



Dental Public Health Activities Descriptive Summaries

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District of Columbia Head Start Oral Health Forum and Oral Health Campaign

In FY 2004, the District of Columbia (DC) Head Start Association was awarded a \$5,000 grant from the Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors (ASTDD) to conduct an Oral Health Forum. The purpose of the forum was to solicit input and buy-in from a multidisciplinary, multi-organizational group of stakeholders to develop an action plan to improve the oral health of Head Start children.

HEAD START ORAL HEALTH FORUM

The Head Start Oral Health Forum was developed in collaboration with the State Oral Health Program Director for the DC Department of Health, the Maternal and Family Health Administration, the Howard University Department of Dentistry, the DC Head Start programs, local dentists, and the Association of Clinicians for the Under-served.

The DC Head Start Oral Health Forum was planned to convene a year after the DC Oral Health Leadership Summit. The oral health priorities for the DC population that were identified at the Leadership Summit were extrapolated for the Head Start/Early Head Start population. Priorities included: (1) Promoting Education and Prevention, (2) Increasing Coverage and Access, (3) Enhancing the Dental Workforce, and (4) Improving the Quality of Data and Surveillance. The DC Head Start Association decided to apply the proposed recommendations of the Leadership Summit to improve the oral health of Head Start/Early Head Start children.

It was decided that the DC Head Start programs would use the Forum to launch a Head Start Oral Health Campaign. The Oral Health Forum provided an opportunity to have a dialogue with oral health professionals, local foundations, parents, and a broad cross section of HS/EHS staff and policy council representatives and to map out a Head Start implementation plan and timetable.

The Head Start Oral Health Forum was held on July 20, 2004. The one-day forum began with welcome and greetings from Travis Hardmon, President of DC Head Start Association and Theresa Shivers, Chief of the Health Maintenance and Special Needs Branch, DC Head Start Grantee Agency, United Planning Organization. The forum included presentations and discussions on (1) The DC Head Start Oral Health Campaign, (2) Infant and Toddler Oral Health Screening, (3) DC Oral Health Program and the Role of Early Childhood Oral Health Promotion, and (4) DC Head Start Oral Health Curriculum Training and Overview of 2004 Screening Schedule. Thirty-six participants attended the Forum representing stakeholders of health services, public health, child and family development, maternal and child health, early childhood development, clinicians for the underserved, and public schools.

ACTION PLAN: THE DC HEAD START ORAL HEALTH CAMPAIGN

National initiatives, local disparities and the participation of all DC Head Start programs in the Oral Health Leadership Summit resulted in the planning of the DC Head Start Oral Health Campaign. With the support of the local Head Start Association and the Head Start State Collaboration, local programs will initiate the Head Start Oral Health Campaign in 2004 for a minimum of two years to achieve the following outcomes:

- Enhanced citywide oral health curriculum for children ages 2-5, parents and caregivers,
- Increased Head Start capacity to deliver oral health screening services,
- Increased capacity of Head Start programs to contribute to early childhood oral health data collection, surveillance and research,
- A system to recruit, train and deploy oral health volunteers in the Head Start system,
- Better utilization of dental hygienists by the Head Start system , and
- Increased dental service delivery reimbursement policies for dentists who serve children.

The Head Start Oral Health Campaign includes the following action steps:

- Promoting Education and Prevention – The Head Start Association and Collaboration Office will provide each Head Start Health Services Area staff person, family service worker and education director with an oral health curriculum for parents, children and staff with accompanying educational support kits.
- Increasing Coverage and Access – Address problems with medical/dental homes and services for children.
- Enhancing the Dental Workforce – The ongoing partnership with Howard University, which houses the local dental school, provides an opportunity for discussions about the need to train more local dentists. Focus groups and additional dialogue will assist in addressing workforce needs.
- Improving the Quality of Data and Surveillance – With the assistance of George Washington University, providing a graduate level statistician, data collection and analysis of oral health needs of 3,500 DC preschool age children will help advance a policy agenda.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND OUTCOMES OF THE HEAD START ORAL HEALTH CAMPAIGN

1. Training was provided for Head Start Health Services staff, advisory members and Family Services staff on conducting a basic screening survey of Early Head Start children. The Association of Clinicians for the Underserved, through their Early Childhood Caries Prevention Project, provided the training on August 10, 2004 with funding from two foundations (Robert Wood Johnson and webMethods).
2. In 2004, all DC children six weeks and older who register for child care, Head Start, public schools, camp or other group activities. Oral health screening has been added to the required list of screenings for entry in all preschools and schools. Hundreds of Head Start Children received oral health screening from their medical homes.
3. A study was initiated in 2004-2005 to give insight into the oral health needs the DC Early Head Start and Head Start children, including barriers to coverage that the children and their families face in accessing dental care. The study will use a random sample of children ages 6 months to 5 years and will compared the oral health status of the children by their insurance status. The data obtained will be used to impact oral health policy change for the DC.
4. The DC Superior Court, which is overseeing a revamping of EPSDT services in DC, issued an order for Medicaid Managed Care Organizations and Dentists serving children in DC to care for children under the age of five. The Court Order coincided with the DC Head Start Association release of a statistical analysis that found that fewer than 5% of Medicaid reimbursed dentists and clinics provided or would provide services to children under the age of five.

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