

It is particularly fitting that AAPHD members are joined at this National Oral Health Conference today by many state Medicaid dental program managers and consultants, as has been

the case for the past three years through Dr. Schneider's efforts. So, today we will say a collective, "Thank you, Dr. Schneider."

For special meritorious service to

public health dentistry, I am pleased to present the AAPHD Special Merit Award to Dr. Don Schneider.

Remarks on Receiving the 2003 AAPHD Special Merit Award

Donald A. Schneider, DDS, MPH

Thank you, Bill, for your kind remarks. It is always appreciated when one receives recognition; but this award has special meaning to me because it comes from the association of my peers and is received in the presence of my friends and colleagues, old and new. Thank you all.

I have found that it is generally the case that an accomplishment attributed to a single individual usually is the result of the hard work of many people. Increasing the number of Medicaid children receiving dental services clearly is no exception to this rule. In my view, the folks who have worked the hardest to improve dental access for Medicaid children are the people on the front lines—those at the

state and local level who, on a daily basis, seek ways to break down access barriers. Among those individuals who have faced the most difficulties in improving dental access for kids are the state Medicaid dental program managers. Their advocacy for children's dental access has produced dramatic results, although it has been unheralded and continues to occur within state governments often focused on concerns other than oral health. Their efforts deserve our acknowledgment and our applause, and I ask those state Medicaid dental program managers now in the room to please stand and accept our congratulations.

As they have over the past few

years, I hope that many state Medicaid dental program managers will continue to participate at this conference as colleagues in dental public health. I was very pleased to learn that, at their caucus this past Sunday, the dental program managers decided to form their own association to help further their communication and collaboration. To assist their organizational committee in getting their new association up and running, I am following Dr. Cohen's lead and contributing to them the honorarium accompanying this Special Merit Award. I hope their great idea becomes a reality.

Again, I extend my thanks and appreciation to AAPHD for this recognition.