Making the Connection to Strengthen the Dental Home
Dental Home Initiative Phase 2

Recognizing the importance of a dental provider commitment to serve Head Start/Early Head Start children the South Carolina Dental Association (SCDA) is partnering with DHEC’s Division of Oral Health in phase 2 of the Dental Home Initiative grant. The SCDA was notified that they will receive funding to strengthen the connection between providers to ensure that children have dental appointments during these challenging times when South Carolina dental reimbursements may be decreased.

These funds will enhance and strengthen the resources created with Phase 1 funding. Planned activities include regional meetings and trainings for providers, recruitment of additional providers targeting rural areas and effective utilization of existing resources.

The SCDA will enhance this next phase with its vast network of providers. “The South Carolina Dental Association (SCDA) is excited to partner with the Division of Oral Health (DOH) at the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control in this Head Start initiative. The past partnerships we have participated in have been very positive and have benefited many in South Carolina. This recent funding will continue the work from Year One and expand the Head Start Dental Home Initiative by allowing DOH to train dental providers and Head Start/Early Head Start (HS/EHS) staff and to provide them with additional resources,” said Phil Latham SCDA Executive Director.

For years of leadership and dedicated service...

The South Carolina Advisory Council and Coalition took a few minutes at their 10th Annual Oral Health Forum held in November to recognize one of its strongest partners and advocates, Mary Lynne Diggs. Her role as the Director of the South Carolina Head Start Collaboration Office is to make progress toward goals that improve the lives of young children through partnerships. These partnerships seek to build childhood systems; encourage widespread collaboration between Head Start and other programs and facilitate Head Start’s involvement in the State’s policies and plans that target children.

On the Horizon...

Promoting the importance of good oral health
Issue 2 | Summer 2011

About “Word of Mouth”

It is the distinct honor of SC DHEC to present the second edition of the “Word of Mouth”, South Carolina’s newsletter linking the network of oral health advocates throughout SC with the successes, challenges and opportunities for improving oral health in the state. This edition is dedicated to those who have dared to explore, dream and discover ways to improve the oral health of our young children.

Child Care Trainings

Today, the Division of Oral Health offers Department of Social Services approved continuing education courses for child care centers.

Fluoride Varnish Application by Medical Providers

In 2007, the SC Department of Health and Human Services adopted a policy to reimburse medical providers to provide fluoride varnish, a preventive treatment, to children age three and under. MUSC, the Palmetto Dental Residency Program, and the SC American Academy of Pediatrics have all stepped up to the plate and have been involved in training medical providers to apply varnish. SC DHEC supported the development of the Society for Family Medicine’s initial version of the Smiles for a Lifetime curriculum, which now is a widely accepted oral health training resource for health professionals.

Early Childhood Workgroup—Creating Mastery in Sailing their Ship

Just as in sailing, the early childhood workgroup has found that they must manage the force of the wind on their sails in order to move their ship forward. This requires an understanding of the challenges and most importantly the opportunities to work together with others who chart a similar course to achieve improvement in the health and well-being of young children.

Dream—At the 2007 forum, a special session titled “Early Childhood and Oral Health: Planning for South Carolina’s Future” was presented to create a pathway that would actualize the dream of a state where all children could experience good oral health. The end result of the facilitated group interaction was the development of the Early Childhood Chapter of the SC State Oral Health Plan.

Discover—These new directions forced the ship to sail in uncharted waters. The most profound discovery from this change in course resulted in significant policy and practice changes at many levels.

“Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn’t do than by the ones you did. So throw off the bowlines, sail away from the safe harbor, catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.” -- Mark Twain
These resources which include an Oral Health Tool Kit for Early Head Start/Head Start staff as well as a web-based resource center for clinicians were developed in conjunction with and funded by the Office of Head Start/American Academy of Pediatric Dentists (AAPD) Dental Home Initiative. From September 2007 to September 2010, the AAPD and Head Start partnered at the national, regional, state, and local level to develop a national network of dentists to link Head Start Children with dental homes. Dr. Clara Turner is South Carolina’s lead on the Dental Home Initiative and played an active role in the development of the new resources that were created to assist Head Start programs in obtaining comprehensive services to meet the full range of children’s oral health needs. It is important to note, that as of October 2010 this initiative is being led by the National Head Start Association (NHSA). For more information on the Head Start Dental Home Initiative: http://www.aapd.org and www.nhsa.org.

The Head Start Oral Health Tool Kit, which contains reproducible parent information sheets, posters, screening charts and children’s books, was debuted at the Head Start Annual Spring Conference held on April 19th in Myrtle Beach. Attendees participated in a training that familiarized them with the contents of the Tool Kit as well as how to effectively utilize these resources to connect with dental providers.

A database of the programs receiving the kits has been created to ensure that a supportive link between Head Start Programs and dental communities work together.

“A dental home is defined as a place where each child’s oral health care is delivered in a comprehensive, continuously accessible, coordinated and family-centered way by a licensed dentist.” - AAPD

The web-based resource for clinicians can be accessed through the Division of Oral Health web page, www.dhec.sc.gov/oralhealth. The information and materials within this Clinician Tool Kit Resource Center are designed to support and strengthen outreach, education and the connection between dentists, clinicians and local Head Start programs.

For more information on the next phase of the dental home initiative see On the Horizon: Making the Connection to Strengthen the Dental Home.

“This Tool Kit is intended to be a living resource that will grow as additional materials are produced,” states Chris Veschusio, Director, Division of Oral Health. Veschusio added, “some additional materials are already in process including a CD that will contain PDF’s of the documents and materials contained in the kit, as well as a DVD with video images and graphics depicting key oral health messages. These types of resources will be an enhancement to our trainings and will enable Head Start staff to share visual examples of important concepts related to oral health.” - Clara Turner, DDE, Pediatric Dentist

Many Hands Make Light Work...

A Message from the SC American Academy of Pediatrics Chapter Oral Health Advocates

The AAP and the American Academy of Pediatric Dentists (AAPD) want all pedodontists to be aware of oral health risk assessments (OHRAs) at every well-child visit and have trained Academy members around SC to “get the word out” as well as teach OHRAs and dental fluoride varnish applications to our fellows. Pediatricians are well positioned to improve oral health in the first three years of life since they regularly see these infants and toddlers at least 11 times for maintenance health care.

Pediatricians need to know that oral disease is consequential. Over 51 million school hours are lost each year to oral disease. The pain caused by dental caries impairs normal activities including learning, speech and eating. Early decay and systemic infectious complications can severely impact long-term health. Access to care disparities contributes to low-income children missing 12 times more school than children from more affluent families. Nationally, only 20 per cent of children with EPIDST Medicaid dental benefits children saw a dentist last year. A recent early childhood caries (ECC) assessment in Georgetown and Charleston Counties revealed an ECC rate of 45 per cent at age 3. The AAP and the AAPD see great potential for improved pediatric oral health by having the medical and dental communities work together.

Across South Carolina, general and pediatric dentists are dedicated to providing children in their communities Head Start programs with dental homes and quality oral health care. Staff in the Head Start programs work daily to identify dentists to link to their programs and provide these much needed services. Funding from the grant, resulting in the development of the Tool-Kits, will provide an additional resource to assist Head Start staff, dentists and families in fulfilling their oral health goals.” - Clara Turner, DDS, Pediatric Dentist

HEC’s Division of Oral Health was pleased to receive funding in April 2010 as part of the Head Start Dental Home Initiative. The funding provided support for the Division to create resources and materials designed to support and strengthen Head Start’s existing program goals and objectives related to oral health and to strengthen the establishment of a dental home.

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he Nurse-Family Partnership Program is an evidence-based home visitation program for first-time, low-income mothers and their babies during pregnancy and the first two years of the child’s life. The three program goals of NFP are: improved pregnancy outcomes, improved child health and development, and improved economic self-sufficiency. The program focuses on six domains, which encompass personal health, environmental health, life course development, material role, family & friends, and health & human services. The nurse home visitor supports the client in each of these areas and in relation to the program goals.

In 2008, a public-private partnership was formed between agencies and stakeholders across the state to bring NFP to South Carolina. Having recognized both the need for such a program, as well as its over thirty years of proven results from randomized controlled trials, the Nurse-Family Partnership Program was chosen to be implemented in six sites across the state. Currently, these six sites serve mothers and their babies in ten counties. The counties currently served are: Anderson, Berkeley, Charleston, Colleton, Dorchester, Greenville, Horry, Lexington, Richland, and Spartanburg. The partnership of organizations supporting Nurse-Family Partnership Program continues, as do expansion efforts around the state.

As the Nurse-Family Partnership Program continues to serve families throughout the state, partnerships continue to be developed and fostered throughout the state. With this in mind, the program has partnered with SCDHEC and its Division of Oral Health to positively impact the oral health of our mothers and babies. Through opportunities for education and outreach, it is hoped that we may partner together to support healthy smiles on mothers and babies in our state.

SEEKING NOMINATIONS

4th Annual Carlos Salinas Award
To recognize a south carolina dentist serving patients with special health care needs

The South Carolina Dental Association (SCDA) and the South Carolina Oral Health Coalition (SCOHAC) have established an award to honor a dentist for excellence in providing care to and advocacy for individuals with special health care needs. This is the fourth year of the award, co-sponsored by Specialized Care Company, and nominations are now being accepted until June 30, 2011.

For more information, please contact: Mary Kenyon Jones
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