



Dental Public Health Activities Descriptive Summaries

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A White Paper on Access to Oral Health Care for Florida's Citizens with Developmental Disabilities

For many years the Florida Developmental Disabilities (DD) Council had been made aware of the lack of access to comprehensive oral health care for people with developmental disabilities; however, the information they received was anecdotal. Before the DD Council could approach the state legislature with a budget request aimed at improving access to care, they needed data to support their request. To obtain the necessary data, the DD Council contracted with the Nova Southeastern University College of Dental Medicine and the University of Florida College of Dentistry to manage an information-gathering project that would result in a comprehensive white paper describing access issues and the detrimental consequences of poor oral health experienced by individuals with developmental disabilities. In addition, the white paper was to present realistic recommendations for establishing a statewide oral health care delivery system designed to ensure that comprehensive oral health care would be available to all of Florida's citizens with developmental disabilities. The total budget for the project was \$30,000 for costs related to data collection, telephone conferences, travel, and meeting facilities. The white paper provided the DD Council, other state agencies, state universities, state legislators, and the Governor with (1) verifiable data regarding the dental needs of Florida's citizens with developmental disabilities and the lack of access to comprehensive dental care they experience, (2) the causes of the access problem, (3) the detrimental health and behavioral consequences due to a lack of dental care experienced by people with developmental disabilities, and (4) feasible recommendations for establishing an oral health care delivery system that would ensure access to comprehensive care for all of Florida's citizens with developmental disabilities.

Contact Person(s) for Inquiries:

Paul Burtner, D.M.D., Associate Professor, PO Box 100426, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32610-0426, Phone: 352-955-5616, Fax: 352-955-6101, Email: burtner@ufl.edu