

Focus on Oral Health

Volume 2, Issue 1

January 2008



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT of HEALTH

Fluoride Varnish – Effective in Preventing Tooth Decay

Fluoride varnish is a protective coating that is painted on teeth to help prevent new cavities and to help stop cavities that have already started. The paint-on varnish is sticky, so it attaches to the teeth easily and makes the outer layer (enamel) of the teeth harder, helping to prevent cavities. Fluoride varnish has been found to be effective in preventing and reducing tooth decay in both primary and permanent teeth.



The use of fluoride varnishes to prevent and control tooth decay in children and adults is expanding in both public and private dental practices and nondental settings across the county. The 2007 North Dakota Legislative Assembly passed House Bill 1293 allowing the application of fluoride varnish by physicians, physician assistants, registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, advanced practice registered nurses, registered dental hygienists and registered dental assistants acting within their scope of practice if they have successfully completed a fluoride varnish training program approved by their respective boards. The purpose of the legislation was to enhance access to preventive oral

health treatment for high-risk children. The North Dakota Medicaid Program covers two applications of fluoride varnish (D1206) per year by the approved providers.

In September 2007, the North Dakota Department of Health's Oral Health Program, North Dakota Department of Health and the North Dakota Head Start Association convened the first training in Minot for 45 Head Start, public health and oral health professionals authorized to apply fluoride varnish. Amos Deinard, M.D., M.P.H., Department of Pediatrics, University of Minnesota, conducted the training. The web-based training course approved by the North Dakota Board of Dental Examiners was developed by Dr. Deinard and colleagues at the University of Minnesota. The training covered the cause and prevention of tooth decay, oral health screening/risk assessment, the "Lift the Lip" examination, how to apply fluoride varnish and billing procedures. Oral health consultants demonstrated the fluoride varnish application process.

The Oral Health Program has created a web page with a variety of educational materials and resources to assist health-care providers in developing a fluoride varnish project in their program or practice. Visit the web page at www.ndhealth.gov/oralhealth/FluorideVarnish.htm.

Information about the new law is available on the North Dakota Board of Dental Examiners website at www.nddentalboard.org/pdf/fluoridevarnishlinks.pdf.

The site also provides a link to a web-based fluoride varnish application training course. In addition to the web-based training, hands-on training is available. To schedule a training session, contact the Oral Health Program at 701.328.2356 or 800.472.2286 (toll-free).

National Children's Dental Health Month



February is National Children's Dental Health Month. It is a good opportunity to raise awareness about the importance of oral health. The American Dental Association has a variety of free online resources for the dental team, teachers or parents that can help with oral health presentations or provide ideas for the classroom, including colorful posters and activity sheets. For a variety of downloadable resources including a planning kit, go to www.ada.org/prof/

Focus on Oral Health

is published by the

Oral Health Program
Division of Family Health
North Dakota Department of Health
600 E. Boulevard Ave., Dept. 301
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North Dakota Dentists Reach Out to Needy by Donating Dental

The Donated Dental Services Program provided oral health care to 116 of North Dakota's most vulnerable individuals during fiscal year 2006.

The Donated Dental Services Program is a partnership between the North Dakota Department of Health's Oral Health Program, the North Dakota Dental Association, and the National Foundation of Dentistry for the Handicapped. Donated Dental Services is one of the nation's largest dental health volunteer programs.

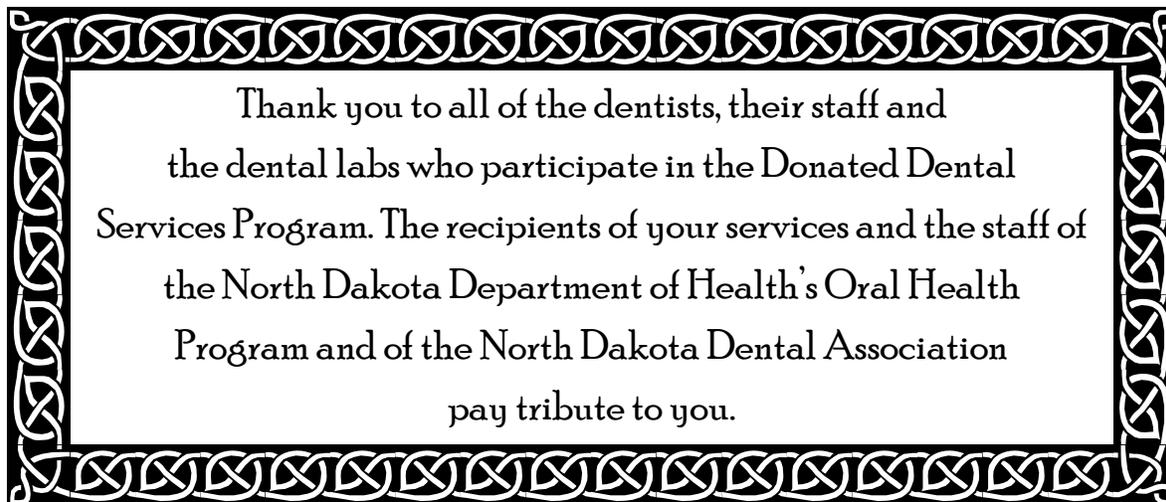
"The Donated Dental Services Program is a community of volunteer dental-health professionals who make a difference in the lives of the often overlooked at-risk population of elderly, disabled or medically compromised individuals who cannot afford dental care and are not eligible to receive public aid such as Medicaid or Medicare," said Joe Cichy, executive director for the North Dakota Dental Association.

In 2006, 120 volunteer dentists and 11 volunteer dental labs participated in the program in North Dakota. "The volunteers, generous in spirit and kind in heart, are giving back to their communities by giving smiles to the faces of those most in need," said Kimberlie Yineman, director of the Oral Health Program for the North Dakota Department of Health.

The value of the donated treatment services in 2006 was \$194,659. Since the program began in 2000, 279 individuals have received comprehensive dental care, with the value of services reaching \$602,838.

Individuals who need care can contact the Donated Dental Services Program coordinator at 866.572.9390 (toll-free).

For more information about the Donated Dental Services Program, contact Kimberlie Yineman, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.4930 or Joe Cichy, North Dakota Dental Association, at 701.223.8870. Additional information about the Donated Dental Services Program in North Dakota can be found at www.nfdh.org/joomla_nfdh/content/view/75/112/





Introduction and Background

Beginning with this issue, Focus on Oral Health will be including updates from recent North Dakota Oral Health Coalition meetings. Formed in 2005, the North Dakota Oral Health Coalition is a chartered, collaborative, statewide coalition comprised of a variety of disciplines and stakeholders focused on the oral health of all North Dakotans. The Coalition's mission is to develop and promote innovative strategies to achieve optimal oral health for all North Dakotans, and its vision is to promote best practice standards to ensure oral health is an integral part of overall health.

A Focus on 2007

In 2007, the coalition focused on forging partnerships and turning the state plan into action. Coalition members prioritized activities into four major areas, including prevention, integration, access and sustainability and established subcommittees accordingly. Each subcommittee developed objectives and action plans. The Prevention Committee is focusing on developing and implementing fluoride varnish and school-based or linked dental sealant programs. The Integration Committee is focusing on educating the public, health-care providers and policymakers about the importance and impact of oral health on overall health, promoting the concept of a dental home for each child in North Dakota and promoting oral health screening and referral by medical providers. The Access Committee is focusing on programs and policy changes to improve access to oral health services, and the Sustainability Committee is working on obtaining 501(c)(3) status for the coalition. The Children's Oral Health Conference held in Fargo in November prioritized future key policy efforts that need to be undertaken to improve oral health in North Dakota. View the conference summary at www.ndhealth.gov/oralhealth/Publications/Childrens%20oral%20health%20conference%20summary.pdf.

2007 Key Accomplishments

- ⊙ Conducted fluoride varnish training in Minot for 45 medical providers.
- ⊙ Formed a subcommittee to initiate the process to obtain 501(c)(3) status to support coalition sustainability.
- ⊙ Convened a Children's Oral Health Conference with advocates and policymakers to determine policy priorities.
- ⊙ Developed a coalition web page.
- ⊙ Drafted legislation and advocated for successful passage of House Bill 1293 to expand the application of fluoride varnish for children by medical professionals.
- ⊙ Shared the state plan with state policymakers, dentists and stakeholders.
- ⊙ Convened strategic planning sessions to prioritize coalition activities and continue implementation of the state plan.
- ⊙ Conducted evaluation of coalition membership and efforts.

Thanks to all the coalition members for your dedicated efforts to improving oral health in North Dakota. We look forward to continued progress in 2008.



Join the North Dakota Oral Health Coalition

The North Dakota Oral Health Coalition (NDOHC) represents a wide range of public, private and nonprofit organizations and individuals interested in developing and promoting innovative strategies to achieve optimal oral health for all North Dakotans.

If you are interested in joining the coalition, complete and mail the application below or enroll over the phone by calling 701.328.2356 or 800.472.2286, press 1 (toll-free in North Dakota).

North Dakota Oral Health Coalition Membership Application

Name: _____

Title: _____

Organization: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Email Address: _____

Send to: North Dakota Oral Health Coalition, North Dakota Department of Health, 600 E. Boulevard Ave., Dept. 301, Bismarck, ND 58505-0200.

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