



Dental Public Health Activities Descriptive Summaries

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The Oral Cancer Consortium

In 1998, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey-NJ Dental School joined with other major regional dental schools to create the Oral Cancer Consortium. The purpose was to raise the consciousness of providers and the public alike to address the need for periodic oral cancer examinations, changes in risk factors such as smoking and excess alcohol consumption, as well as identification and treatment of existing disease. The morbidity of this disease had not changed appreciably in forty years. It was felt that by promoting early detection and treatment, the morbidity could be reduced. At present there are over eighteen institutions in New Jersey and New York actively participating in the Consortium. The Consortium facilitates a yearly free oral cancer screening program in twenty-nine sites throughout the region. Publicity for the screening program is multimedia, being funded through a corporate grant. Collaborative partnerships with faith-based community leaders, educators, healthcare providers and civic officials have been established to "get the word out" about oral cancer screenings to the underserved. Additional activity includes continuing education programs sponsored by the consortium. Each Consortium member contributes in-kind volunteers and equipment for oral cancer screenings. The New Jersey Dental School along with twenty-nine other institutional sites in the consortium administered free oral cancer screenings yearly. Publicity for the screenings has been multimedia and funded through a corporate grant. Over 4,000 citizens have been screened in 1999-2001. The media campaign has spread nationally and the consortium has aided schools in Massachusetts to form a similar consortium, known as the Oral Cancer Partnership and developed a partnership with the University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The Consortium, through education and raising the consciousness of the public to periodic examinations, aims to make a change in the morbidity rate.

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