticipated impact on expenditure trends and utilization. The actuarial firm also will price the various options that have been developed. DHS has held its first internal operations workgroup meeting and continues to draft the DBM Purchasing Specifications.

The 14 projects funded by the OHAP's Grants Program continue their efforts to increase access to oral health care in Rhode Island. CareLink, Inc. has developed several financial models that project the financial

ramifications of providing nursing home residents with access to oral health care. The Donated Dental Services program obtained nearly \$100,000 in donated dental treatment for approximately 50 individuals in the latter half of 2004. St. Joseph Hospital welcomed two new pediatric dental residents who will be providing care to hundreds of children during their training program. After screening nearly 1,800 children in the spring and fall of 2004, the school-linked dental programs implemented by St. Joseph Hospital/Fatima Health Center (Pawtucket), Northwest Health Center (Burrillville), East Bay Community Action Program (Newport), and Thundermist Health Center (Woonsocket) have begun to provide cleanings and sealants on-site in schools and report that families are following up on referrals for restorative care at the respective host organizations. At least half of the programs have reported that they have secured additional funds to either expand their program to other communities or expand their service capacity in terms of staff and/or hours of operation.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

RI Board of Examiners in Dentistry

RI Department of Health, Providence, RI
May 18, 2005 @ 8:00 AM

For information, call Gail Giuliano at 401.222.2151

RI Special Senate Commission on Oral Health

State House, Providence, RI
June 1, 2005 @ 8:30 AM – 10:00 AM

For information, call Marie Ganim at 401.222.1772

Oral Health Professional Advisory Council

RI Department of Health, Providence, RI
June 29, 2005 @ 7:30 AM – 9:00 AM

For information, call Laurie Leonard at 401.222.2433

RI Early Childhood Oral Health Coalition

Cianci Center, 99 Berkshire St., Providence, RI
June 24, 2005 @ 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

For information, call Deb Fuller, DMD at 401.222.3044

RI Dental Association

High-Tech Management Applications (7 CEUs)

RI Convention Center, Providence, RI
May 18, 2005 @ 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

For information, call Valerie Donnelly at 401.732.6833

RI Dental Hygienists' Association

New Advances in Forensic Science Technology (3 CEUs)
Providence Marriott Hotel

April 30, 2005 @ 8:30 AM & 1:00 PM

"Breathless in Boston" Pulmonary Disorders and the Dental Patient (2 CEUs)

Evelyn's Villa, Warwick, RI

May 17, 2005 @ 7:00 PM

For information, call Mary Anne Barry at 401.821.2373

RI Dental Assistants Association

Keys for Customer Service: Creating a Competitive Advantage (2 CEUs)

St. Joseph Hospital, North Providence, RI

May 10, 2005 @ 7:00 PM

For information, call Joanne Wilbur at 401.647.2175



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A Healthy Smile Can Last A Lifetime

www.health.ri.gov/disease/primarycare/oralhealth/index.php