

2nd Annual Meskin Symposium
 "Meeting the Oral Health Needs of the Aging Population: Education,
 Service & Advocacy".


**Health Reform: The Process &
 Role of Advocacy by the Dental
 Community**

John C. Baldwin, M.D.
 Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center

The Mouth/Body Connection

NIDCR Challenges

Convincing physicians and
 laypersons that without
 oral health you are not healthy



Source: National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research: The Challenge of Translational Research at the NIDCR; Remarks by Lawrence A. Tabak, D.D.S., Ph.D.
<http://www.nidcr.nih.gov/Content/About/TranslationalResearch/PDF/Tabak%20Remarks%20080910.pdf>

The Mouth/Body Connection: Getting Beyond Separation

*Oral Health in America: A Report of the Surgeon
 General (2000)*

- Recognition that oral health is critical to overall health
- "All primary care providers can contribute to improved oral and craniofacial health. Interdisciplinary care is needed to manage the oral health-general health interface. Dentists, as primary care providers, are uniquely positioned to play an expanded role in the detection, early recognition, and management of a wide range of complex oral and general diseases and conditions."

Future of Health Care: Demographic Trends

An Older and More Diverse Nation by Midcentury

- "In 2030, when all of the baby boomers will be 65 and older, **nearly one in five U.S. residents is expected to be 65 and older.** This age group is projected to increase to 88.5 million in 2050, more than doubling the number in 2008 (38.7 million)." (2008 U.S. Census Bureau Projections)
- "By 2050, half of the U.S. population will be a person of color. This demographic shift in the population suggests that there are economic as well as health consequences of our failure to eliminate longstanding disparities in health status and in access to health care." (Testimony of Marsha Lillie-Blanton, Dr.P.H., Kaiser Foundation, House of Rep. - Ways and Means Health Subcommittee June 10, 2008)
- Non-Hispanic whites are much more likely to visit a dentist. In 1997, the percentage of persons 65 yrs and older who had a dental visit in the past year: 57% of Non-Hispanic whites, 45% of Hispanics and 38% of Non-Hispanic blacks (National Health Interview Survey)

Oral Health and the Aging Population

"...It is no longer appropriate to equate geriatric dental care with denture care, because only 27 percent of people 65yrs and older were edentulous in 2004...as people live longer and retain more natural teeth, the complexity of their treatment increases."

(Ronald Entinger, *Oral Health and the Aging Population*, The Journal of the American Dental Association, Vol. 138 September 2007)

"Unfortunately, financing dental care for older persons is particularly difficult compared with other age groups, in part, because there are no Federal or State dental insurance programs that cover routine dental services, and only 22 percent of older persons are covered by private dental insurance. Consequently, dental care is unreachable for many older persons living on a fixed income."

(Clemencia M. Vargas, et al. *The Oral Health of Older Americans*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, March 2001)

57% of older Americans reported no dental visit

(Medical Expenditure Panel Survey)

Measures of Oral Health in the Aging Population

Dental Caries

- In 1988- 94 nearly 1/3 of adults 65 years of age and older with natural teeth had untreated dental caries

Periodontal Diseases

- The prevalence of periodontal diseases increases with age (and studies have show a possible association between these diseases and diabetes and cardiovascular diseases)

Oral Cancer

- People 65 years and older are 7 times more likely to be diagnosed with oral cancer – approximately 30,000 individuals diagnosed each year

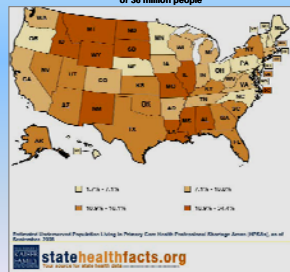
Source: Clemencia M. Vargas, et al. *The Oral Health of Older Americans*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, March 2001

U.S. Population Living in Health Professional Shortage Areas: The Need for More Dentists

An estimated 10.4% of U.S. Population Lives in Dental HPSA or 32 Million people



An estimated 11.8% of U.S. Population Lives in Primary Care HPSA or 36 million people



HPSA- Is a geographic area, population group or a facility designated as such by the Department of Health and Human Services – Health Resources and Services Administration.

Challenges to Oral Care Delivery

The dental community must adjust to the needs and expectations for oral health care in an aging U.S. population:

- Treating conditions that are prevalent in the older population
- Incorporating dental "best- practices" through collaborative efforts as a means to improve overall health
 - Opportunities for testing and prevention
- Providing access to care to a segment of the population that has increased social and physical limitations
 - Increased emphasis on geriatric dentistry

How to create economic incentives to address these challenges?

Lessons from Health Care Reform

- The long-standing focus of health care reform has been the provision of coverage for the uninsured and paying for that expanded coverage

Current reform bills still lack broad support for oral health:

- All bills includes a dental provisions for children, but adult oral health coverage is not offered
- H.R. 3200 and the Senate HELP Committee Bill - creates a program to train professionals in public health dentistry
- H.R. 3200 - provisions to make dental students eligible for public health workforce scholarships, student loan reimbursement, and training enhancement programs

Healthcare Reform: The Process and Role of Advocacy by the Dental Community

Run-away Cost

- Widespread, unexpected underinsurance, experienced across a wide socio-economic range
- Unsustainable costs for business and individuals

Cost Control

- Cost savings from "best practice" decisions
- Evidence – based dentistry reducing costs and improving quality of life

Linkage and Reform

- Interdisciplinary approach to care
- Incorporating oral health procedures to improve outcomes in overall health
- Incentivize best practices
- Rewarding good long-term outcomes