
Remarks on Receiving the 2003 ASTDD Distinguished Service Award

Rhys B. Jones, DDS, MS

Thank you so much, Lynn and the Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors, for honoring me with your Distinguished Service Award. Yes, it is a homecoming to come back to Wisconsin. While living in Madison, I made many trips to Milwaukee on issues of dental public health.

Looking back to 1985, I remember attending my initial State and Territorial meeting for the state of Wisconsin in Salt Lake City, UT. I had been on the job for about a month. At that first meeting, Greg Connolly, dental director from Massachusetts, presented a program on the new youth use patterns of smokeless tobacco, and Sol Silverman introduced dental public

health leaders to a strange new disease with oral manifestations affecting the population of San Francisco. I went back to Madison with the realization that I would be working on tobacco and infection control issues, both of which I had little background in from dental school or in graduate study in dental public health. Fortunately, the state of Wisconsin had epidemiologic expertise in tobacco intervention and eventually in AIDS/HIV. That is what is challenging and exciting about state dental positions. You never know what is around the corner. The principles of dental public health will continually be applied to new problems.

It has been several years since I have been able to attend the National Oral

Health Conference. Two years ago it was the birth of our twins who are here with us today and are attending their first dental public health conference. Last year was the discovery of a rare disease called primary amyloidosis associated with the beginnings of the bone marrow cancer, myeloma. Thanks to modern medicine and a most successful bone marrow stem cell transplant last August, I'm back with the National Oral Health Conference. So Valerie, Owen, Isabel, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the national dental public health family for all their concern, support, and good wishes this past year. And thank you again, Lynn, for this wonderful honor.