



Dental Public Health Activities Descriptive Summaries

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Early Head Start/Head Start Oral Health Forum for Pacific Basin Jurisdictions

There are eight Head Start grantees/programs for the nine U.S. affiliated jurisdictions throughout the Pacific Basin. These jurisdictions include Guam, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Republic of Palau, Republic of Marshall Islands, American Samoa, and the four Federated States of Micronesia (Pohnpei, Kosrae, Yap and Chuuk). Pohnpei administers Kosrae's Head Start Program. With the exception of Guam, nearly all oral health programs and services are delivered through a public delivery system consisting of government-operated hospitals, Public Health (PH) facilities, Community Health Centers (CHCs) and dispensaries. However, some jurisdictions have Head Start dental clinics and providers exclusively treating Head Start students. Pacific jurisdictions have oral health departments are widely varied with regards to infrastructure, programs, capacity and human resources, but all are faced with a growing epidemic of Early Childhood Caries (ECC) in young children, most of whom attend Head Start. Surveillance data and reporting done by the University of Washington indicates that nearly all Pacific children become afflicted with ECC. The Early Head Start/Head Start Oral Health Forum was held November 14-15, 2002 in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia. The purpose of the Early Head Start/Head Start Oral Health Forum was to:

1. Develop model partnerships between MCH, Head Start Programs and Divisions of Oral Health for Pacific jurisdictions.
2. Share ideas, best practices, and collaborative solutions to oral health problems among young children in the Pacific jurisdictions.
3. Identify strategies and the key roles of stakeholders and other entities for action.
4. Develop strategic action plans specific to each participating jurisdiction in the form of model Early Head Start Dental Programs and to strengthen current Head Start dental programs.

The Pacific Basin Dental Association, in consultation with the University of Washington faculty and the Region IX Dental Consultant, did the initial planning for this forum. The forum was made possible with the assistance and support of ASTDD, MCHB, HRSA and PBDA. Local arrangements were provided by the Pohnpei Department of Health and Pohnpei Head Start. Thirty-five participants from MCH, Head Start and Dental Divisions attended the forum in Kolonia, Pohnpei: 26 participants from Pohnpei, three from American Samoa, two from Kosrae, two from Palau, one from Hawaii, and one from University of Washington. The Early Head Start/Head Start Oral Health Forum resulted in the initial drafting of Early Head Start and MCH strategic plans as well as Head Start strategic plans for Palau, Pohnpei, Kosrae and American Samoa.

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