



The purpose of this newsletter is to provide an informal brief summary of ASTDD activities to keep our members and partners aware of what we do on your behalf and to highlight resources. We also like to share more personal stories as ASTDD really is a family. Welcome to a new year everyone!

National Activities and Collaborations

ASTDD continued to meet virtually with Natalia Chalmers from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). She discussed the results of a spring 2022 CMS survey, Oral Health Human-Centered Design Customer Engagement. They engaged directly with a broad range of external customers, including people with Medicaid benefits, oral health providers, state representatives, and advocates through interviews and onsite visits. Check out their [Barriers to Oral Health Illustration](#).



In preparation for our new collaboration with the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD) and their Health Equity Council, Robyn Taylor, Vice President of NACDD's Center for Justice in Public Health, conducted a wonderful webinar on November 15 on *Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Social Justice, and Dental Public Health* with 82 attendees. Also remember to check out their new publication, [Social Justice Framework for Public Health Professionals](#).

We would like to announce some changes at CDC that occurred this quarter. Casey Hannan, MPH, who served as Acting Director of the Division of Oral Health from April 2016 to April 2020 and as Director from April 2020 to December 2023 has retired after serving in many other administrative rolls during 27 years of federal service at CDC. We would like to thank Casey for all the contributions he made nationally and to the states. Gina Thornton-Evan, DDS, MPH, previously the Director of the Dental Public Health Residency Program and Team Lead for Surveillance, Investigations, and Research for the Division of Oral Health will now serve as Acting Director.

Peer and Member Support Program



Lori Cofano oriented three new oral health program directors, Nicole Reynolds (OK), Tonette Hollingsworth (MT) and Ruma Simhan (NC). Chris Wood sent Peer Support Program completion certificates to Stacey Swilling (UT) who was mentored by Frances Wise (AK). The next Peer Support Discussion Group call will be January 11, 2024. Dr. Debonny Hughes, Maryland's state dental director, will present on diversified funding for state oral health programs.

The December 20 Dental Director call was on the Indian Health Service (IHS) Multi-Directional Integration Projects, presented by Dr. Tim Ricks with 35 people attending. He led us through the myriad possibilities of integrating primary care and behavioral health screenings by oral health professionals, sharing IHS stories and asking states to contribute their stories.

On December 18 the BOD entertained a presentation by Jessica Woods, Clinical & Scientific Affairs for Incisive Technologies, on BlueCheck, a chemical/biological optical agent that enables identification of early-stage tooth decay, allowing a prevention approach to heal and preserve the natural tooth structure. She asked ASTDD if we would be willing to provide a letter of support for a new CDT code, which we subsequently did.

Fluorides Committee (FC)

New resource to view on the website is [Silver Diamine Fluoride \(SDF\) Fact Sheet Update](#) posted in October.

Judy Feinstein participated in Zoom calls with fluoridation contacts in several states to discuss mutual issues of concern. One meeting focused on identifying and categorizing the challenges states have encountered in trying to test and implement the “New Wave” fluoride tablet system, and brainstorming strategies to manage them. Other discussion touched on operator training and messaging when confronting rollbacks.

Judy Feinstein sent two Fluoridation Alerts in October with a specific follow-up email to a contact in Alabama, two in November with specific follow-up emails to contacts in Alabama, Oregon and Iowa, and one in December with follow-up emails to contacts in Utah and Wisconsin.

The Committee reviewed and approved the criteria for the annual ADA/ASTDD/CDC Fluoridation Awards and the ADA has agreed to provide \$1,000 to ASTDD to support the awards.

Communications Committee (CC)



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Matt Jacob and Heather Beavers from the Social Media Workgroup (SMWG) continue to provide TA to three states to show that social media is not intimidating to use. Missouri is complete. Minnesota and Arkansas should be finished by April 2024. TA sessions have been a great success!!

ASTDD is no longer using Twitter. The committee will discuss adding Instagram in January. ASTDD participated in the October 2 social media campaign for National Child Health Month conducted by the Children’s Health Alliance.

Recent Spotlights:

- [Social Determinants of Health and Improving Oral Health Equity Policy Statement](#); the ASTDD Policy Statement itself is [here](#). This Spotlight was held November 9 and presented by Catherine Simpson and Stephanie Yang, both 4th year dental students from Harvard. The event summarized ASTDD’s March 2023 policy statement, providing a broad background of the issues and a range of models for taking action against health disparities and inequities. These disparities are significantly influenced by social

determinants of health (SDoH), also referred to as upstream factors; without addressing these determinants, health disparities cannot be reduced or eliminated.

- [Dental Amalgam and Resin-Based Composites: An Overview of Environmental and Health Impacts](#); the ASTDD Policy Statement itself is [here](#). This Spotlight was held December 5 with 87 participants; the presenter was Dr. Linda Kaste. The Spotlight presentation reviewed concerns related to both major classes of restorative materials, noting also international issues as brought forward by the Minamata Convention and others. It also noted the importance of preventing tooth decay, of engaging in interdisciplinary efforts and strategies such as education and early intervention, and of emerging strategies that incorporate minimally invasive dentistry to reduce environmental burdens from direct restorative dental materials as part of efforts for sustainable and equitable oral healthcare.

If you missed any previous Spotlights, you can access the links on the [ASTDD Home page](#), or the Archived Webcasts and Audioconferences in Members Only, or by contacting Kimberlie Payne at kyinemanbhs@gmail.com.

The date for the most recent Communication Community of Practice was November 2, *Getting Communication Materials through the Review Process*; this was facilitated by Matt Jacob. Some talking points included: 1) Does anyone have a story about your internal challenges to reach consensus on the appropriate wording for fact sheets, web pages or other content? 2) Does your health department have any standards or rules regarding the use of plain language? The call was well attended by 22 people including CDC staff with active participation.

ASTDD leadership, consultants and committees already have initiated some improvements to the website content on each page as well as navigation. The updated home page went live on October 30. As of November 10, the number of pages on the website has been reduced from 146 to 118, and the number of files has been reduced from more than 3506 to 2866. A-Z has been updated with additional links, and all existing links on A-Z have been checked to make sure they are functional. The links on the committee webpages have been checked to make sure links are functional.

The proposal for an ASTDD Excellence in Communication Award at the NOHC ASTDD awards ceremony was approved by the BOD. Access the form no later than March 1 to submit an [entry](#).

Dental Public Health Policy Committee (DPHPC), Best Practices Committee (BPC), and Healthy Aging Committee (HAC)

State activity submissions will no longer be posted on the ASTDD website. Submissions will be removed from the BPC webpage effective 2/1/2024. If a state wants to keep a copy of their submission, they will need to download it prior to that date. Moving forward, only descriptive reports that are included in a BPAR will be posted.

The [Early Childhood Caries Prevention and Management Best Practice Approach Report](#) was posted in October. It includes sixteen practice examples from various states and entities. Thank you to Dr. Brian Novy who served as the primary author, the advisory workgroup members, the external reviewers and the Maternal and Child

Oral Health Resource Center and the CareQuest Institute for Oral Health for their support of this project. An ASTDD Spotlight is scheduled on February 7, 2024 to highlight this BPAR during Children’s Dental Health Month. There will be a session on the BPAR at the NOHC on Monday, April 15 titled, *Early Childhood Caries: A Paradigm Shift*.

Spearheaded by the Policy Committee, the *Dental Amalgam and Resin-Based Composites: Environmental and Health Impacts* policy statement and the *Social Determinants of Health* policy statement were highlighted in ASTDD Spotlight presentations (see previous description).

The Healthy Aging and Best Practices Committees’ update to [Improving the Oral Health of Older Adults BPAR](#) is now posted on the website. It includes eleven practice examples from various states and entities. Thank you to Dr. Leonard Brennan who served as the primary author and Drs. Steffany Chamut and Lisa Thompson for their assistance with the narrative, as well as the advisory workgroup members, the external reviewers and the Gary and Mary West Foundation (GMWF) for their support of this project and Apple Tree Dental for facilitating the partnership with the GMWF. There will be a session highlighting this BPAR at the NOHC on Tuesday, April 16 titled, *If I Had Known I Was Going to Live This Long, I’d Have Taken Better Care of Myself!* The HAC continues to ask states to share the [ASTDD Older Adult Oral Health Resources for Collaboration](#) document. The GMWF notified ASTDD and Apple Tree Dental that \$35,600 in funding has been approved for 2024 to update the *Improving Oral Health Access and Services for Older Adults Policy Statement*. The funding period is January-December 2024. This will be a collaboration with the DPHPC.

The Best Practices and Dental Public Health Policy Committees received notification from the CareQuest Institute for Oral Health that the proposal to develop an issue brief on minimally invasive care has been funded for \$100,000 for the 2024 calendar year.



School and Adolescent Oral Health Committee (SAOHC) and Dental Sealant Subject Matter Expert

As mentioned in the previous *Roundup*, the SAOHC worked with Dr. McCallister Castelaz to create the [Mobile and Portable School-](#)

[Based/School-Linked Oral Health Programs: Delivery Models to Expand Care for Children and Adolescents Issue Brief](#). An ASTDD Spotlight is scheduled on January 10, 2024 to highlight the issue brief. The SAOHC has asked the ASTDD Social Media Workgroup to develop messaging for Children’s Dental Health Month. The committee will share the messages with SAOHC members and disseminate them via various communication platforms such as social media and listservs. The committee has also embarked on a new project to assist three states enhance the clarity and impact of their sealant program’s communications. Matt Jacob will be providing technical assistance in the coming months to Idaho, Iowa and Pennsylvania, to strengthen and develop communication pieces for their sealant programs. He will hold an orientation with the three states on January 11, 2024. As part of the project, the three states will share their materials during a sealant community of practice in June 2024. During the SAOHC meeting in November, Bianca Rogers from the CareQuest Institute for Oral Health shared information on OPEN and some changes to Medicaid that may impact school-based oral health programs.

Sandy Tesch continues to coordinate the Dental Sealant Community of Practice (CoP) and to provide TA to states. Examples of posts to the Dental Sealant listserv included Information on ADA’s free materials/resources for 2024 National Children’s Dental Health Month; information on CDC Infection, Prevention, and Control (IPC) Resources to Provide Safe Dental Care; resources by Pacific Dental Services about the *Critical Link of the Mouth Body Connection Research*; upcoming Spotlight webinars and CoPs. Sandy also coordinated email correspondence with CDC DOH regarding speakers for the sealant panel for the upcoming CDC grantee meeting in March 2024.

Data and Oral Health Surveillance Technical Assistance (TA) and Training

Kathy Phipps, Mike Manz, and Brooke Mehner, ASTDD data subject matter experts, provided TA to 14 states for Basic Screening Services (BSS) or other surveillance assistance in October, November, and December. Check out the updated list of [States with Oral Health Survey Data for different age groups](#) posted in November. Mike and Brooke continued reviewing and updating emergency department related documents. Brooke began preparing documents for the 2024 ASTDD State Synopses. Sahiti Bhaskara continues to update the *Assessing Oral Health Needs: ASTDD Seven-Step Model*. The ASTDD BSS CoP was held on October 17. States discussed the challenges they are having with gaining access to schools and obtaining consent to screen students. In follow up, a workgroup has a call scheduled with the CDC in early 2024 to discuss the possibility of rethinking how states collect data for school-aged children.

Evaluation Activities

The ASTDD evaluation consultants continued to provide general assistance to CDC-funded states through listserv posts and emails and held office hours for progress updates. They also have held meetings with CDC staff to discuss the NOHC, listservs, webinars, and state evaluation frameworks. Listserv postings included Evaluation as a Team Sport: Different Players’ Roles in Evaluation Implementation, and Reminder About the Evaluation Resources on the [ASTDD Evaluation and Quality Improvement page](#) of the website.

We are saddened to announce JoAnna Hillman’s retirement on December 15 after seven years of working with ASTDD and Emory to pursue some more personal time with her family and contemplate the next phase of her career. JoAnna has been such a valuable member of this Emory team and we wish her well. At the same time, we want to welcome Kristin Giordana to the ASTDD Emory evaluation team. For the past four years she has managed and contributed to mixed methods evaluation and learning projects for multisector partnerships including work in community health, education, and economic opportunity. We look forward to learning about her new skills.



National Center on Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety (NCHBHS)

In addition to the critical but routine work of administration and provision of technical assistance to Dental Hygienist Liaisons (DHLs) and regional DHL coordinators (RDHLCs), Kathy Hunt (lead) and Gina Sharps (co-lead) also oversaw the following activities:

- Submitted abstract for NOHC 2024 roundtable
- Submitted abstract for ADHA 2024 presentation
- Began planning for RDHLC annual meeting in 2024
- Continued to fill state DHL vacancies as they arise.

Activities this quarter also included hosting a DHL webinar on October 19, 2024, titled the *Practical Applications of Teledentistry: Expanding Access to Care*. The speaker for the session was Linda Mann RDH. Linda serves as the Region X DHL coordinator and the Oregon DHL. DHLs received 1 CEU from ADHA for participating in the webinar; there were 29 attendees including the presenter.

The webinar focused on teledentistry as a component of the broader telehealth system in which it serves an important role in reducing barriers that communities and populations face when seeking oral healthcare. Linda shared that there is increasing interest in using teledentistry as a tool to connect patients to their oral health provider when they are not in the same location and has growing support from a variety of organizations including organized dentistry and payors. The webinar served as a framework for DHLs to understand the goals of teledentistry, equip DHLs with the knowledge of how to explore the rules and regulations of teledentistry in their respective states, and provide insights on teledentistry-related resources.

Also in October, Gina Sharps and Ren Reyes, DHL for Oklahoma, joined Matt Crespino, host of ADHA’s podcast, to talk about the important work of the DHL Project. Gina and Ren shared strategies and insights on how DHL Project volunteers work in communities with children and families served by Head Start to help move the needle on access to oral health services. Listen in here: [Your Official ADHA Podcast \(wavve.link\)](#).



Consortium for Oral Health Systems Integration and Improvement (COHSII)

As part of COHSII’s effort to support the [Networks for Oral Health Integration](#) (NOHI) within the Maternal and Child Health Safety Net project, ASTDD and OHRC (COHSII partners) helped the project produce several new resources to share challenges, accomplishments, and lessons learned to improve access to and use of comprehensive, high-quality oral health care for pregnant women, infants, and children at high risk for oral disease. The NOHI project consists of three networks: (1) Midwest Network for Oral Health (MNOHI), (2) Rocky Mountain Network for Oral Health (RoMoNOH), and (3) Transforming Oral Health for Families (TOHF). The project is funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau.

Networks for Oral Health Integration (NOHI) Within the MCH Safety Net Overview and Project Profiles: Update 2023:

- [MNOHI Project Profile Update 2023](#)
- [RoMoNOH Project Profile Update 2023](#)
- [TOHF Project Profile Update 2023](#)



This series of reports provides an overview of the NOHI project and descriptions of the three networks. The series includes a profile of each network and provides information about the network’s partners, approach, settings, models of care, strategies to help sustain models of care in community health centers, and core function activities, as well as a discussion of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on network activities.

Networks for Oral Health Integration (NOHI) Within the MCH Safety Net Environmental Scan 2023 Chartbook

- [MNOHI Environmental Scan 2023 Chartbook](#)
- [RoMoNOH Environmental Scan 2023 Chartbook](#)
- [TOHF Environmental Scan 2023 Chartbook](#)

This set of chartbooks contains data about factors that could impact the integration of oral health care into primary care for pregnant women, infants, and children and presents data related to scope of practice for medical and dental providers, Medicaid billing and reimbursement, dental hygienists, dental therapists, community health workers, and teledentistry.

U.S. Territorial and Jurisdiction Activities

The Guam Maternal and Child Health (MCH) program developed an oral health plan for 2022-24 that focused on integrating oral health into “sister” programs such as well-baby/WIC clinics and school health programs. Specifically, they would train non-dental public health staff on oral health risk assessment, teaching proper oral hygiene care, the application of fluoride varnish (FV) and using silver diamine fluoride (SDF) to arrest caries. In addition, the MCH program would enhance its referral system for private practice dentists to provide needed follow-up care. As a key step, the MCH program planned and implemented the training of staff to apply SDF. The training sessions were conducted including with a refresher for fluoride varnish (FV) on November 29-30, 2023 in Guam. Faculty included Ohnmar Tut, BDS, MPhil, ASTDD Consultant for the USAPI and Peter Milgrom, DDS, Professor, School of Dentistry, University of Washington. Funding and support for the training were provided directly by Guam MCH, and by ASTDD/OHRC and the Maternal and Child Health Bureau. Nineteen local individuals participated in the training sessions including nurses, CNAs, and social workers from the MCH program and CNAs from the Guam CHC. The training spanned two days and included didactic presentations, lab exercises and direct patient care. Follow-up consultation and technical assistance in Guam for both SDF and FV will be provided by Dr. Tut in February 26-27, 2024.



Meetings and Webinars

(Links aren’t available if they were a member only or pre-registration event)

Announcements about meetings and webinars are regularly included in the ASTDD Weekly Digest. This is an example of a meeting attended.



National Network for Oral Health Access, November 5-8, Denver, CO, Julie Janssen reporting.

National Network for Oral Health Access (NNOHA) is a nationwide membership association that promotes access to oral health care for underserved populations. They encourage community health centers to start and maintain dental programs. NNOHA also provides training, technical assistance and networking for oral health professionals who work in safety net settings.

Denver welcomed 1,140 attendees and there were 98 speakers for all the sessions and 70 exhibitors and sponsors. Most of the attendees were clinical providers and the program gave them a variety of topics geared to improve oral healthcare and working in community health centers. Many sessions were excellent opportunities to blend public health into community-based practice. Several sessions were related directly to public health. My favorite was on policy and advocacy. It was one of the sessions where community water fluoridation came up during the presentation and again in the Q&A. Justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion are overarching all aspects of our practices and should increase many forums for partnerships.

Performance measures and value-based care lent to data collection and evaluation. More intersections between public health and clinical care mutually beneficial and rife for opportunities to collaborate included workforce and leadership development. I thought there were many more sessions surrounding school-based services both in schools and portable/mobile programs. Focus on children and medical dental integration were perfect promotions for growing innovations featuring noninvasive therapies. Partnership, collaboration, and learning all make for improving public health and health center skills and abilities to improve oral health for all.

The service project created more than 2,000 oral health kits for the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless. Several ASTDD members attended.

Send any questions, comments, or articles to Bev Isman at bev.isman@comcast.net