



August 2016

Welcome to the sixth edition of the Vermont Oral Health Coalition (VOHC) quarterly newsletter. VOHC newsletters provide updates on Coalition activities, and information on oral health issues, news and initiatives in Vermont and across the nation.

The vision of the VOHC is that Vermont will have an oral health system that allows all Vermonters to achieve and sustain optimal oral health, contributing to their ability to lead healthy lives.

VOHC News & Updates

VOHC Annual Meeting

The VOHC's Annual Meeting was a success! More than 20 individuals convened on August 9th at the Vermont Department of Health to reflect on the Coalition's work over the past year, share information on the oral health landscape in Vermont, and set the Coalition's agenda for the coming project year (September 2016 – August 2017).

Keeping in mind traction made in the operations and organization of the Coalition, the Annual Meeting focused discussion on priority setting for the 2016/2017 project year. To guide their priority setting, members shared anecdotal and quantitative oral health data, as well as discussed recent policy changes and their implications on the oral health landscape and access to dental care. Access to dental care was defined as an urgent and important priority for both the state and the Coalition.

2016 – 2017 VOHC Subcommittees

Considering past VOHC successes, remaining work, and potential impact of the Coalition, the Annual Meeting participants agreed to continue their focus on the four subcommittee topics established for the 2015/2016 project year, with expanded focus for two of the subcommittees. Going forward: (1) the EFDA subcommittee will be expanded in focus and renamed to the Dental Workforce subcommittee and (2) the MCH Oral Health subcommittee will incorporate youth engagement and education strategies into their annual objectives. The Dental Workforce subcommittee will work to promote and expand a trained and geographically distributed dental workforce in Vermont to increase access to and utilization of care. Thus, efforts will focus on promoting use of EFDAs, dental therapists, dental hygienists as Medicaid providers, community dental health coordinators, as well as recruitment of dentists. The four VOHC subcommittees for the 2016/2017 year and their respective chairs and goals are as follows:

- ❖ **Community Water Fluoridation (CWF) Subcommittee**
 - **Goal:** Maintain and expand CWF in Vermont.
 - **Chair:** Chuck Bookwalter
- ❖ **Dental Workforce Subcommittee**
 - **Goal:** Promote and expand a trained and geographically distributed dental workforce in Vermont to increase access to and utilization of care.
 - **Chair:** Debora Teixeira + potential new co-chair (TBD)

VOHC ~ Improving & Promoting Optimal Oral Health for All Vermonters

To learn more visit the VOHC website, www.vtoralhealthcoalition.com, or contact a committee chair:

- **Maternal and Child Oral Health** – Chairperson: Robin Miller, robin.n.miller@vermont.gov
- **Expanded Functions Dental Auxiliary (EFDA)** – Chairperson: Debora Teixeira, debora.teixeira@vermont.gov
- **Medical / Dental Integration** – Chairperson: Liz Cote, elizabeth.cote@uvm.edu
- **Community Water Fluoridation** – Chairperson: Chuck Bookwalter, book@timberlanedental.com

❖ **Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Oral Health Subcommittee**

- **Goal:** Promote oral health and reduce oral disease for women and children in Vermont.
- **Chair:** Robin Miller

❖ **Medical / Dental Integration Subcommittee**

- **Goal:** Promote communication, coordination, and collaboration across medical and dental health professionals to enhance care and improve overall health.
- **Chair:** Liz Cote

Annual objectives for each subcommittee will be defined in upcoming subcommittee meetings. As the VOHC embarks on the 2016/2017 project year, be sure to participate in the subcommittee work. You can reach out directly to subcommittee chairs to express your interest in being involved or reach out to the VOHC coordinator, Fonda Ripley at fripley@jsi.com.

Subcommittee Updates

Community Water Fluoridation (CWF)

The CWF subcommittee achieved their 2015/2016 annual objective to maintain CWF in Rutland. Moving forward, the CWF subcommittee anticipates an ongoing need to maintain CWF in other communities throughout the state and will identify and pursue activities in specific municipalities as needed during the 2016/2017 project year.

Expanded Functions Dental Auxiliary

The EFDA subcommittee achieved their 2015/2016 annual objectives intended to promote increased utilization of EFDAs. These included: (1) gathering data to better understand the EFDA landscape in Vermont; (2) disseminating an informational video on EFDAs; and (3) promoting enrollment into a pre-requisite class for the EFDA program.

Going forward, the renamed Dental Workforce subcommittee will continue efforts to promote awareness and use of EFDAs. This work will include outreach regarding the EFDA loan forgiveness program available through VSAC and consideration for a tooth morphology class (pre-requisite for the EFDA program) in 2017. Additional subcommittee activities will be determined per the annual objectives defined by the subcommittee members during fall 2016.

MCH Oral Health

The MCH Oral Health subcommittee is close to achieving their 2015/2016 annual objectives. These include: (1) supporting the "Age 1" training for dental teams hosted by 11 of the Vermont Department of Health district offices; (2) updating and disseminating an endorsement letter on the importance and safety of oral health care during pregnancy; and (3) working with dental practices in areas of the state with high need to facilitate access to dental care for children insured by Medicaid, starting at age one.

Upcoming activities for the subcommittee include: (1) scheduling three additional "Age 1" trainings for fall 2016; (2) disseminating materials endorsing and promoting the national consensus statement on the safety and importance of oral health care during pregnancy to prenatal care and dental practices throughout the state in the coming months; and (3) outreach to dental practices in three areas of the state to promote dental care for children insured by Medicaid starting at age one.

In addition to continuing activities in these areas, the MCH Oral Health subcommittee will incorporate specific strategies and activities intended to engage and educate youth on the importance of oral health and dental care.

Medical Dental Integration

The Medical Dental Integration subcommittee achieved their 2015/2016 annual objectives!

These objectives were to: (1) host a medical/dental conference in Vermont; (2) produce and disseminate a summary of findings from the conference and strategies to promote medical dental integration in Vermont; and (3) offer fluoride varnish training to primary care practices, which was successfully delivered 15 times during the project year.

Going forward, the Medical Dental Integration subcommittee will continue offering revised and improved fluoride varnish training in collaboration with the Vermont Department of Health. Additional activities for the 2016/2017 project year will be determined per the annual objectives to be defined by subcommittee members during fall 2016.

Oral Health Around the State

Collaborative Partnership: From the First Tooth Initiative

From the First Tooth is an evidence-based pediatric oral health initiative that promotes the oral health of infants, toddlers and preschool children (ages 6 months to the 6th birthday). The primary purpose is to assist medical health care professionals with integrating oral health risk assessments and fluoride varnish applications as a standard of care for young pediatric patients.

In June, the Area Health Education Center, UVM (AHEC) provided a 4-hour *Train the Trainer* session for the state's public health dental hygienists (PHDH) from the five Local Health District Offices. The PHDHs are now available to conduct trainings requested by medical health care practices through the AHEC program coordinator. These trainings consist of 1-hour interactive visits between health care professionals and a dental hygienist trainer in the setting of health care professionals' offices.

For more information, visit the [Office of Primary Care and AHEC Program](#).

Licensed Dental Hygienists can now enroll as Vermont Medicaid providers

On July 1st, 2016 Vermont became the 18th state in which licensed dental hygienists can become enrolled as Medicaid providers. This policy change allows dental hygienists to practice in public health settings, thereby increasing access to preventive dental services for beneficiaries who may not be able to access these services in conventional settings (e.g., nursing homes). The dental hygienists are required to have a collaborative agreement with a Vermont licensed dentist.

The Department of Vermont Health Access (DVHA) is accepting applications from licensed dental hygienists to become enrolled as Vermont Medicaid providers, allowing them to bill independently. In order to enroll, a dental hygienist must meet all licensing requirements set forth by the state of Vermont. A complete list of Provider Enrollment packets can be accessed from the [Vermont Medicaid Portal](#). Questions about the enrollment process, re-validation, and updating provider information may be directed to 1-800-925-1706, option 4.

Emerging Partnerships: The Vermont Health Care Association and the Office of Oral Health

The Vermont Health Care Association (VHCA) has been awarded funds to promote oral health among Vermont's older adult population. Funds support a 3-pronged project initiated on July 1, 2016 that involves: (1) mentor training in four nursing homes; (2) providing Alzheimer's disease and dementia care training for nursing home staff; and (3) VHCA partnering with the Vermont Department of Health Office of Oral Health to promote oral health information and training to nursing home staff in all 39 nursing homes in Vermont.

VHCA's Alzheimer's disease and dementia care training opportunity (which can lead to becoming a certified dementia practitioner) is intended for dental team members who are

interested in providing dental care in nursing homes. The full-day training will be held at nursing homes throughout the state. The training itself is free; however, there is a charge of \$20 for the training manual.

If you would like to learn more about this project, the Alzheimer's disease and dementia care training, and becoming a certified dementia practitioner, please contact:

Sheila Burnham

Vermont Health Care Association

Email: sburnham@vhca.net

Phone: 802-229-5700

Tooth Tutor Program Target Exceeded!

The percentage of children who accessed dental care through the Tooth Tutor Program in the 2015-2016 school year has surpassed the 60% target!

The Tooth Tutor Program aims to connect families and their children with a dental home. During the 2015-2016 school year, 62% of the students in the true target group (those who had not received dental care in the past year) were able to access dental care. This represents a significant improvement from the previous year's rate of 56%.

Another important goal of the Tooth Tutor Program is increasing the number of elementary and middle school-aged children who receive sealants on their permanent molars. Here, the Tooth Tutor program also attained a very favorable result: 440 students in the true target group received at least one dental sealant, up from 339 during the 2014-2015 school year. This means 20% of the students in the true target group received sealants (up from 13% in the previous school year).

For more information on the Tooth Tutor program, check out the [online Tooth Tutor manual](#). The performance measures for this and other Vermont Department of Health Office of Oral Health programs can be found on the [VDH Oral Health Dashboard](#).

Oral Health Resources of Interest

Listed below is a selection of resources identified by VOHC members for VOHC members. Take a look. These resources along with several others are available on the VOHC website at www.vtoralhealthcoalition.com

- ***The Benefits of Fluoride in Tap Water***, [a quick and informative video](#) about community water fluoridation and its many benefits. These include preventing 25% of tooth decay in our children and adults, and money saved in the pockets of our community families. Additional videos are also available on the site in support of community water fluoridation from sources such as the U.S. Surgeon General.
- **Fluoridation Toolkit: A Resource for Health Advocates.** The Campaign for Dental Health's [Fluoridation Toolkit](#) provides resources that local advocates can use to educate their communities on community water fluoridation. The Toolkit includes memos on what fluoridation is and why it matters, blog and social media posts, and tips for talking to reporters about community water fluoridation.
- **Vermont Oral Health Performance Dashboard.** The Vermont Department of Health's [Oral Health Performance Dashboard](#) shows dental health population indicators and performance measures that the Vermont Office of Oral Health uses to track their progress toward achieving goals. Check it out to see how Vermont is doing in addressing oral health burden in the state.