

Perinatal Oral Health Conference

August 7-8, 2013
Delta Dental
Okemos, Michigan



Executive Summary of the 2013 Michigan Perinatal Oral Health Conference

AUGUST 2013

Michigan's focus on perinatal oral health is part of an ambitious state plan to reduce infant mortality, an initiative proposed by Governor Rick Snyder in 2011 in light of persistently high death rates. The Michigan Infant Mortality Reduction Plan identifies eight strategies, including to "Support better health status for women and girls," with a specific goal is to "integrate oral health promotion and treatment into the medical home model."

The **Perinatal Oral Health Conference**, organized by the Michigan Department of Community Health, was held on August 7-8, 2013 to address this specific goal. It drew close to 70 attendees representing medical and dental health professionals, local, state and federal government agencies, advocacy groups, and academicians.

Over the course of the two-day meeting, attendees heard progress reports from three states (New York, California and Washington) that have adopted perinatal oral health care guidelines, learn what steps the federal government is taking, and contributed their own ideas toward Michigan's first Perinatal Oral Health Action Plan. The conference participants identified the goals of a multi-year action plan that encompass Michigan-specific perinatal oral health care guidelines, initial actions for an implementation plan, and structure for assessing outcomes.

Michigan Landscape

A review of Michigan's activities to advance perinatal oral health demonstrated progress that has been made and hurdles yet to overcome. The need for more data on perinatal oral health and perinatal oral health care in Michigan was a primary theme of the event.

However, increasing the understanding of the importance of oral health, particularly to the oral health of pregnant women, the developing fetus and infants remains a challenge. The need for greater understanding applies to medical and dental providers as many health professionals fail to make the connection of oral health to general health. This is layered with persistent financial barriers, especially for women with Medicaid coverage, to accessing dental care during pregnancy due to resistance of dentists to accept patients.

National Landscape

New York State led the nation in 2006 with the first perinatal oral health guidelines. The guidelines included recommendations for all health care professionals, for prenatal care providers, oral health professionals, and child health professionals.

After the New York Guidelines were published in 2006, other states began to take notice and consider plans of their own. In 2010, California published evidence-based guidelines for health professionals for oral health during pregnancy. In addition to prenatal care professionals, oral health care professionals and child health care professionals, California also added recommendations for community-based programs. Not only did the New York Guidelines inspire California to take action, they also served as a model for other states. Washington State was highlighted during the conference for their work using focus groups to educate, discuss issues and come up with recommendations for dentists, prenatal care providers, pregnant women, and community organizations.

By 2012, the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) of HRSA, an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, published the *National Consensus Statement on Oral Health Care During Pregnancy* in coordination with the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology and the American Dental Association.

The publication follows nearly six years of work on perinatal oral health and is an affirmation of the safety and importance of oral care for mothers-to-be, with recommendations directed to prenatal care providers and oral health professionals, suggestions for information to be shared with pregnant women, and tips for pregnant women themselves on how to have good oral health during pregnancy.

Planning for the Future: Michigan's Perinatal Oral Health Action Plan

The following is an overview of the Michigan Perinatal Oral Health Action Plan developed based on the input of the conference participants. A broadly representative Advisory Committee is currently being developed to refine the Action Plan and to oversee its implementation.

MISSION: To eliminate infant mortality and morbidity caused by poor oral health.

GOAL: Create a comprehensive perinatal oral health initiative for the state of Michigan.

- Objective I:** Develop Evidence-based Perinatal Oral Health Guidelines for the state of Michigan
- Objective II:** Integrate oral health into the health home for women and infants
- Objective III:** Develop interdisciplinary professional education to improve perinatal oral health
- Objective IV:** Increase public awareness of the importance of oral health to the overall health of pregnant women and infants
- Objective V:** Ensure a financing system to support perinatal oral health

For more information about the Michigan Perinatal Oral Health Action Plan or to get involved, visit the Michigan Department of Community Health, Perinatal Oral Health Program website at <http://michigan.gov/mdch>.

