



Dental Public Health Activities Descriptive Summaries

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The Maryland Oral Cancer Prevention Coalition's Needs Assessment Efforts

With the release of data from the 1990 CDC oral cancer SEER (Surveillance, Epidemiology and End Results) Program showing a high oral cancer mortality rate in Maryland, the University of Maryland Dental School, National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (Office of Oral Health) called together other partners from the American Cancer Society, Association of Local and County Dental Health Officers and others and develop the Maryland Oral Cancer Prevention Coalition. The Coalition developed a plan utilizing small grants from each institution to conduct the following needs assessment efforts on oral cancer: 1) assess funds, available educational materials and interested individuals and agencies (e.g., federal and state agencies, schools and universities, ACS, and health care provider associations/societies); 2) review state epidemiological data from the Maryland State Cancer Council/Maryland Cancer Registry; 3) conduct surveys and focus groups of health care providers (surveys of dentists, dental hygienists, nurse practitioners and family physicians) to determine their knowledge, opinions and practices concerning oral cancer prevention and early detection as well as to learn about practitioner's interest in continuing education courses on oral cancer; 4) conduct surveys and focus groups of the public (survey the adult population to determine their knowledge, opinions and practices regarding oral cancer prevention and early detection and to learn what Maryland adults think is the most appropriate manner to educate the public). Cost to implement quantitative and qualitative surveys of the oral cancer knowledge, attitudes and practices of both health care providers and the public was approximately \$50,000 in funds with the remainder being in-kind contributions from each coalition partner. The results of the Coalition's efforts included publishing and disseminating the survey findings and using the needs assessment as leverage for additional funding and policy to prevent oral cancer. The needs assessment effort has led to four significant developments: a) providing a model for the NIDCR national RFP "State Models For Oral Cancer Prevention And Early Detection"; b) inclusion of oral cancer as one of seven targeted cancers by the Tobacco Settlement Funds Program (called the Cigarette Restitution Fund) in Maryland; c) the first-ever review of oral cancer State epidemiological data by the Maryland State Cancer Council and the Maryland Cancer Registry; and d) passing of legislation to the Oral Cancer Prevention Initiative.

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