



Whatcom Oral Health Coalition Quarterly Meeting

September 21, 2011

Thirty-seven coalition members attended this meeting at the Health Education Center. The next Quarterly Meeting will be on Tuesday, January 31st, at 5:30pm at the same venue.

Welcome and Overview

Sid Williams (OHC Treasurer, Chair of Access Committee) recognized Jenny Shuler for her 8 years as Chair, and all she brought to the Coalition. Jenny could not be with us tonight, so more will be said at our next Quarterly! Sid then introduced **Lara Welker, our new OHC Chair**, who is also the ABCD coordinator, Program Manager at WAHA, and brings a wealth of talent to the job.

We all introduced ourselves round the room, and then Lara took the chair to move us forward with the evening's agenda.

OHC 2011-2013 Initiatives (attached)

On behalf of the Steering Committee (SC), Lara presented the two initiatives that emerged from results of the 2011 Smile Survey, and ideas at our last Quarterly Meeting, refined and prioritized by the SC.

In spite of consistent educational efforts and the gains made through ABCD (Access to Baby and Child Dentistry), many children still do not get to a dentist in their pre-school years, and 42% have experienced decay before entering kindergarten (2011 Smile Survey Whatcom County). That is why our first goal is "Taking Prevention Where Kids Are". There was interest from the floor in using existing data, and thinking about the design and evaluation of any interventions. Lara suggested that Whatcom County Health Department could be helpful in this regard, and Astrid agreed.

Our second two-year goal commits the Coalition to continuing the effort of "Health Smiles from the Start", and is supported by the fact that Medicaid is again covering dental care for women during pregnancy and 60 days post-partum.

Oral Health Updates (attached)

Sid and others described current status of DSHS dental care. *(Note – on September 22nd the State of Washington Health Care Authority issued a new budget package with further projected cuts to adult dental, and adult pharmacy benefits; details to follow.)*

Lara described WAHA's new program "Project Access Dental" differentiating it from the Donated Adult Dentistry program (DAD) at Interfaith Clinic. All present were encouraged to help recruit dentists for both these programs. For details see either of the following websites: www.mbddds.org (Partnership Projects) OR www.whatcomalliance.org

ABCD in Whatcom has been absorbed into WAHA's programs, with Lara Welker as coordinator. In Skagit County, the ABCD coordinator is Linda Albert at the Health Dept 360-419-3322.

For current Dental Resource lists see OHC's website www.happyteeth.org.

Panel Presentation and Discussion: "Exploring strategies for oral health education and prevention with young children."

Panel Members:

1. Kristin Rohfleish - Early Learning and Family Services / Head Start
2. Dawne Shepherd - Kids Korner childcare
3. Stacy Donovan, MPH - Washington Dental Service Foundation, Early Learning Initiative

1) Kristin told us there are 400 children under age 5 in Head Start programs across Whatcom County, and that 98% have a dental home, thanks to our great pediatric dental providers. Federal and State requirements are met by tooth-brushing programs in the classroom, oral health kits to families including ABCD info, and other measures. Interfaith Mobile Dental Clinic visits preschool sites.

What helps? ABCD; getting the info from parents, staff and the Health Services Advisory Committee on what the needs are.

What are barriers to service? Occasional dentist who turns away kids under 3; challenges in follow-up treatment, missed appointments etc. ; little access to dental care for the parents.

There is a need to get consistent training for staff, and to give a consistent message to parents.

Q: is there a way to encourage use of systemic fluoride (drops)?

A: It is definitely encouraged. Medical providers prescribe drops for children outside the fluoridated water areas (Lynden and Lummi Res). Hagggen Pharmacies provide free fluoride with prescription.

2) Dawne's childcare Kids Korner started an oral health program in partnership with Head Start 9 years ago, and continues to offer it to all (70-75) families. About 30-40 of the families

choose to participate each year. The kids age 3-5 brush their teeth with supervision each day. Interfaith Mobile Dental Clinic visits each quarter and the kids love it!

Amber (Interfaith CHC) commented that 2 new childcare facilities are preparing to get similar service with the Mobile Dental Clinic – and there is still spare capacity.

Q: How common is tooth-brushing in private daycare?

A: Not common. Dawne commented that they did not make the effort until it was required as part of the partnership with Head Start, but now they find it is an easy thing to do with the 3-5 age group – harder with the younger kids as it takes so much time.

Dawne mentioned that Whatcom County Directors of Childcare Centers meet monthly. Idea to have speakers from the OHC / Health Department ask to address the Directors at a future meeting.

- 3) Stacey outlined WDSF access initiatives, 80% focused on children, 20% on seniors. “Cavity Free Kids” / ABCD educational materials are designed for Head Start programs and are also available free of charge to other providers. Training is provided to primary care doctors. The WDSF Smile Mobile goes around Washington offering dental care to low-income kids. The Early Learning Initiative that Stacy leads is working with childcare providers and the State on a policy level also.

What helps? Partnerships such as this one (Whatcom OHC); brainstorming ways to reach more families.

Barriers? Cultural differences; getting buy-in from the parents; policy issues and DSHS cuts - especially for adult care.

Q: What services does the Smile Mobile offer?

A: Screening, sealants and treatment – billing DSHS or on a sliding scale if uninsured. Serves 2000 kids/year statewide. In Whatcom, the Smile Mobile goes to Lummi tribal School 1-2 times per year to do exams, sealants, extractions, simple restorative treatment. Major needs are referred out.

Q: Does DSHS require oral health education in all licensed childcare?

A: No – only in Head Start programs.

Comment from Mary Jo Durborow: 2/3 of the kids we serve meet the definition of homeless or are in substandard housing. Would WDSF consider outreach to these families e.g. at shelters, schools?

Comment from Ross Howell (Skagit Community Action Agency) : Would love to see the Smile Mobile get to schools in Concrete, Rockport where there are no dental offices.

Thanks expressed by Harriet L for the WDSF grant which purchased extra capacity/ equipment for the Lummi tribal Clinic; they now have a fully equipped dental hygiene room at Lummi School.

There followed a brainstorm on “next steps” and ideas as to how we might implement the goals of the OHC.

Ideas on implementing OHC Goals

- Policy goal – could DSHS require oral health practices at all licensed childcare?
- Write a grant to subsidize a hygienist visit to new parents along with nurse visit
- Klamath County got RWJ Foundation to fund \$3M program for WIC moms 2002-2005
- School programs – swish and fluoride varnish
- Birthing classes – educate parents about oral health
- Pursue & expand partnerships with PeaceHealth / Family Care Network / Planned Parenthood
- Get medical offices to ask (on intake) “Who is your dentist? Date of last visit?” and get dental offices to ask, “Who is your doctor?”
- Survey pediatricians to find out what they do in terms of oral health (Stacy of WDSF interested in helping)
- Promote education of dentists (in training & in private practice) about seeing kids during their first year: ABCD and UW Dental curriculum
- Volunteer services in day-care centers: Dentists/ RDH / pre-dental students
- Get on the agenda at medical meetings of Family Practice docs / ObGyn
- Speak to Whatcom County Childcare Directors (Dawne is contact)
- Establish an Oral Health Coalition speakers’ bureau

Date of next Quarterly Meetings: Tuesday January 31st and Tuesday May 8th, 2012.