

Focus On Oral Health



A newsletter for North Dakota's oral health community

March 2011

Healthy smiles for all children

Many areas of North Dakota experience a dental work force shortage, making it difficult for children to see a dentist for early and ongoing care. Currently there are eight pediatric dentists practicing in North Dakota, which does not cover care for the number of children in need. To assist with the dental work force shortage, the 2007 legislature passed a new law allowing trained physicians, physician's assistants and advanced practice registered nurses to screen and apply fluoride varnish. Also, trained registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, registered dental hygienists and registered dental assistants are allowed to screen and apply varnish under the direct or general supervision of a dentist or physician.

The North Dakota Department of Health's (NDDoH) Oral Health Program is helping children through its Healthy Smiles Fluoride Varnish Program. The Healthy Smiles Program is billable (private insurance and Medicaid-eligible), with training offered free of charge to pediatric office staff including physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, registered nurses and licensed practical nurses.

Fluoride varnish, a protective coating that is painted on the teeth to help prevent new cavities and to help stop those that have already started, is normally applied in a dental office. A current problem is that there are very few pediatric dentists in the state and general dentists don't often see young children until school age. In addition, some families do not have the ability to pay for regular dental care for their children.

Public health hygienists, employed by the NDDoH, have begun training other providers, besides dentists,

to do screenings and apply the fluoride varnish in an effort to provide protection to the children who are not getting dental care. The Oral Health Program is teaming up with local public health units, pediatricians and schools to ensure that all children are offered fluoride varnish for their teeth.



Staff at Dr. Carver's pediatric office learn how to apply fluoride varnish to a young patient.

Fluoride varnish trainings

The Healthy Smiles Program has trained RNs and LPNs in local public health units (LPHUs) and has begun to train staff in pediatric offices in the fluoride varnish procedures. LPHUs and pediatricians see children early and more frequently, which makes these places the perfect settings to include fluoride varnish.

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Healthy smiles for all children (continued from Page 1)

In January 2011, Dr. Diana Peterson and the staff at Dr. Carver's pediatric office in Minot were the first pediatricians and clinic nurses trained to do screenings and apply fluoride varnish. They will implement this procedure as part of their well-baby and well-child check-ups through Trinity Health Care.

The Healthy Smiles Program will continue to train pediatric offices across the state in the fluoride varnish procedure.

Fluoride varnish in schools

Plans are in place to have the NDDoH public health hygienists provide the direct service of screening and applying fluoride varnish in schools. The school-based programs will target the schools with a 50 percent or higher free and reduced lunch rate.

Online training on the horizon

Healthy Smiles is in the process of creating a web-based program. The didactic portion of the program will be accessible online with a required post-test. Once the test has been completed, the participant will be directed to contact the NDDoH to schedule the clinical portion (fluoride varnish application).

The NDDoH public health hygienists will continue to do the trainings for the program and will be available to answer any questions about the online program. Three contact hours will be awarded to RNs and LPNs for completion of the didactic web-based program with a passing grade on the post-test of at least 90 percent and completion of the clinical application training. Health-care professionals who already have been trained in the procedure also can earn one contact hour from having a customized retraining session. Please contact Robyn Stearns at 701.328.4915 or rstearns@nd.gov to schedule a training for your office.

Though tooth decay is one of the most prevalent of infectious diseases, it is 100 percent preventable. The Healthy Smiles Program hopes to help children who may be suffering unnecessary pain and bring a smile back to their faces.

Coalition News



North Dakota Oral Health Coalition updates:

Seal! ND Program – Four portable dental units are being ordered, along with supplies. Plans are to begin in-school or school-related application of dental sealants for eligible students in the southwest part of the state in the fall of 2011.

Ronald McDonald Care Mobile – More donations have been secured, including \$125,000 from the Leach Foundation. MDU Foundation also has made a donation. The Care Mobile vehicle is expected to be completed by early fall 2011.

Dental Loan Repayment Program for safety-net dental clinics – As of press time for this newsletter, this program is without funding for the next biennium. Work is being done in the legislature that would allow for continued funding of the program. When the legislature wraps up all of its budget hearings, there will be a better idea about the future of the program.

The next meeting of the North Dakota Oral Health Coalition will be held May 20 from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. at the Gold Seal Building in Bismarck. If you are interested in joining the coalition, please contact Colleen Ebach at 701.328.2356 or cebach@nd.gov.

A round of applause

Thank you to all the dental professionals and partner organizations who took part in February's *Give Kids A Smile Day* events. They provided free dental care to children in need, making for some happy and pain-free kids. Those who participated include Nelson Dentistry in Bismarck, North Dakota State College of Science Allied Dental Education Clinic in Wahpeton, Valley Community Health Centers Dental Clinic in Grand Forks and Prairie Rose Dentistry in Bismarck.

If your clinic or practice also participated in the event, or wishes to participate in future events, please contact the North Dakota Department of Health's Oral Health Program Director Kimberlie Yineman at 701.328.4930 or kyineman@nd.gov for more information or to be included on this listing.

Oral Health Day at the Capitol

Oral Health Day, which was held at the State Capitol on January 11, offered a chance for oral health-related organizations and state programs to educate legislators about their work. The groups set up booths in the Great Hall and offered information about their programs and the successes and challenges of oral health in North Dakota.

Organizations and state programs involved included Bridging the Dental Gap, Community Health Care Association of the Dakotas, Head Start, North Dakota Dental Association, North Dakota Division of Cancer Prevention and Control, North Dakota Tobacco Program (Quitline and QuitNet), North Dakota Oral Health Coalition, North Dakota Oral Health Program and the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile.

According to event organizer, Kathy Keiser, the groups felt the event was a success and each had the opportunity to visit with several legislators, state employees and other visitors passing by.



Several visitors stopped by the booths set up at the State Capitol for Oral Health Day.



Mark your calendars for Leadership Parenting training

The North Dakota Head Start Dental Home Initiative, in partnership with the North Dakota Oral Health Program, the North Dakota Head Start Association, the North Dakota Association of Pediatric Dentists and the North Dakota Dental Association, is presenting a parenting conference led by John Rosemond, a psychologist, nationally syndicated columnist, best-selling author and recognized parenting expert.

“Leadership Parenting” will be held Friday, April 15 from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Fargo Holiday Inn. Registration begins at 8:45 a.m. Dental and medical professionals and Head Start staff are encouraged to attend. Lunch will be provided.

Pre-registration is \$40 (\$65 at the door) for dentists and physicians and \$15 (\$25 at the door) for dental and medical staff. Five hours of continuing education credit will be provided.

To register, call 701.777.2663 or 1.866.579.2663, or register online at www.conted.und.edu/secure/rosemond.

For more information about John Rosemond, visit his website at www.rosemond.com.

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Items Available

Fluoride varnish information sheets (8.5 by 5.5.) are available to be given to parents when children have fluoride varnish applications completed.

Copies of the information sheets can be ordered by calling 701.328.2356 or e-mailing cebach@nd.gov.



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

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Volume 5, Issue 1

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DEPARTMENT of HEALTH