ASTDD Dental Hygienist Liaison Project Annual Report
Jan 1, 2020 – Dec 31, 2020

Oral Health Team: Michelle Landrum, Kathy Hunt (Region II & VII), Bev Isman, Gina Sharps (Region III), Katrina Holt, Beth Lowe
Regional DHLs: Heather Blair (Region I), Tami Miller (Region IV), Diane Flanagan (Region V), Beth Stewart (Region VI), Melissa Utley (Region VIII), Julie Stage-Rosenberg (Region IX), Linda Mann (Region X),
DHLs: ADHA member hygienists representing each state

1. List any new members or subcommittee members:

Michelle Landrum resigned her position starting in October and Kathy Hunt stepped in as the lead consultant, with Gina Sharps functioning as the co-lead. Starting in 2021, we are excited to be welcoming two new Regional DHLs that we recruited in December 2020. For the first time, we will have hygienists representing Head Start Regions XI (AIAN), Juanita Simpson, and XII (Migrant & Seasonal Farmworkers), Mariela Leyba.

2. Describe the purpose of your committee:

ASTDD works in partnership with the Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center and the American Dental Hygienists’ Association to oversee many of the activities for the Dental Hygienist Liaison Project. The DHL project was funded by the Office of Head Start through the National Center on Early Childhood Education and Wellness through Sept 29, 2020, and starting on Sept 30, the National Center on Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety. The DHL Project provides oral health training and technical assistance to Head Start Programs across the United States. Under the DHL project, one dental hygienist from each state volunteers to help promote oral health for pregnant women and children enrolled in Head Start, serving as a communication liaison for the Center. For more information on this project, check out this link: [https://www.astdd.org/docs/dhl-project-handout.pdf](https://www.astdd.org/docs/dhl-project-handout.pdf)

3. List your committee accomplishments for the last calendar year.

Highlights from 2020 activities include:

- Fifteen in-person and virtual oral health presentations at the local/state, regional, and national levels. Three national presentations were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Michelle Landrum RDH, MEd; Beth Stewart, RDH; Michelle Martin RDH, MPH; and Diane Flanagan RDH presented *Using Interprofessional Collaboration to Increase Access to Care and Improve Oral Health Literacy* on June 26 as part of the virtual 2020 NOHC.

- DHLs reached out to their state’s Head Start programs and other partners on a monthly basis to share approved oral health resources, respond to oral health
related questions, and provide screening and preventive services as need, and helped link families to dental homes.

- Over one third of the DHLs participated in Head Start health services advisory committee meetings and an average of 15 percent in state health managers’ network meetings.
- The annual DHL survey indicated that DHLs’ confidence in their ability to fulfill their roles has been increasing over the years, with more than 70 percent reporting feeling “extremely confident” or “confident” in their roles in 2020.
- In 2020, ASTDD recognized the DHL project as a best practice approach for collaborative partnerships (see Best Practice Approach: State Oral Health Coalitions and Collaborative Partnerships).
- Articles on the DHL project and about DHLs appeared in the July/August 2020 issues of Access, ADHA’s magazine and in several of ADHA’s Member Monday social media messages.

4. Describe the future activities planned by your committee:

- Provide support to state and regional DHLs through quarterly calls and webinars, the DHL discussion list, and responding to their requests for assistance.
- Recruitment of DHLs as needed, with special emphasis on Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands
- Offer oral health presentations in each state and Head Start Region
- Identify oral health resources in each state to share with Head Start programs
- Strengthen relationships with the Head Start Regional Health Specialists

5. Describe any subcommittees your committee uses, their roles and activities:

Our state DHLs and RDHLs function as our subcommittees. The state DHLs provide the following volunteer activities as is needed and their time allows:

- Providing a communication link between NCHBHS and Head Start agencies in their states.
- Collaborating with state organizations such as oral health programs and Head Start state collaboration offices
- Providing oral health presentations at state conferences and meetings.
- Offering strategies to improve access to oral health care for pregnant women and children.
- Working with oral health professionals to establish partnerships with local Head Start programs to provide staff education and training.
- Sharing information about the importance of oral health and regular oral health visits, good nutrition and oral hygiene practices, and oral-injury-prevention strategies with Head Start program staff.
- Serving on Head Start committees (e.g., Head Start health manager networks, Head Start health services advisory committees) and oral health advisory boards and coalitions to promote the oral health of Head Start participants.

6. List any unmet needs of your committee (e.g., members, funding, etc.):