



## Dental Public Health Activities Descriptive Summaries

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### Activation of a Collaborative Oral Health Plan and Coalition Development in Texas

The Department of State Health Services (DSHS) worked with the University of Texas Health Science Center San Antonio (UTHSCSA) Dental School to develop a statewide oral health plan. This effort was funded by HRSA grant received by UTHSCSA Dental School. The primary investigators, Dr. John Brown and Ms. Jane Steffensen from UTHSCSA in collaboration with DSHS Oral Health Group and Title V program, held five listening sessions during February - April 2004 around the state to elicit input from stakeholders about oral health issues affecting all citizens of Texas. The listening sessions afforded the investigators, the state Title V Director, and Interim State Dental Director, the opportunity to hear from stakeholders about dental issues affecting their area residents. From the input from the listening sessions, the primary investigators drafted a State Oral Health Plan that was then presented to approximately 150 attendees/stakeholders for comment at the Texas Oral Health Summit on September 9-10, 2004 in Austin. A final copy of the State Oral Health plan was released in March 2005. A copy of the state plan can be found at: <http://dental.uthscsa.edu/oralhealthsummit/>. The **Texas Collaborative Oral Health Plan** established 5 objectives: (1) Assess oral health burden in Texas by monitoring trends in oral health needs, resources, and gaps; (2) Develop a strong oral health unit with a full-time state dental director and effective infrastructure within the Texas Department of State Health Services to provide state level oral health leadership and perform the essential public health functions to meet the oral health needs of all Texans; (3) Change perceptions regarding oral health and oral disease so that oral health becomes an integral component of health policies and programs in Texas by informing, educating, and empowering community partners, public officials, policymakers, and the public; (4) Build collaborative partnerships and apply evidence-based prevention strategies to address identified needs and disparities to improve oral health of Texans; (5) Remove barriers between people and the oral health care system by enhancing oral health system capacity, including directly supporting or providing oral health services when necessary. For each objective, the Plan established an overall strategy, action steps, leadership, collaborating organizations/agencies, personnel/expertise/resources needed, funding sources, 2010 targets for operations and services, justification/rationale, and available resources (relevant models, tools, guidelines, and evidence-based best practices). From the activities in the development of the state oral health plan, the **Texas Oral Health Coalition (TOHC)** was formed. The membership includes individuals from public health and private dentistry, state dental and dental hygiene professional organizations, government entities, community health centers, Head Start, Medicaid, long-term care organizations, schools, third-party payers, business leaders, policy advocates, state nurse associations, fluoridation advocates, public consumers, faith-based organizations, research and professional education, existing oral health coalition members, and DSHS staff. Coalition members also include representatives of four existing regional oral health coalitions, which will provide coordination and integration with the activities at the regional level and help establish a shared voice for oral health issues for the state. The coalition has elected the TOHC Chair and Vice-chair, outlined an organizational chart, and wrote the mission, vision and slogan statements. Letters of commitment of time and interest have been received from member organizations. TOHC workgroups are utilizing the state oral health plan to guide their activities.

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#### Contact Person(s) for Inquiries:

Linda Altenhoff, DDS, Director, Division of Oral Health, Texas Dept. of Health, 1100 W. 49<sup>th</sup> Street, Austin, TX 78756, Phone: 512-458-7111 ext. 3001, Fax: 512-458-7256, Email: [linda.altenhoff@dshs.state.tx.us](mailto:linda.altenhoff@dshs.state.tx.us)

Sandy Tesch, RDH, Program Specialist, Division of Oral Health, Texas Dept. of Health, 1100 W. 49<sup>th</sup> Street, Austin, TX 78756, Phone: 512-458-7111 ext. 2369, Fax: 512-458-7256, Email: [sandy.tesch@dshs.state.tx.us](mailto:sandy.tesch@dshs.state.tx.us)