

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2001 ANNUAL MEETING

Enhancing Health, Access, and Partnerships: National Oral Health Conference

Kim McFarland, DDS, MPH

The 64th annual meeting of the American Association of Public Health Dentistry (AAPHD) was held jointly for the second time with the Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors (ASTDD). You may recall that our association voted to partner with ASTDD for several years in conducting a joint national meeting in an effort to truly impact oral health. Building upon the success of the first joint meeting, this year's combined meeting made for some exciting synergy, not only because the theme focused on "Enhancing Health, Access, and Partnerships," but because the array of participants included all those necessary to truly make a difference in improving health, access, and partnerships.

Meeting attendance broke all previous records with 453 participants, including Medicaid directors, educators, researchers, community health center staff, dental hygienists, administrators, health educators, and yes, a few dentists. Premeeting activities clearly contributed to the outstanding attendance and included the American Board of Dental Public Health examinations, the American Association of Community Dental Programs symposium, HRSA/HCFAs Oral Health Initiative Team meeting, as well as a continuing education course presented by Dr. Jim Bader on "Writing for Publication." A special thank you goes out to Dr. Stan Lotzkar and Dr. Bob Dumbaugh for their dedication to the duties of the board and the great dinner/business meeting.

The opening session of the meeting was kicked off with a warm welcome from AAPHD President Dr. Rebecca King and ASTDD President Ms. Diane Brunson. An excellent audiovisual presentation set to the theme music of the movie "2001: A Space Odyssey" was provided by Dr. Kathy Phipps. In keeping with the opening theme, Dr. Scott Trapp of the National Electronic Data Interchange Council (NEDIC)

provided an overview of dental informatics, the importance of electronic claims processing, and HIPAA compliance. Clearly the future is now!

The opening session also included updates from Dr. Don Altman on the ASTDD and CDC National Oral Health Surveillance System (NOHSS), Ms. Laurie Barker on the State Synopsis Database of Dental Public Health Programs (www2.cdc.gov/nccdphp/doh/synopses/index.asp), as well as HRSA's geo-mapping project of national dental health resources. These excellent data sources along with last year's release of both the "Surgeon General's Report on Oral Health" and the "Healthy People 2010 Objectives" will serve as the foundation for implementing a national oral health plan for our country.

Additional program highlights included 13 symposia, more than 40 contributed papers, numerous roundtable breakfast and luncheon discussions, as well as an outstanding poster session, which preceded a wonderful Portland harbor dinner cruise banquet. A big thank you goes out to all those who made these activities possible: Drs. Kathryn Atchison, Sena Narendran, Gordon Empey, Jim Toothaker, Dean Perkins, and Ms. Sue Sanzi-Schaedel. A special thank you goes out to Kneka Hayward, the ASTDD program chair, who made the planning process a joy!

During the awards luncheon, Dr. Duskanka Kleinman, past president of the AAPHD, did an excellent job of showcasing the success and important contributions of several key people in dental public health. Award recipients included Dr. Brian Burt, who received the Distinguished Service Award, and Dr. David Satcher, who received the Public Service Award. Likewise, Drs. Skip Collins and Cas Evans were honored with the Special Merit Award. This year's Special Merit Award for Outstanding Achievement in Community Dentistry-International went

to former practitioner, author, and fluoridation advocate Dr. Fumio Yamashita of Japan. A special thanks goes to Alice Horowitz for her assistance in making the international awards a success!

The American Dental Hygienists' Association (ADHA) President Carla Gurtz did an outstanding job of hosting the ADHA symposium on increasing access to care by changing practice acts and more fully utilizing the knowledge, skills, and expertise of dental hygienists. A notable event occurred during the symposium, when we sang happy birthday to Stan Peck, executive director of the ADHA—it was his birthday, and he was spending it with AAPHD. ADHA also jointly hosted a wonderful Monday night reception with AAPHD, which provided a great opportunity for all participants to learn more about the important work being done in dental public health throughout our country.

It takes many people and a lot of work to develop such a great program, but it takes even more effort to find support to make the program a reality. Therefore, we are eternally grateful to our sponsors for making this meeting possible: Aseptico, Stone Pharmaceuticals, Dentsply International, Omni Products, GC America, ASTDD, CDC, HCFA, HRSA, State Medicaid Programs, ADA, ADHA, NGA, IHS, and NIH. Please take time to thank our sponsors and let them know how much you appreciate them as you work with them throughout the year.

Next year's meeting will be Third Joint Annual Meeting of AAPHD and ASTDD. It will be held April 26 to May 1, 2002, at the Sheraton Ferncroft Resort in Danvers, MA. Dr. Bill Maas is the AAPHD program chair and Dr. Lew Lampiris and Dr. Steve Geiermann are the ASTDD program chairs. Please let them know if you have additional ideas on how we can enhance health, access, and partnerships!