



Dental Public Health Activities Descriptive Summaries

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The Pacific Basin Dental Association

The Pacific Basin Dental Association (PBDA) is a non-profit organization that was formed and chartered on December 15, 2001 in the Republic of Palau. PBDA currently represents six (6) U.S. territories and associated Pacific Islands Jurisdictions: (1) Territory of American Samoa, (2) Territory of Guam, (3) Republic of Marshall Islands, (4) Federated States of Micronesia (Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei and Yap), (5) Commonwealth of Northern Marina Islands, and (6) Republic of Palau. The association formed during the Western Regional Dental Directors/Chiefs Meeting in Palau, which was sponsored by the World Health Organization. Pacific dental directors and chiefs support the need to have a regional dental association to help address some of the critical issues related to oral health in the Pacific. These issues included very high oral disease rates, diminishing workforce in oral health, lack of funding/support for programs and professional isolation. The main objectives for PBDA are as follows:

1. To promote and support regional continuing education and human resource development in oral health, with emphasis on primary care and prevention.
2. To promote and support culturally sensitive oral and general health initiatives in the region.
3. To strengthen infrastructure of dental programs in the region.
4. To develop standards and improve the quality of oral health care in the region.
5. Encourage the exchange of information and collaboration between dental and health care professionals, individuals, groups and supporting organizations in the region.

PBDA has no formal mechanism to fund activities; so regular meetings are held, as funding permits. In 2002, PBDA applied on behalf of three jurisdictions (Pohnpei, Palau, American Samoa) and received funding to hold a regional Early Head Start / Head Start Oral Health Forum. This took place in Pohnpei and stakeholders from MCH, the University of Washington, Hawaii Department of Health, Head Start and dental departments convened to develop strategic plans for Head Start. Following on from this, PBDA has been working closely with the University of Washington in trying to secure funding to help support the strategic plans that were developed. In 2003, PBDA implemented a continuing education project for dental directors/chiefs from the association. This focused on management training and was held at the Palau AHEC with assistance from PIHOA and the University of Washington. One outcome of this project was the establishment of a PBDA video library for oral health. A human resource development (HRD) needs assessment for oral health was also completed as a part of this project. PBDA recently became an affiliate member to PIHOA and gained representation on the Pacific Association for Clinical Training (PACT) and the Pacific Islands Primary Care Association (PIPCA).

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