

2005 NATIONAL ORAL HEALTH CONFERENCE: MAY 2-4, 2005, PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

Highlights

Chris Forsch, RDH, BS; Kathryn Atchison, DDS, MPH; Maija Beyer, RDH; Robert Weyant, DMD, DrPH

"Confluence of Research, Education, and Practice" was the theme for the 2005 National Oral Health Conference, held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The theme, chosen to highlight the relationship between these three branches of the oral health community, was also selected to recognize that the Allegheny, Monongahela, and Ohio Rivers all converge within the great city of Pittsburgh. The program and the participants reflected the importance of and the interrelationship between the three groups who planned and hosted the Conference, groups, all of which are working to promote better oral health.

The 2005 conference was the sixth conference jointly sponsored by the American Association of Public Health Dentistry (AAPHD), the Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors (ASTDD), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). It continued to build upon the success of previous conferences. Here are a few facts that demonstrate that confluence:

- There were 658 registrants, some from as far away as Australia and Taiwan.
- Seventy-seven abstracts were submitted and an additional 40 roundtables were presented.
- The CDC and HRSA provided significant financial and planning support. In addition, over \$38,000 of funding from corporate sponsors was secured. Corporate partners included Aseptico, OMNII Oral Pharmaceuticals, Software of Excellence, Stone Pharmaceutical,



Christine Forsch, Program Co-chair, NOHC Planning Committee

the Xylitol Information Center and OraPharma. The numerous exhibitors provided additional sponsorship.

Of course, the excitement and energy of the conference isn't captured by the statistics alone. To do that, we need to look at the highlights of each day.

Preconference Sessions

The conference was preceded by three days of preconference activities. These included meetings of ASTDD, AAPHD, the American Association of Community Dental Programs (AACDP), and the newly established Medicaid/SCHIP Dental Program Representatives Association (MSDPR). In addition, preconference activities

included full-day Medicaid and AACDP Symposiums, a HRSA-sponsored Dental Public Health Residency workshop, a Military Session and the American Board of Dental Public Health annual examination for specialty certification.

Three preconference workshops provided additional opportunities to learn. A Health Literacy workshop targeted providers, educators, communication specialists, agency chiefs, and others who want their public health messages to effectively reach their intended audiences. Experts addressed different aspects of health literacy and described tools and strategies used to communicate clearly and effectively. In addition, the Institute of Medicine's recent report on oral health literacy was highlighted. A second workshop focused on Geographic Information Systems (GIS). An introduction to GIS was provided. It included information on GIS capabilities and applications; how GIS relates to the Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS); current national and federal activities related to GIS; state level applications related to workforce and disease surveillance; and specific experiences using GIS technology and applications for oral health. The third workshop covered the art of grant writing. Participants shared success stories and lessons learned the hard way. While the focus of the conference was educational, it was not all work and no play. On Sunday evening attendees were treated to a fabulous array of *hors d'oeuvres* and cocktails, thanks to the generous sponsorship of Stone Pharmaceuticals.

Those who still had some energy could finish off the evening by attending an Advocacy Training Workshop put on by the American Dental Education Association (ADEA). Valuable information on how to influence policy makers was shared by Frank Catalanotto, a Past President of ADEA, Jack Bresch, Associate Executive Director of ADEA, and Monette McKinnon, Director of Grassroots Advocacy and State Issues for ADEA.



Anita Boles, National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition



Richard Haught, President, ADA

Monday

The conference itself started on Monday. A total of four plenary sessions and 18 concurrent sessions were presented over the course of the three days.

Prior to the opening ceremony and welcome, participants were treated to Steve Geiermann's PowerPoint pre-

sentation, which contained photographs from previous conferences. Attendees learned then and there that someone might be taking a picture of them when they least expected it! The opening ceremony and welcome featured distinguished guests from the community and the federal government, the ASTDD and AAPHD Presi-

dents and the Program Co-Chair, Christine Forsch. The Chief Dental Officer for the United States Public Health Service, Dushanka Kleinman, gave a warm welcome from the federal government. Lewis N. Lampiris, ASTDD President and then Jane A. Weintraub, AAPHD President, both of whom provided inspiring and entertaining comments, followed her. There was also a representative from the office of the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health, followed by Bruce W. Dixon, MD, Director of the Allegheny County Health Department. These representatives from the state and county health departments provided a local perspective and extended a big thank you and congratulations to all those in attendance.

The opening plenary session, which was also the ABDPH symposium, kicked the conference off to a rousing start. Richard Haught, President of the American Dental Association, Anita Boles from the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition, and Dushanka Kleinman presented a thought-provoking session entitled, "Improving Access to Care: Finding Common Ground." Participants could then choose between three concurrent sessions: the AAPHD Symposium, "Community Health Center and Dental School Partnerships," "Federal Legislation Affecting Access to Care," and "Access to Care: An International Perspective." The AAPHD Symposium, "Community Health Center and Dental School Partnerships," examined the impact of resident/senior student rotations in Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) on reducing access disparities, recruiting dentists for FQHCs, and improving dental education. During the session entitled "Federal Legislation Affecting Access to Care," speakers provided the audience with an up-to-date view of federal legislative efforts to address access to dental care as well as an overview of similar efforts at the state level. The third concurrent session, "Access to Care: An International Perspective," featured speakers from the

United Kingdom, Australia and the United States comparing and contrasting various countries approaches to addressing access to care.

The morning's sessions were followed by the AAPHD Awards Luncheon. While participants enjoyed lunch, well-deserved awards were presented to the following individuals:

- ♦ *Journal of Public Health Dentistry*, 2004 Article of the Year Award – Jessica Lee
- ♦ President's Award – Steve Geiermann
- ♦ Special Merit Award – Dolores Malvitz, DrPH
- ♦ Special Merit Award for Outstanding Achievement in Community Dentistry – International – Prathip Phantumvanit, DDS, MS
- ♦ Public Service Award – The Honorable Senator Susan Collins
- ♦ Distinguished Service Award – Dushanka Kleinman, DDS, MscD
- ♦ Student Merit Awards (see complete list on pages S22 and S23).

The educational sessions resumed that afternoon with an additional offering of three concurrent sessions. Sessions covered topics as diverse as "Evidence-Based Dentistry," "Increasing the Oral Health Community's Involvement with the National Network of Quitline Initiative," sponsored by the American Dental Hygienists' Association, and "Tributaries for Local Dental Programs: A New Resource for Planning, Practices, and Partners."

The day's educational offerings culminated in the General Poster Session. In response to suggestions received after previous conferences, the session was held at a time when no other competing events were scheduled. This resulted in a large number of attendees taking time to view the Poster Presentations and visit with the poster presenters.

Participants then rewarded themselves for their hard day's work by attending a reception sponsored to celebrate the 5th birthday of the Children's Dental Health Project.

Sponsored by the American Dental Hygienists' Association and the Children's Dental Health Project, the celebration was held in a room festooned with colorful balloons and decorations. Guests were able to take home gift bags filled with a variety of treasures, courtesy of the Children's Dental Health Project.

The evening ended with the Second Annual AAPHD Foundation Fundraising Event. AAPHD Foundation supporters took trolleys to the Carnegie Museum, where they could enjoy the eclectic collection of art featured in the Museum's beautiful galleries. In addition to celebrating the achievement of the Foundation reaching its first goal of \$100,000, the 2004 (and first) Horowitz Scholarship recipient, Lisa Chung was honored and the recipient of the 2005 scholarship, Tara Esmeili, was announced. The event brought in almost \$10,000, making it even more successful than last year's inaugural event.

Tuesday

The second day of the conference started off with a plenary entitled, "Fulfilling the Potential of State Oral Health Programs." Representatives from Illinois, Nevada, New York and Arkansas presented information about their respective state oral health programs. The audience learned about some of the ways strong state programs can promote oral health within their states.

Participants were then able to choose to attend one of three exciting concurrent sessions for the remainder of the morning. Speakers from the National Institutes of Health and the media provided an enlightening session, "Communicating Oral Health Information: Working with the Media." The first recommendation of the National Call to Action is to change perceptions of oral health among the public, providers and policy makers. The four speakers in this session provided key suggestions and identified resources to enable the audience to work more effectively with the media to enhance the visibility of oral health. Participants also had the option of

attending "Filling Critical Gaps in Prevention Research." This session focused on the importance of filling the essential gaps in the oral health science base in order to justify or plan sound public health programs, especially in times of scarce resources. Panel members identified the applied research needed to document the benefits of program efforts and to justify program resources. They discussed quality of life measures relevant to oral health and proposed opportunities to engage in partnerships to develop and validate quality of life measures and other measures of program benefit. "Health Center-Based Practice Networks: Opportunities for Collaboration" was the third concurrent session offered that morning. This session explored the feasibility of establishing community health center-based research networks to address questions of importance for providing care for underserved populations. Under a new NIH/NIDCR initiative, similar practice-based research networks will soon be established among private practices to conduct clinical research ranging from comparing outcomes of dental procedures to estimating disease prevalence. The speakers addressed what the opportunities, benefits, and challenges might be for establishing such networks in health centers.

Tuesday's concurrent sessions were followed by the ever-popular Roundtable Luncheon. Attendees had the opportunity to select two sequential roundtables that were facilitated by topical experts. Forty different presentations on topics as varied as "Delivering System Change for Dental Care in England" to "An Update on the Alaska Dental Health Aid Program" were offered so that participants were assured of finding something of interest. A new twist to the Roundtable Luncheon was that for the first time, Roundtable Luncheon presentation applications were submitted online, a process that seemed to work well for everyone.

After the Roundtable Luncheon, participants were able to choose from three concurrent sessions. A CDC expert panel on school-based dental

sealant programs provided an update on a review of new information on school-based dental sealant programs and on guidelines that were last updated in 1994. Speakers addressed the concerns that led up to the convening of the panel, its aims and methods and state of the science, and potential implications for practice. A second session addressed dental informatics and public health. This session brought together faculty from the University of Pittsburgh, who are working on new applications of technology (informatics) that have applications in 1) collection of population-based longitudinal data; 2) development and mining of existing databases; 3) workflow integration software for dental offices that permit health services research; and 4) strategies for determining efficacy and effectiveness. A third choice available to participants was a session on models for training the dental public health workforce. Presenters explored both the scope of the problem and strategies and available resources that may be employed to help remedy these workforce shortages.

The evening was set aside for a buffet, dancing and games. Attendees could work out all the kinks they had accumulated during the day by hitting the dance floor, playing pool or just mingling with friends, both old and new. And they did so with great gusto. The dance floor was packed, the pool tables were hot and lively conversation filled the air right up until the close of the party!

Wednesday

The final day of the conference began with the traditional NOHC Fun Run/Walk that was organized by Oral Health America. A hardy group of souls took to the streets of Pittsburgh for an invigorating start to their day.

Wednesday morning's Plenary Session was entitled "Access and Prevention: Achieving a Health Balance." Speakers from the CDC, NIH, Delta Dental of Massachusetts, and the Pennsylvania Department of Health discussed the role of community-based approaches, such as ex-

panding use of preventive measures or developing policy changes to alter environments, systems and behaviors.

The morning concluded with the final series of concurrent sessions. The second annual Herschel S. Horowitz Memorial Symposium focused on "Recent Advances in the Fluoride Legacy: Fluoride Varnishes." Prominent speakers from the University of California, San Francisco School of Dentistry, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Public Health and the NIH/NIDCR provided a fascinating update on the latest on fluoride varnishes. Challenges and barriers to the use of fluoride varnish were examined, as were practical applications and regimes. Another current session, "Data Resources for Public Health Action, Policy, and Research: Finding and Using Data Sources," was a second option available to participants. This session addressed advancements in data sources and techniques that have become available since 2004 for characterizing oral health at a state or national level. Speakers demonstrated navigation through data sources, reviewed Web-based tools and concluded with practical applications in the policy and research arenas. Topics covered included the Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), new developments and future enhancements to the BRFSS maps, GIS applications, state and local oral health surveys, and the ASTDD Synopses of State and Territorial Dental Public Health Programs. "Genetic Epidemiology or Genetics 102" provided an exciting follow-up to last year's session on genetics. Participants increased their understanding of the concepts used in genetics, their ability to describe the use of genetic epidemiology in ongoing studies, and their knowledge of approaches to address challenges related to the integration of molecular genetic information in the promotion of oral health and the prevention of dental and craniofacial diseases.

After the morning's concurrent sessions ended, attendees joined together to celebrate at the ASTDD Awards Luncheon. At the conclusion

of lunch, a number of conference attendees were recognized by the ASTDD. The Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Don Altman. This award is presented to a past or present member for significant contributions to ASTDD and dental public health. Julie Tang and Barbara Gooch both received the Distinguished Service Award. This is presented to an individual or organization for excellent and distinguished service to dental public health. Finally, Monette McKinnon and Chris Forsch were honored with the President's Award, which is presented at the discretion of the ASTDD President to individuals or organizations that have contributed to the advancement of state dental programs and dental public health.

Lunch was followed by three concurrent sessions that highlighted contributed papers. One contributed paper session was dedicated to papers on software and internet-based approaches to assess and assure health. The second was devoted to the influence of non-dental providers in promoting oral health, while the third focused on meeting the oral health needs of Medicaid populations.

The conference ended with a stimulating and informative presentation by Elizabeth M. Duke, Administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration. Dr. Duke discussed HRSA's efforts to improve oral health through access and prevention. Her presentation elicited a lively question and answer session, which led into the final closing remarks delivered by Lynn Mouden, State Dental Director of Arkansas. Dr. Mouden issued a warm and gracious invitation to the 2006 NOHC, scheduled for Little Rock, Arkansas.

The 2005 NOHC Planning Committee would like to thank everyone who made this year's conference such a resounding success. We would also like to join Dr. Mouden and the 2006 NOHC Planning Committee in extending an invitation to join us at next year's conference. Thank you!

2005 NOHC Planning Committee

Myron Allukian, Jr.
Kathryn Atchison*
Maija Beyer*
Patrick Blahut
Nathela Chatara
Conan Davis
Robert Dumbaugh
Tina Edwards
Christine Forsch*
Alice Horowitz
Beverly Isman
Lewis Lampiris
Tim Lynch
Nancy Martin
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