



Dental Public Health Activities Descriptive Summaries

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Alabama Dental Summit II: Dental Access for Alabama's Children – Working Together for a Solution

In Alabama, an estimated 39 percent of all school-age children have untreated cavities and account for more than 25,000 missed school days each year. Nearly 400,000 children qualify for dental services through Medicaid but have limited access due to a shortage of dental providers enrolled in Medicaid. The **Alabama Dental Summit II**, provided a one-day follow-up to the first summit and was held on January 24, 2003 to address the following summit objectives: 1) to understand the magnitude of the dental access problem in Alabama, 2) to understand the state's strategic plan for addressing ongoing issues associated with the access issue, 3) to appreciate the suggested solutions to expanding the dental workforce in order to meet oral health needs in Alabama and 4) to value the importance of preventive/educational strategies for achieving good oral health. Dental Summit sponsors included: Alabama Medicaid Agency, Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors, National Governors' Association Center for Best Practices, and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation/21st Century Challenge Fund matching grants program. The Alabama Dental Summit II consisted of 63 attendees from diverse groups including civic, health and government leaders (public and private dental providers, physicians, and representatives of civic, faith-based, education, health and other organizations). Summit speakers consisted of national and state leaders. Ms. Anne DeBiasi from the Children's Dental Health Project presented the national legislative and policy prospective to attendees. The panels, presented in the morning, *From Those Seeking Care* and Panel Two: *From Those Providing and Financing Care*. The advocacy group, Alabama Arise, the Alabama Head Start Association and the Alabama School Nurses Association served on the first panel. Representatives from the state's child health insurance program (AllKids), a community health center (Health Services Inc.), the Alabama Academy of Pediatrics and the Alabama Medicaid Agency served on the second. Speakers from the University of Alabama in Birmingham (UAB), the Alabama Dental Association, Alabama Department of Education, UAB School of Dentistry, Alabama Primary Health Care Association, Alabama Academy of Pediatric Dentistry and Alabama Department of Public Health also presented. Outcomes of the second dental summit include finalization and distribution to the AL legislature of the Oral Health Fact Sheet for policymakers, and the distribution of county level statistics on oral health to legislators with the updated Alabama Oral Health Strategic Plan. Additionally, the Alabama Dental Association supported the passage of legislation allowing licensure by credentials. Key costs associated with the summit included rental costs for the location, materials for the sessions (name badges, notebooks, flipcharts), and food for the breaks and meal. The total cost for the one-day summit was \$2,500.

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