

made our research successful.

Recognition from working in other health areas that oral health is a fundamental component of overall health and quality of life brought me into public health dentistry. As I have moved into studying other health areas, this fundamental component is

continually reinforced.

In closing, thank you again for this great honor. Thank you again for the truly important work that you do, and I hope that our paper will be prove to be beneficial to you in carrying out this important work.

[Editor's Note: Dr. Chavers declined the \$1,000 prize associated with the award and asked that the funds be deposited in the AAPHD Foundation in honor of the faculty, staff, and students at the University of Alabama-Birmingham (UAB) School of Dentistry and the UAB School of Public Health.]

Journal of Public Health Dentistry Best Paper of 2003

Beltrán-Aguilar E, Malvitz D, Lockwood S, Rozier G, Tomar S
Oral Health Surveillance: Past, Present, and Future Challenges
J Public Health Dent 2003;63(3):141-9

Remarks on Receiving Best Paper of 2003 Award

Eugenio Beltrán-Aguilar, DDS, DrPH

When I arrived at the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 1991, Larry Furman, who was preparing for reassignment and would provide his last service as our leader the following day, summarily instructed me that I "will" work in surveillance, a cornerstone in all CDC activities. At that time, I was the only person assigned to surveillance and soon it was clear to all of us, and by "us" I refer to Don Marianos and Dolores Malvitz, that we would not be able to promote surveillance among our constituents using the same tools we had been using for more than 60 years. CDC had very strong ideas and a good deal of experience on what surveillance for diseases and risk factors should be. We needed to learn the CDC blueprint and work on developing our own surveillance systems.

In our dealing with the issue and trying to balance what our constituents need and what our colleagues in academia say, it took us almost eight years to finalize the product that you have been kind to honor. And to say that it is the work of Beltrán and others



Drs. R. Gary Rozier, Eugenio Beltrán-Aguilar, Dolores Malvitz, and Scott L. Tomar

would be unfair. This is really the work of all of you who provided feedback, and especially the work of my coauthors, Dolores, Stuart, Scott, and Gary, who helped me to clarify my philosophical conundrums and correct my "Spanglish."

We visualized our paper as a document to generate discussion and, based on the showcasing of surveillance issues in meetings in the last two or three years, I think it is fulfilling that goal. Let's continue the discussion.

Thanks.

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