



Well, we survived the busy holiday season and managed to accomplish a lot of work as well. It was wonderful to receive holiday letters and cards from so many friends scattered across the country. Because ASTDD doesn't have much travel money to hold face-to-face meetings, most of our communication is via email or, lately, ZOOM. So, it is great to receive photos or to hear about consultants getting together on their own. JoAnna Hillman, an evaluation consultant from Emory University, spent two months traversing the U.S. and stopped in to visit another member of our evaluation team, Mary Davis, at her home in Colorado (see photo). They previously had not met in person, so this gave them the opportunity to further bond as team members and to spend some quality time coordinating their evaluation activities. In December, I joined them on a call to plan for the evaluation portion of our CDC progress report and continuation application. Mary and JoAnna have continued to post helpful hints and resources about evaluation for states and are planning a weekend



NOHC workshop, *Evaluation Plans in Action*.

I received another holiday greeting from Bradley Cummins who lives in North Carolina. Bradley owns Sixth Street Website Design and E Marketing and is our website and listserv guru who tries to maintain communication functionality for us and protect us from unwanted viruses and hackers. Our website and listservs are crucial communication tools for ASTDD. In addition, he consults on website design, suggests upgrades and runs statistical reports. Because most of us are consultants and maintain our own computers, Bradley has established a regular system for backing up some ASTDD consultants' ASTDD folders to the ASTDD server in case we have computer crashes or otherwise lose files. He sent me this lovely photo of his family for the holidays.



Some of our members travel internationally throughout the year and over the holidays. Dr Ohnmar Tut, our consultant to the US Affiliated Pacific Islands, continues to provide TA to the islands on various projects. She and her husband currently live and work in Australia, hopefully out of range of all the fires. From 2000-2010 she served as the Chief of Dental Preventive Services in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Since then she has been involved as a researcher and trainer in numerous USAPI and Australian projects. Over the holidays she sent me this beautiful photo of her in her native country of Myanmar where she is visiting family and friends for a month. I was extremely lucky to spend a week in Myanmar this past year myself to experience the country's beautiful scenery and people and drift over the 1000 temples in Bagan in a hot air balloon.



Announcing a New Grant to Apple Tree Dental and ASTDD to Support our Healthy Aging Activities

As you may remember, we had a thriving Healthy Aging Committee with broad national representation, but for the past year had no funding for them to continue their great work. This was particularly unfortunate because Oral Health America disbanded, leaving several aging programs and advocacy efforts in limbo. Through combined efforts with Apple Tree Dental, we submitted a grant proposal to the Gary and May West Foundation for increased collaboration between State Oral Health Programs, Aging and Disability Services, and Area Agencies on Aging to improve the oral health of older adults. The Foundation has awarded us \$49,450 to support the Healthy Aging Project for three years, with Apple Tree Dental serving as the fiscal agent. The project will address 6 goals:

1. By the end of year 1, establish a baseline on SOHP partnerships with Aging and Disability Services programs and Area Agencies on Aging.

2. By the end of Year 1, create an inventory of existing educational materials with a focus on older adult oral health to identify gaps and how those could be addressed via new materials.
3. By the end of Year 2, educational materials that address identified gaps will be developed.
4. By the end of Year 2, consistent messaging to be shared by all SOHP around older adult oral health, tailored to priority target audiences, will be developed.
5. By the end of Year 3, an Older Adult Oral Health Promotion toolkit using Section II of the [ASTDD Guidelines](#) as a template, will be developed.
6. By the end of Year 3, a plan to evaluate usage and impact of the toolkit will be developed and implemented.

The Healthy Aging Committee, with Sam Zwetchkenbaum as Chair and Lori Cofano as consultant, will lead the project. We're looking forward to this important partnership!

School and Adolescent Oral Health Committee (SAOHC) and Dental Sealant Consultant

The SAOHC held a call on November 7 and welcomed four new members. Committee members discussed ideas for planning future webinars to support school and adolescent oral health and add to the learning for the Dental Sealant Community of Practice (CoP) states. The group elected to form a small workgroup to discuss and plan for future webinars. Members also provided updates on their respective programs such as the School Based Health Alliance, Future Smiles, the National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center and UCSF's California Oral Health Technical Assistance Center. Donna Behrens completed language to use in a joint CDC and ASTDD correspondence to five state education agency and state office of oral health contacts in Arkansas, Colorado, Louisiana, Minnesota, and Missouri to help identify and leverage opportunities to enhance their work with each other and their state programs addressing chronic diseases and the underlying risk factors. The email correspondence was sent out from CDC and ASTDD in January.

Participants on the November 22nd sealant CoP call discussed sealant retention issues. The next CoP webinar for sealant coordinators is scheduled for January 23; the topic will be an update on infection prevention and control for school dental sealant programs. Sandy Tesch posted messages on the CDC sealant groups listserv on several topics and posted infection prevention and other resources on the ASTDD Dental Sealant Resources webpage. In response to several requests from states, CDC conducted a training webinar on January 8 for CDC-funded states/sealant coordinators to review cooperative agreement data reporting requirements. Sandy is also developing a PowerPoint presentation for CDC-funded states for training/calibrating sealant providers. Sandy and Judy Feinstein planned an NOHC roundtable submission regarding lessons learned from the implementation of new sealant and fluorides Communities of Practice.

ASTDD Fluorides Committee

Judy Feinstein led a Community Water Fluoridation (CWF) Community of Practice call on December 18 for CDC funded states. These calls occur most every month. Discussion focused on several issues including:

- Some water operators are seeing 0.7 as a limit rather than a target, possibly out of concern about an overfeed
- Reviewed the November 13 CDC Update webinar on Fluoridation
- Overview and criteria for the ASTDD/ADA/CDC Fluoridation Awards
- Reminder that the 75th anniversary of CWF is in 2020. CDC, ADA and others are planning special materials.
- The ADA-published reference "Fluoridation Facts" is now available digitally at no cost to members and the public. Download it at <https://ebooks.ada.org/fluoridationfacts>
- Reviewed state deliverables for their CDC grants and assistance and templates available from CDC and ASTDD.
- Discussed the weekend workshop at the NOHC, *Succeeding in Efforts to Maintain Water Fluoridation on a Shoestring Budget: What's in Your Toolbox?*

The committee helped ASTDD submit a letter of concern to the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine regarding their "Draft National Toxicology Program Monograph on the Systematic Review of Fluoride Exposure and Neurodevelopmental and Cognitive Health Effects." Along with other national colleagues, ASTDD noted the NTP Draft Monograph potentially contradicts and compromises decades of findings about the safety of CWF and that the monograph's conclusion that fluoride is "presumed to be a cognitive neurodevelopmental hazard to humans" is flawed

for several reasons. We requested that this letter be included in the public record and taken into consideration when the monograph is revised.

Best Practices Committee (BPC) and Dental Public Health Policy Committee (DPHPC)

The Collaborative Partnerships Best Practice Approach Report (BPAR) is almost ready for posting with associated Descriptive Reports. Look for it in January. The Protocol document for drafting BPARs has been updated and posted to BP webpage. The BPC will have their annual face-to-face meeting at the NOHC on Sunday, April 5th.

Judy Feinstein participated in ASTHO Clinical-Community Connections Subcommittee and Population Health and Informatics Policy Committee conference calls, and completed final review of ASTHO's new Oral Health Policy Statement and the background paper, to which it will link, and updated several data points with information from ASTDD's State Synopses. ASTHO approved the Oral Health Policy Statement in December. Chris will note in the Weekly Digest when it is posted on the ASTHO website. The DPHPC finalized a new policy statement, "Reducing Emergency Department Utilization for Non-Traumatic Dental Conditions," for Committee and Board approval. Check the Weekly Digest for its posting in January. The Perinatal Oral Health Committee is working on an update to the Perinatal Oral Health Policy Statement.

Communications Committee

Matt Jacob and John Welby will be presenting a weekend workshop at NOHC, *Giving Oral Health Talks and Presentations with Real Impact*, and also providing feedback to DPH residents during a Five-Minute Masterpiece session. John also will be doing the *Choosing the Right Tools – Creating Your Best Messages* Roundtable. The Social Media workgroup hosted a [webinar](#) in November highlighting the Virginia and Missouri Oral Health Coalitions and how they use social media. The Collaborative Project with the Data, Best Practice and Communications Committees to do a Best Practice Approach Report on Data and Data Dissemination is moving forward.

Data Committee

Kathy Phipps and the committee finalized the 2020 Synopses of State Dental Public Health Programs in December. It was distributed to states the first week of January and state submissions will be due by the end of February 2020. The Synopses asks about Youth Risk Behavioral Surveillance System (YRBSS) state-added questions, with the responses to be added to the list of state added BRFSS questions that ASTDD already is tracking. States will now be able to submit Synopses responses online. Because the Synopses must go through OMB approval via CDC, once the Synopses form is approved, questions cannot be changed for three years. The Data Committee is sponsoring an 8-hour weekend workshop split into two 4-hour sessions at the NOHC, *From Sampling to Analysis: A Hands-on Workshop for Epidemiologists and Analysts*. During the past three months, Kathy Phipps and Mike Manz provided Basic Screening Survey (BSS) TA and oral health surveillance TA to the following states – New Hampshire, Arizona, Montana, Illinois, Missouri, Wyoming, Washington, Ohio and Mississippi.

ASTDD Peer Support Program

We currently have ten dental directors/program managers in the mentoring program: Russell Dunkel (WI), Tommy Johnson (AL), Cheri Kiefer (ND), Dayna Brinckman (KS), Maryanne Goss (CT), Darwin Hayes (NJ), Misty Robertson (ID), Katie Glueckert (MT), Frances Wise (AK), and Mana Mozaffarian (PA). In addition, Kimberlie Payne contacted 35 new associate members in November and 27 in December for orientation. Bob Russell, Lori Cofano, Chris Farrell and Tommy Johnson will be facilitating a weekend workshop at NOHC, *Keeping the Ship Upright for Smooth Sailing: Using Mentoring to Help Steer Your Program*.

ASTDD Territorial Oral Health Needs Assessment and Technical Assistance Project

The final USAPI Needs Assessment report was sent to CDC and national reviewers from the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD), ASTHO, HRSA and the US Public Health Service. ASTHO featured the Executive

Summary in their online newsletter *Insular Areas Update*. The [executive summary](#) is posted on the ASTDD website. Reg Louie, Ohnmar Tut and Magda de la Torre will be presenting a panel at the NOHC, *Oral Health Program Infrastructure Needs Assessment in the U.S. Territories: So What and Now What?* Magda is almost finished drafting the two reports for Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands, which will be sent for review and turned into final reports to submit to CDC. Our thoughts are with Puerto Rico after their recent earthquake!

Center on Oral Health Systems Integration Initiative (COHSII)

As part of the National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center's cooperative agreement for COHSII, ASTDD continues to provide TA and training to state/territorial Maternal and Child Health (MCH) agencies to make improvements in oral health systems integration and workforce development. The ASTDD consultants assisted COHSII staff in drafting *Strengthening State and Jurisdictional Efforts Related to Title V Maternal and Child Health National Performance Measure 13 (Oral Health)*. This document is intended to provide sample strategies, sample evidence-based or evidence-informed strategy measures (ESMs), possible data sources for ESMs, and a selection of resources. State Title V programs can use the information in this document in their implementation of national performance measure on oral health (NPM 13) and state performance measures. The COHSII project is also sponsoring a concurrent session at NOHC related to the [BPAR on Perinatal Oral Health](#), *Don't Reinvent the Wheel: Best Practices for Improving Oral Health for Pregnant Women* with presenters Hugh Silk, Jay Kumar, Teresa Marks and Harry Goodman.

ASTDD consultants continue to provide TA as part of the National Oral Health Initiative (NOHI). As a reminder, the purpose of NOHI is to improve access to and delivery of comprehensive, quality oral health care for infants and children by testing and establishing models of care. The NOHI oral health team has calls each month as does each regional team. The teams participated in a webinar on December 12th on Common Metrics Consensus Development. Kathy Geurink is assigned to the Rocky Mountain Project Team, and virtually attended the November 21-22 meeting held in Colorado, providing information on the role of ASTDD within the COHSII NOHI Project and participating in selected group sharing. The agenda included objectives to build relationships and understanding of experiences, develop a mutual experience of the work to be done, and develop an action plan for the next 3-6 months. Harry Goodman is assigned to the Eastern Regional Network and participated in project calls and will attend the first partners meeting in March. He will also represent COHSII in assisting the NOHI projects to develop an Environmental Scan for each of the regions. Reg Louie is the lead for the Midwest Region Project Team. Kathy Phipps attended one monthly conference call and generated state specific information on the perinatal indicators from BRFSS (2016 and 2018). The teams are planning a face to face meeting with attendees from all three projects in April.

National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness (NCECHW)

A Regional Dental Hygienist Liaison Coordinators call was held on November 19. On the call, Beth Stewart provided an overview of her training, *Oral Health Messages to Share with Pregnant Women and Parents*, which includes five interactive station activities to do at Q&A sessions with state health managers' networks. This training also includes oral health strategies for Early Head Start, Head Start, and early childhood education staff to integrate into the classroom. Collaborating with regional health specialists is key to successfully training health managers about oral health for pregnant women, infants, and children and providing consistent messaging to educate parents. ASTDD convened its first Spotlight webinar, "[Dental Hygiene Liaisons: Your State's Perfect Partner](#)," on November 13, 2019. It featured DHLs who are employed by state oral health programs; Carla Bassett, (Mississippi), Mariela Leyba (New Mexico), and Leigh Vitukinas (Connecticut). During the webinar, each DHL described how she is making an impact on the children enrolled in Head Start and child care in their states.

The December issue of [Access](#), an ADHA publication, contains a special feature on nutrition. Included in the issue is an interview with DHLs Carla Bassett (Mississippi), Ann Hoffman (Missouri), and Mariela Leyba (New Mexico), in which they describe their experiences providing nutrition education to parents of children enrolled in Head Start and child care. At the NOHC, Diane Flanagan, Michelle Landrum, Michelle Martin, and Beth Stewart will present a workshop, *Creating Change by Using Interprofessional Collaboration to Increase Access to Care and Improve Oral Health Literacy*.

NOHC Updates

As noted in Chris Wood's Weekly Digest, the NOHC Planning Committee made its selection of plenary and concurrent sessions based on 64 submitted abstracts, and a draft footprint has been developed for the weekend sessions and the Monday to Wednesday sessions. Abstracts submitted this year included 68 for roundtables, 54 for oral presentations and 98 for posters; final decisions on orals and posters have not yet been made. Attendees will be given more time for networking and discovering the San Diego sites this year. For the first time, the national organization/federal agency roundtables will be held on Monday in conjunction with the topical roundtables, and the session will not be during lunchtime; this should mitigate the noise and disruption from the box lunches. Registration and hotel information should be opening in mid-January. This year we are partnering as a community service project with the Veterans Village of San Diego putting together individual care kits.



Recent Meetings (the following meeting was mistakenly omitted from the last issue)

Coalition for Modernizing Dental Licensure, Chicago, IL, October 11, 2019; Mona Van Kanegan reporting.

This coalition was founded in October 2018 by the American Dental Association (ADA), the American Dental Education Association (ADEA) and the American Student Dental Association (ASDA) with two goals: 1) Achieve adoption of a valid and reliable examination for dental licensure that does not involve the use of single encounter, procedure-based examinations on patients, and 2) Achieve portability of dental licensure among all licensing jurisdictions in the United States for the benefit of the public and the profession. The meeting did discuss including dental hygienists in the two goals, but participants noted this will be more complicated as the scope of services for RDHs differ greatly among states. Two ADHA members were present at the meeting.

There were several important discussion points. The licensure examination that will be formulated (Dental Licensure Objective Structured Clinical Examination, or DLOSCE) is only one part of the process to determine the clinical competency of a graduating student. The DLOSCE needs to be taken together with graduation from a CODA-accredited program and passing of national board examination(s). In addition to differing dental examinations through current testing agencies, limited validity and reliability information from patient-based testing methods, and several ethical issues concerning current licensure examination options were discussed. This licensure modernizing process will have impact on access to care in our states, and state oral health programs need to be aware of the changes that are likely as a result of professional and external forces. The DLOSCE is currently under development. It is anticipated that a pilot examination will be available in late 2019, with limited deployment beginning in 2020.

And lastly, this is my version of being "rounded up" on our camel ride in Morocco in late October. Happy New Year!



Send any questions or comments to Bev Isman at bev.isman@comcast.net