

Focus On Oral Health



A newsletter for North Dakota's oral health community

May 2010

North Dakota's safety-net dental clinics are there to help

North Dakota is home to four safety-net dental clinics. Safety net clinics are most often nonprofit, community-sponsored dental clinics that see patients who are low-income or uninsured or who do not have other access to dental care. The clinics typically see patients covered by Medicaid and offer sliding fee schedules or reduced fees.

Bridging the Dental Gap is a nonprofit clinic serving people within a 50-mile radius of the Bismarck-Mandan area. The clinic employs four dentists, two hygienists, four assistants, two office employees and one director. Opening in August 2004, the clinic typically serves 500 or more patients per month and is hoping to increase the numbers as one new dentist and one new assistant begin work in June. Services available at the clinic include exams, cleanings, sealants, fluoride applications, x-rays, fillings and extractions. Dentures, partials, root canals and oral surgery are also provided, but at a 50 percent discount.

According to Marcia Olson, director of the clinic, "Bridging the Dental Gap provides a dental home for those who have had no regular access to dental services. Many of our patients have lived with tooth pain that has impacted their ability to work and function. Just being able to provide relief affects their lives and touches ours. Many times, the thanks are overwhelming."

Family Healthcare Center Dental Clinic is a federally qualified community health center located in Fargo that serves people in the Red River Valley Region of both North Dakota and Minnesota. The clinic was started in 1995 and typically fills about 280 appointments per month, completing basic services like emergency care, exams, cleanings,

sealants, fluoride applications, x-rays, fillings and extractions. The clinic employs one dentist, one hygienist, one dental assistant, one receptionist and one director.

Valley Community Health Centers Dental Clinic is another federally qualified community health center. It was formed in 2007, is located in Grand Forks and serves people in the Northern Red River Valley region, providing exams, cleanings, sealants, fluoride applications, fillings and extractions. They employ two dentists, one and a half hygienists, four assistants and one office employee. Between the dentists and hygienists, they serve nearly 600 patients per month.

Northland Community Health Center – Dental Clinic is North Dakota's newest safety net clinic, opening in January 2010 in Turtle Lake. It is part of a federally qualified community health center and serves people in central North Dakota. The clinic offers exams, cleanings, x-rays, fillings and extractions. One dentist provides services, along with one hygienist and three assistants. The clinic is currently recruiting another dentist and is planning to add another hygienist.

Kimberlie Yineman, director of the North Dakota Department of Health's Oral Health Program, believes the safety net dental clinics are helpful in filling the gap for people without the ability to pay or without access to dental care.

Yineman said, "North Dakota is very fortunate to have these clinics and we are so appreciative to all the professionals involved. They provide an essential service to the underserved populations of North Dakota, helping them meet their oral health care needs."

Coalition News



At its February 2010 meeting, the North Dakota Oral Health Coalition received updates on the following topics:

Obtaining 501(c)3 status

Tara Lacher, founder of My Pink Scarf, talked to the coalition about her charity, which gives pink scarves to cancer victims. She reviewed the steps she went through in order for her charity to become a 501(c)3 organization. The coalition voted to proceed with the 501(c)3 process, and Ms. Lacher offered to help with any questions or concerns that come up along the way.

Southwest Area Safety Net Dental Clinic

A meeting was planned in Dickinson to discuss the possibility of forming a southwest area safety net dental clinic. Many area professionals and residents who might be interested in helping get the project rolling were expected to attend.

To view complete meeting minutes, go to www.ndhealth.gov/oralhealth/Coalition.htm.

Give Kids A Smile Day events provide relief for children

Oral health professionals from across North Dakota donated their time, equipment and supplies to provide free dental care to kids during the annual *Give Kids A Smile Day* events in February. The events provide education, preventative and restorative care to children from low-income families.

A total of 155 children were served at five locations, and more than \$60,000 worth of dental services were provided for free. Events were held at Dakota Family Dentistry and Nelson Family Dental, Bismarck; Ideal Image Dentistry, Mandan; Valley Community Health Centers, Grand Forks; and North Dakota State College of Science, Wahpeton.

Preventative services provided included exams, cleanings, x-rays, fluoride treatments, dental sealants and oral hygiene instruction. Some children received restorative care at the event, and some were referred to other dentists who continued their care with free fillings and extractions.

A dangerous correlation: eating disorders and oral health

By Troy Roness, Former Oral Health Coalition Coordinator

Eating disorders have severe consequences for teeth and oral health. For example, self-induced vomiting associated with bulimia nervosa essentially can cause a breakdown of tooth structure. Because the digestive system releases powerful acids that break down food, self-induced vomiting allows these acids to come into contact with, attack and wear-away tooth enamel during regurgitation. In addition to causing gum disease and the erosion of enamel, frequent vomiting also may alter the color, length and shape of the teeth.

Society generally perceives bulimia nervosa as the only eating disorder that contributes to poor oral health, when in fact, anorexia nervosa is just as detrimental. Semi-starvation deprives the body of the nutrients it needs.

Individuals with eating disorders may experience a wide range of symptoms associated with their illness, including tenderness of the mouth and throat and swollen salivary glands. Swollen salivary glands may result in the widening of and a square-like shape of the jaw. Anorexia sufferers may experience weakening of the jaw bone resulting from osteoporosis, which also weakens teeth and leads to tooth loss.

Because of the devastating effect eating disorders can have on the teeth and oral health, no tooth restoration(s) should be pursued until the person has undergone treatment to overcome the disorder. In the interim, several steps can be taken to lessen the effects of the acid on teeth and gums during recovery, including limiting acidic or sugary foods and brushing and flossing on a regular basis.

Eating disorder numbers are definitely on the rise. Dentists and oral health professionals are often the first to encounter the symptoms of an eating disorder.

For more information about the dental complications of eating disorders, view the fact sheet at [www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/uploads/file/information-resources/Dental%20Complications%20of%20EDs\(1\).pdf](http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/uploads/file/information-resources/Dental%20Complications%20of%20EDs(1).pdf). The fact sheet provides information, resources and steps for oral health practitioners who want to discuss concerns with their patients and offer suggestions for treatment.

Seal! ND event conducted at Bridging the Dental Gap

A Seal! ND pilot program event was held at *Bridging the Dental Gap* in Bismarck in February. The clinic staff provided screenings and dental sealants to 21 third-grade students from Bismarck's Jeannette Myhre Elementary School. The students were bused to the clinic, and those who needed them had sealants applied to their 6-year molars. The students also received a packet to take home that included a toothbrush, literature for the parents and the results of the clinical visit.

Bridging the Dental Gap will continue the free dental sealant program, offering a day of services during each quarter. Their service area encompasses towns and rural areas within a 50-mile radius of Bismarck, so schools within that range will be the ones to receive services.



(Top) Staff members of *Bridging the Dental Gap* who donated a day to provide screenings and dental sealants to 21 third-grade students. (Right) A student receives a screening and a dental sealant.



Items Available

A fact sheet for parents about dental sealants and *Tips For Healthy Teeth* fact sheets for ages birth to 21 years are available for use in dental offices. To print these fact sheets, go to www.ndhealth.gov/oralhealth and click Fact Sheets and Brochures.

DENTAL SEALANTS

What are dental sealants?
Dental sealants are thin plastic coatings that are applied to the grooves on the chewing surfaces of the back teeth (molars) to protect them from tooth decay. Sealants keep bacteria and food particles out of the grooves on the teeth.

How are sealants applied?
Applying sealants is quick and easy. The tooth is cleaned, and a special gel is placed in the chewing surface. For this material to bond to the tooth, the dental professional also may shine a light on the tooth to help harden the sealant. It takes about 15 minutes for the sealant to finish a procedure. Children can sit or stand immediately after the sealant procedure is done.

How long do sealants last?
A sealant can last for as long as five to 10 years. They can be reapplied if they are no longer in place.

Does my child really need sealants?
Sealants protect the teeth from decay (cavities) and can prevent the need for dental fillings. One stage of decay is not permanently damaging your child's teeth. Sealants can save time, money and the discomfort sometimes associated with fillings.

Will my child feel or see the sealants?
Your child may feel the sealant with their tongue after it is first placed on their teeth, but sealants are very thin and your child will quickly adjust to them. Sealants only can be seen up close. They usually are not seen when a child smiles.

Does my child need to go anywhere else to prevent tooth decay after he or she has a sealant?
Sealants protect the chewing surfaces of the teeth, but regular dental visits and good oral hygiene will be needed to prevent the other parts of the teeth, the gums and the spaces between teeth from becoming decayed. Sealants do not prevent cavities. Sealants, floss, and a dental professional twice a year.

For more information about dental care for your child, contact:
Child Health Program
North Dakota Department of Health
600 E. Boulevard
Bismarck, ND 58102

LIFETIME SMILES BEGIN EARLY

TIPS FOR HEALTHY TEETH 12 MONTHS TO 36 MONTHS

Baby teeth are important. Teeth decay in baby teeth can be painful and can cause health problems like infections. A decayed gum line results in a healthy place for teeth to grow.

- **Brush your child's teeth daily.** Brush your child's teeth twice a day. Around age 2, begin brushing with a small amount of fluoride toothpaste on a baby or child-sized soft bristled toothbrush. The toothpaste on baby's teeth are before bed and after breakfast. Teach your child to brush and floss.
- **Put your child to bed with love and have, not a pacifier.** Seal your child's teeth with fluoride varnish. Fluoride varnish is a protective coating that is painted on teeth to help prevent new cavities and help young teeth.
- **Ask your doctor or nurse if your child needs fluoride varnish.** Fluoride varnish is a protective coating that is painted on teeth to help prevent new cavities and help young teeth.
- **Take your child to the dentist.** When your child turns 1 year old, schedule a dental checkup. Children should see the dentist at least once a year, more often if they have had cavities. If you do not have a dentist, ask your physician to check your child's teeth.

For more information, contact:
Oral Health Program
North Dakota Department of Health
600 E. Boulevard, Dept. 301
Bismarck, ND 58102
755.232.5156 or 755.472.2386
www.nd.gov/ndhealth

TOOTHPS

Approved by the Department of Health Services
for use in a community oral health program
© 2004 North Dakota Department of Health

North Dakota Regional Public Health Hygienists

Section 1 (Northwest Area)

Tracey Haugenoe, R.D.H.
701.774.8708

Section 3 (Northeast Area) and Section 7 (Southeast Area)

Hollie Harrington, R.D.H., B.S.
701.683.9072

Section 4 (Southwest Area)

Carla Kelly, R.D.H.
701.523.3423

Section 2 (North Central Area) and Section 5 (Southwest Central Area) and Section 6 (South Central Area)

Marlene Hulm, R.D.H.
701.663.7962

Join the North Dakota Oral Health Coalition

The North Dakota Oral Health Coalition (NDOHC) represents 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, call 701.328.2356 or 800.472.2286 (press 1), or send an e-mail to cebach@nd.gov.

The next coalition meeting will be Sept. 10, 2010, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Gold Seal Building in Bismarck.



North Dakota Oral Health Coalition Membership Application

Name: _____

Title: _____

Organization: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail Address: _____

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

The Focus On Oral Health newsletter is published three times per year by:

**Oral Health Program
Division of Family Health
North Dakota Department of Health
600 E. Boulevard Ave., Dept. 301
Bismarck, N.D. 58505-0200
701.328.2356
www.ndhealth.gov/oralhealth
Volume 4, Issue 1**

State Health Officer: Dr. Terry Dwelle
Deputy State Health Officer: Arvy Smith
Division Director: Kim Senn
Program Director: Kimberlie Yineman
Program Manager: Robyn Stearns
Administrative Assistant: Colleen Ebach
Communications Consultant: Cameo Skager



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT of HEALTH

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT #256
BISMARCK, ND
ZIP CODE 58504

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Oral Health Program
Division of Family Health
North Dakota Department of Health
600 E. Boulevard Ave., Dept. 301
Bismarck, N.D. 58505-0200