

# MONTGOMERY COUNTY ORAL HEALTH CARE TASK FORCE

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## ACTIVITIES REPORT SPRING 2004-2007



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# HISTORY OF ORAL HEALTH CARE TASK FORCE

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“Somebody needs to do something about dental.”

That is the true impetus for the beginning of the Oral Health Care Task Force. In the course of conducting inquiries into the health needs of the un and underinsured of Montgomery County, there were continual references to dental as an unmet health need. School nurses indicated that some of their students had such severe dental issues that they could not concentrate in class. Social service agencies indicated their clients on medical assistance found it difficult to find providers willing to take their insurance.

Many people, even professionals, have a disconnect between their oral health and their overall physical health. As more research is conducted, the more we learn about the significant impact poor oral health care can have on our general health. The 2000 U.S. Surgeon General report called oral health in America a ‘Silent Epidemic’ and in 2003 a *National Call to Action to Promote Oral Health* was released.

This Task Force started out as a small group of people recognizing that a greater impact could be made by working together and supporting each others efforts. The first meeting was in December 2003 and generated enough interest and support to expand the group. All interested parties are welcome to attend the meetings.

The task force has produced some quality accomplishments. It is a testament to the hard work of our members and the interest and value of this work that so much has been accomplished. We are pleased to be able to share our activities with the community and others who may be interested in assisting us in our efforts to meet our mission, *“To advance the oral health and well-being of Montgomery County residents by eliminating oral health disparities, facilitating the utilization of existing resources, and supporting initiatives to enhance and increase oral health care programs.”*

## MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

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The Montgomery County Oral Health Care Task Force meets the second Monday of every other month at 9:00 a.m. in the Human Services Center, Norristown. Listed below are agencies that regularly send representatives. We include and encourage any other interested person to join the task force.

Community Medical and Dental  
Delaware Valley Community Health  
ElderDent  
ElderNet  
Harcum College  
Head Start Dental Hygienist  
KenCrest  
Main Line Health Systems  
Montgomery-Bucks Dental Society  
Montgomery County Aging & Adult Services  
Montgomery County Assisted Living  
Montgomery County Community College  
Montgomery County Health Department  
Montgomery County School Nurses  
Montgomery County Youth Center  
North Penn Community Health Foundation  
PEAK Center  
Private Dental Providers  
Visiting Nurses Association-Community Services

# SENIOR CENTER DENTAL SURVEY

## SPRING 2004

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A population of interest to the group was the elderly. The task force is aware that many elderly persons lack dental insurance or are underinsured. The task force surveyed seniors at the Ambler, Ardmore, Glenside, Harleysville, Norristown, Lansdale, Pottstown, and Upper Perkiomen Senior Centers on attitudes regarding dental care. The survey included questions on dental insurance, dental visits, attitudes toward dental care, and dental services.

### *Highlights of the results:*

70% visit a dentist at least once a year

24% do not visit due to lack of insurance

19% do not visit due to lack of funds

38% visit the dentist for routine check-ups

36% visit only when there is a problem

35% state they do not visit a dentist because they wear dentures

55% indicate they would use a low cost/free clinic

25% stated they need dental services

35% wear dentures

19% need fillings

19% need dentures/partial

58% have monthly income over \$1125

# SCHOOL NURSES DENTAL SURVEY

## SUMMER 2004

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School nurses from all county school districts were surveyed on oral health issues in their schools. The survey included questions on dental services provided to students, interest in dental programs, needs of students with regard to dental care.

### *Highlights of the results:*

School nurses were asked: “What are your follow-up procedures for children when a referral is made from the mandated school dental program?”

54% send a letter home to parents

30% perform a follow-up phone call

16% have no follow-up

School nurses were asked: “What issues would you like to see addressed by the task force?”

59% want an increase in low-cost/free dental care

26% want oral health education in schools

11% want a referral/resource guide

4% want mandated screenings in 10<sup>th</sup> grade

### *Sample comments from survey:*

“We need to have a place in Montgomery County to send students and parents with no dental insurance who do not qualify for CHIP. There is a real need for low-cost or free dental care.”

“Education to parents of kids: dental care, bottle rot, reduce sugars.”

“Kids have tooth decay that parents can’t afford to get fixed and the kids have a lot of pain. They usually end up with teeth pulled.”

# SCHOOL NURSES DINNER

## DECEMBER 2004

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As a result of the school nurses survey administered earlier in the year, we identified the need for school nurses to have more education on oral health care issues. The Oral Health Care Task Force sponsored an educational dinner for public and private school nurses of the county. Many school nurses attended the session held on December 1, 2004 and were educated on issues relating to dental physiology, treatment of dental injuries, and oral health care.

Our guest speakers included Dr. Angela Stout, pediatric dentist and adjunct professor with Temple University. Dr. Stout created the Oral Health Care Manual for School Nurses in association with Temple University. Her talk focused on the dental physiology and common dental scenarios encountered by school nurses and how to handle them.

Joan McClintock, RHD, MRHD, M.ED, Professor of Dental Hygiene from Montgomery County Community College also presented to the school nurses on the topic of Oral Health Care and Children. Her talk covered issues such as community water fluoridation, sealant programs, trends in oral health, and available resources. She included information on the clinic at the Montgomery County Community College campus in Blue Bell which provides dental hygiene students with experience while serving the community.



- Traditional Dental Hygiene Preventive Services
- Dental Exams
- Patient Education
- Fluoride Treatment
- Sealants
- X-rays
  - CMS
  - Decay
  - Panoramic
- Study Models

Slide from Joan McClintock presentation

# DENTAL PROFESSIONALS SURVEY

## FEBRUARY 2005

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In order to obtain information on the viewpoint of the dental community with regard to serving the un/underinsured population, the task force surveyed dental professionals in Montgomery County. We purchased a listing of licensed dentists and hygienists from the state of Pennsylvania and mailed out surveys. The task force issued a press release to encourage participation.

### *Highlights of the results:*

Dentists were asked “What are your primary concerns in dealing with underserved dental clients?”

36% low reimbursement	33% not keeping appointments
19% already donate services	11% lack of follow-through by clients

Dentists were asked “What issues would you like to see addressed by the oral health care task force?”

50% Increase reimbursement	29% Provide education
21% Develop clinic or other care provision model	

Dentists were asked “What concerns to you have about the state medical assistance program?”

77% Low reimbursement	12% Slow reimbursement
12% Too much paperwork	

### *Sample Comments from survey:*

“No one should have to go through life toothless or compromise their general health by leaving dental problems untreated.”

“I spent 15 years accepting DPA cases; the fee schedule makes it impossible to keep accepting cases.”

“There needs to be a way to compensate dentists for missed appointments. Increase in Medical Assistance fees.”

# **BUSINESS PLAN DEVELOPMENT**

## **SPRING 2005**

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The Oral Health Care Task Force decided to use a business plan format to shape its activities for the future. This enabled us to organize our ideas and create an outline for our new group to operate. In developing the plan, we came up with new ideas and a guide to keep the group moving along and on track.

Listed below are the activities we devised for our business plan.

- Complete provider survey and determine nature of work force availability and interest.
- Conduct HPSA (Health Professional Shortage Area) research to determine if any areas within Montgomery County can be designated as dental professional shortage area.
- Provide and assess prevention programs delivered to targeted populations (i.e. seniors, minorities, children, underserved)
  - Baby Bottle Syndrome Initiative at Montgomery County Community College
  - Denture Clean and Screen Programs
  - Sealant Programs through Health Department and MCCC
  - Restorative Care Programs through Health Department
- Develop School Nurse Resource Guide and dissemination strategy
- Research workforce development plan
  - IRS/Account research on tax incentive plan
  - Volunteer and paid opportunities
  - Education on MA reimbursement
  - PR campaign on community involvement
- Identify and establish short term/long term volunteer venues
- Complete feasibility assessment for portable office and if appropriate, develop business plan for this component.
- Determine optimal structure for convening, coordinating, and managing activities of Task Force.

## **SENIOR CENTER CLEAN AND SCREENS**

### **SUMMER 2005**

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In the Summer of 2005, the Oral Health Care Task Force funded the provision of dental 'Clean and Screens' in local senior centers. There were two objectives to this program. First, to provide services to this particular population who oftentimes are unaware of their dental needs and frequently lack dental insurance. Second, to test the concept of portable dental services. The task force had been considering a mobile dental unit and wanted to determine if clients were receptive to receiving medical care in a non-traditional setting.

The task force identified several local senior centers and coordinated with their staff to schedule the clean and screens. The centers selected were The Peak Center (Lansdale), Ambler Senior Center, Glenside Senior Center, Ardmore Senior Center (PALM), and Norristown Senior Center. The Task Force contracted with a provider to screen clients for oral cancer and, if the clients had dentures, to provide a thorough cleaning of the dentures, and to provide education on oral health issues.

Each senior center promoted the program to its clients and had the clients sign consent forms. The provider set up an area at each senior center to perform the clean and screens. The program was well received and attended. It was clear that the community would accept dental services in the non-traditional setting.

# PORTABLE DENTAL OFFICE PROGRAM

## FEBRUARY 2006

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The Oral Health Care Task Force reviewed the existing resources in the community for dental care, particularly to underserved persons, and recognized the need for additional providers. In a county as sizeable as Montgomery County, it was challenging to conceive of a particular fixed clinic that could serve our residents. A subcommittee was developed to pursue the idea of a mobile dental clinic. This subcommittee examined current mobile dental practices including dental vans. There was a site visit to the University of Pennsylvania's dental van program, PENNSmiles, and other research into dental van programs. While the dental van program is valuable, there are some challenges to a van program; significant start-up costs, insurance, driver status, on-going costs. The subcommittee determined that a mobile dental van was not a viable project for the task force.

The subcommittee then focused on mobile dental equipment, portable dental equipment that could be easily transported to any location and set up to serve clients. The subcommittee developed the concept and conducted additional research including contacting a North Philadelphia school which was served by a portable dental unit.



Funding for the portable dental equipment was available through a federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant already obtained by Montgomery County Human Services Administration. This grant was given to support programs to increase access to health care for the un and underserved residents of Montgomery County.

We issued a Request for Proposals from community organizations to determine interest in operating a portable dental program. A proposal was received from The Greater North Penn Collaborative, led by the Visiting Nurses Association, to utilize the equipment with financial support for dental care providers granted by the North Penn Community Health Foundation.

The Visiting Nurses Association contracted with a dental care provider familiar with mobile dental equipment, ElderDent, and also partnered with Montgomery County Community College. They developed a comprehensive program to provide dental services in the Visiting Nurses Association clinic in Lansdale to clients. They take Medical Assistance, private insurance, and utilize a sliding-fee scale for individuals all of ages with no dental insurance coverage. This unit will be traveling to other sites in the community to provide dental care to a greater number of underserved individuals.



# ORAL HEALTH CARE MANUAL FOR SCHOOL NURSES

## SEPTEMBER 2006

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The results of the oral health care survey for school nurses and the nurses' educational dinner indicated that school nurses desired more oral health information. Dr. Angela Stout had produced an Oral Health Care Manual for School Nurses with her colleagues at Temple University. The task force appealed to Dr. Stout to share her manual with Montgomery County and that the task force would adapt it for Montgomery County; including Montgomery County resources and contact information in place of Philadelphia information. Dr. Stout was updating the manual and when the update was completed, she graciously shared the manual with Montgomery County and we made appropriate changes and distributed to school nurses, both public and private.

The manuals were provided to nurses during a school nurses coordinator meeting. The manuals were also provided to local teaching colleges to distribute to students entering dental careers.

### Oral Health Manual for School Nurses

#### Index 1

- ▶ The Tooth: Parts and Supporting Structures
- ▶ Dental Physiology (Eruption and Shedding of Teeth)
- ▶ Normal Oral Structures
  - ▶ a. Frenum
  - ▶ b. Buccal Mucosa
  - ▶ c. Tongue
  - ▶ d. Gingiva
  - ▶ e. Alveolar Mucosa
  - ▶ f. Palate
- ▶ Common Oral Conditions
  - ▶ a. Tooth Decay
  - ▶ b. Baby Bottle Tooth Decay
  - ▶ c. Gum Disease/Periodontal Disease
- ▶ Preventive Measures
  - ▶ a. Tooth Brushing
  - ▶ b. Flossing
  - ▶ c. Sealants
  - ▶ d. Fluorides
  - ▶ e. Mouth Guards

### Oral Health Manual for School Nurses

#### Index 2

- ▶ Management of Dental Emergencies
  - ▶ a. Toothache with no accident
  - ▶ b. Knocked-out permanent tooth
  - ▶ c. Fractured, chipped, or broken tooth
  - ▶ d. Loose permanent tooth
  - ▶ e. Uncontrolled bleeding, bitten tongue or lip, or trauma from facial injury
  - ▶ f. Recurrent, continual, or uncontrolled bleeding after extractions
  - ▶ g. Inflamed Gums
  - ▶ h. Intruded tooth
  - ▶ i. Possible fractured jaw
  - ▶ j. Canker sores
  - ▶ k. Orthodontic emergencies
- ▶ Dental Facts for the School Nurse
  - ▶ a. Nutrition and Oral Health
  - ▶ b. Smoking and Oral Cancer
  - ▶ c. Tobacco and Oral Cancer - Chewing Tobacco
- ▶ Referrals
- ▶ Links to Resources and Dental Organizations



# MONTGOMERY COUNTY DENTAL RESOURCE GUIDE

## FEBRUARY 2007

Based upon numerous requests, we recognized the need for a dental resource guide to be used by school nurses, medical personnel, social service agencies and others. With new low-cost dental services arriving in the county in the past few years, we had sufficient information to produce a resource guide. The task force partnered with the Montgomery-Bucks Dental Society to publish the guide and it will be distributed to a variety of providers throughout the county.

**Selected Health Plans**

**AmeriChoice**  
1-800-445-9090

**Delta Dental**  
1-800-932-0783

**Doral Dental**  
(Amerihealth, Health Partners, ION Health, Inc. Keystone Mercy)  
1-800-341-8478

**Guardian DentalGuard**  
1-800-890-4774

**MetLife**  
1-800-942-0854



**For additional information:**

American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry  
[www.aapd.org](http://www.aapd.org)

American Association of Public Health Dentistry  
[www.aaphd.org](http://www.aaphd.org)

American Dental Association  
[www.ada.org](http://www.ada.org)

American Public Health Association  
[www.apha.org](http://www.apha.org)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

Montgomery Bucks Dental Society  
[www.mbds.org](http://www.mbds.org)

National Foundation of Dentistry for the Handicapped  
[www.nfhd.org](http://www.nfhd.org)

National Institutes of Health  
[www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov)

Created February 2007

**Montgomery County Dental Resource Guide**



**Funded by the Montgomery Bucks Dental Society**  
[www.mbds.org](http://www.mbds.org)

**CLINICS AND LOW-COST DENTAL PROVIDERS**

Many private practice dental professionals provide services at reduced or no cost. This is a listing of providers who supplement that effort to meet the oral health needs of our community.

<p><b>Community Dental Services</b> Pottstown High School N. Washington Street Pottstown, PA 19464 Phone: 610-970-6730 -Working adults -Medical assistance, sliding fee scale</p>	<p><b>Greater North Penn Dental Initiative at North Penn VNA</b> North Penn VNA 51 Medical Campus Drive Lansdale, PA 19446 Phone: 1-877 GONPSMILES (1-877-466-7764) -Children &amp; adults -Medical Assistance, sliding fee scale</p>	<p><b>HealthLink Medical Center</b> 1775 Street Road Southampton, PA 18996 Phone: 215-364-4247 -Working adults -No-cost clinic, based on income level</p>
<p><b>Community Medical and Dental</b> 309 Gravel Pike Rahns, PA 19426 Phone: 610-489-1313 -Children &amp; adults -Medical Assistance, reduced fee</p>	<p><b>Harcum College</b> Cohen Dental Center 750 Montgomery Avenue Bryn Mawr, PA 19010 Phone: 610-526-6015 -Preventive care only, children &amp; adults -Low cost clinic</p>	<p><b>Montgomery County Community College</b> Dental Hygiene Clinic 211 Science Center 340 DeKalb Pike Blue Bell, PA 19422 Phone: 215-641-6483 -Preventive care only, children &amp; adults -Low cost clinic</p>
<p><b>Dental Clinic at Abington Hospital</b> 1200 Old York Road Abington, PA 19002 Phone: 215-481-2193 -Children &amp; adults -Medical Assistance, sliding fee scale</p>		<p><b>Norristown Regional Health Center</b> 133 West Main Street Norristown, PA 19401 Phone: 610-278-7787 -Children &amp; adults -Medical Assistance, sliding fee scale</p>

# NATIONAL CHILDREN'S DENTAL HEALTH MONTH

## FEBRUARY 2007

In recognition of National Children's Dental Health Month, celebrated each February since 1981, members of the Oral Health Care Task Force developed a bulletin board display. This board was on display at the Montgomery County Health Department's Norristown clinic. In addition to the bulletin board, activity sheets, toothbrushes and floss were made available to the clients of the clinic.



# PRESENTATIONS TO TASK FORCE

## 2004-2007

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August 2004

Donna Wyatt  
Program Coordinator  
Bucks County Health Improvement Project

December 2005

Stephanie Grier  
Program Manager/Health Educator  
Area Health Education Center

July 2006

Colleen McCauley-Brown  
Health Care Projects Manager  
Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth

March 2007

Connie Whitson  
Director  
Montgomery County Office of Day Care

Jennifer Gillette  
Donated Dental Services Coordinator  
National Foundation of Dentistry for the Handicapped

## NEXT STEPS FOR THE TASK FORCE

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Over the course of our task force meetings, many ideas have come forth from members on how to improve access to oral health care. While the task force is unable to pursue each of these ideas simultaneously, it is important for us to catalog our ideas to ensure that they are eventually explored.

At the beginning of the year, we review our activities list and determine which we will focus on for the upcoming year. Listed below are some of the ideas which have arisen over the years.

- ❖ Create dental professional volunteer opportunities
- ❖ Dental professional education: liability, MA reimbursement, Language Line
- ❖ Tax break incentive for volunteer dentists
- ❖ Utilizing dental loan forgiveness programs
- ❖ Public education initiative: website, PSAs, newsletters
- ❖ Oral health care for pregnant women
- ❖ Conference for school nurses-possibly during in-service days
- ❖ Develop partnerships with schools and other community based organizations to educate our target population
- ❖ Support the portable dental program as it expands to serve clients in community locations

The Oral Health Care Task Force will continue to meet to review its existing initiatives and take on others as appropriate. Sharing information and awareness of oral health initiatives with one another is one of our greatest values. We must continue to inform ourselves and reach out to the community on the importance of oral health care issues and make this valuable resource available to everyone in our community.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
ORAL HEALTH CARE TASK FORCE  
ACTIVITIES REPORT SPRING 2004-2007



Commissioners

Thomas Jay Ellis, Esq.

Chairman

James R. Matthews

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For more information on the Oral Health Care Task Force,  
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