



NATIONAL CENTER ON
Early Childhood Health and Wellness



American
Dental
Hygienists'
Association

American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



February 12, 2018

To: American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Chapter Oral Health Advocates (COHA)
National Center for Early Childhood Health and Wellness (NCECHW) Dental
Hygienist Liaisons (DHL)

Dental caries continues to be the most common chronic disease of early childhood, disproportionately affecting children who live in poverty. Many of these children and their families experience pain and suffering because of dental disease and are often faced with little access to dental care. Solving this problem requires interprofessional, multidisciplinary solutions. *For this reason, we are writing to make an important introduction, one that includes you.*

Approximately two years ago, the American Dental Hygienists' Association (ADHA) became a liaison organization to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). This relationship was put in place because of the similarities of the two groups in approach to improving oral health. The AAP, like the ADHA, is focused on the prevention of oral disease and the promotion of access to care for all. Both organizations work to educate members about effective prevention strategies as well as ways to build medical/dental integration to improve access to care.

ADHA and the Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors (ASTDD) work in collaboration with the NCECHW, a federally funded project awarded to AAP, to help coordinate the Dental Hygienist Liaison (DHL) project. DHLs are volunteers who communicate with Head Start and child care agencies to help improve the oral health of pregnant women and children enrolled early childhood education programs. AAP Chapter Oral Health Advocates (COHA) are AAP chapter champions (pediatricians or pediatric dentists) in each state who work to train pediatricians and others to provide preventive oral health services and serve as the point person for oral health questions and advocacy in their state Chapter.

As the state NCECHW DHL or COHA, we hope that you will commit to getting to know each other and working together at the state level to improve oral health.



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Suggested Next Steps for DHLs and COHAs

Here are a few suggested ways in which ADHA and AAP through you, as the DHL and COHA, can work together.

- **Find Your State DHL or COHA**

Below you will find the links to the rosters for the AAP COHA and the NCECHW DHL.

- AAP COHA Roster: https://www.aap.org/en-us/Documents/oralhealth_coha_roster.pdf
- NCECHW DHL Roster (*click on DHL Roster*): <http://www.astdd.org/head-start-state-dental-hygienist-liaisons-information>
- If a DHL is not identified on the DHL roster for your state, please refer to the regional DHL coordinator that is listed on page 3 of the DHL roster. If a COHA is not identified for your state, please refer to the AAP Chapter Executive Director's roster at <https://www.aap.org/en-us/Pages/Chapter-Executive-Director-Contact-List-and-Websites.aspx>

- **Introduce Yourself**

We ask that you take a few minutes to send an email, have a phone call, or setup a short meeting to learn about each other and the work that you do. From there, we hope you will begin to work together to bring a united voice to our work around oral health.

- **Consider Asking Your Organization to Join the Campaign for Dental Health (CDH)**

The AAP and ADHA both advocate for community water fluoridation. The CDH is a program of the AAP, generously supported by the Dentaquest Foundation and the Arcora Foundation, that works to protect and promote community water fluoridation as the most effective, affordable, and equitable way to protect teeth from decay. If your state organization is not already an [ally](#) to the CDH, you are encouraged to ask them to join. Please fill out the attached partner agreement and submit to hrussinof@aap.org, CDH Program Manager.

- **Join the AAP Section Oral Health**

The AAP SOOH is a group of pediatricians and dental professionals who work on educating pediatricians about oral health and improving medical/dental collaboration. Pediatricians, pediatric dentists, general dentists, dental hygienists, and other allied health professionals are encouraged to join and participate in the AAP Section on Oral Health. For more information about the Section and how to join, visit aap.org.



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- **Learn More About the ADHA and the DHL Project**

To learn more about the ADHA visit <http://www.adha.org/>. For information on the DHL project, visit the [ASTDD web site](#).

We hope this introduction proves to be fruitful and look forward to hearing that you have made a connection with your state counterpart. We will be following up in the coming months to check in on your progress and thank you for making the effort to connect.

Please contact Lauren Barone, AAP Manager, Oral Health at lbarone@aap.org or Ann Lynch, ADHA Director of Education & Professional Advocacy at annl@adha.net with questions.

Sincerely,

David Krol, MD, MPH, FAAP
Chairperson, AAP Section on Oral Health

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