Supporting State Oral Health Programs

SERVICES

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Where oral health lives

From the Executive Director

The Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors (ASTDD) has been providing support and guidance to state and territorial oral health programs since 1947. ASTDD works to establish a governmental oral health presence in each U.S. state and territory, to formulate and promote sound oral health policy, to increase awareness of oral health issues, and to assist in the development of initiatives that help prevent and manage oral diseases and injuries and promote oral health. ASTDD's vision is "A strong and effective governmental oral health presence in states and territories to assure optimal oral health."

ASTDD is an affiliate of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials.

Christine Wood

Christine Wood
Executive Director, ASTDD

State and Territorial Technical Assistance

ASTDD provides state and territorial oral health programs with technical assistance, support and learning opportunities to help them build effective programs and systems, and implement environmental change strategies. The association focuses its efforts on infrastructure and capacity development, surveillance, data collection and analysis, evidence-based prevention, communications, evaluation, partnerships, special population groups, networking and professional development opportunities, infection prevention and safety, and disaster preparedness. ASTDD offers common sense approaches to addressing the needs of each U.S. state and territory commensurate with available resources. ASTDD has grant funding to help support many aspects of technical assistance.

This brochure describes the various types of technical assistance with associated tools and resources available from ASTDD. Unless otherwise specified, contact Christine Wood, ASTDD Executive Director at cwood@astdd.org or at 775-626-5008 to request technical assistance or use the ASTDD Technical Assistance Request Form.

State/Territorial Oral Health Program Infrastructure and Capacity

State/Territorial Oral Health Programs (S/TOHPs) make an essential contribution to public health. Strong and vibrant governmental oral health programs at all levels are critical to achieving optimal oral health for all people. Good infrastructure increases capacity to enable basic programs to become strong, robust and resilient programs. ASTDD promotes and supports S/TOHPs through a variety of resources, including the ASTDD Guidelines for State and Territorial Oral Health Programs, the Competencies for State Oral Health Programs and the State Oral Health Program Review Manual. The following resources are available to assist S/TOHPs with infrastructure and capacity development.

State Oral Health Program Review – ASTDD launched the State/Territorial Oral Health Program Review (SOHPR) efforts in 1986. The Association offers several levels of program review, ranging from assistance from a consultant on a specific programmatic question to a comprehensive program review. Program reviews are designed to help state/territorial health department oral health programs assess their program goals, objectives, and key activities and build their capacity to promote and maintain optimum oral health in their state. Reviews begin with a self-study component after which a SOHPR team of oral health experts and public health experts conduct a site visit. During the visit, the SOHPR team interviews oral health program staff, other health department staff, and key stakeholders. The team then produces a report that describes the status of the program and makes recommendations for how the program can become more effective. To view all of the SOHPR options, access the ASTDD State Oral Health Program Review (SOHPR) Manual at www.astdd.org.

Peer Support – ASTDD, in conjunction with the Health Resources and Service Administration (HRSA), Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB), established a mentoring program in 2001 for leaders of S/TOHPs who have less than two years experience in their present positions. Although ASTDD no longer receives HRSA funding for mentoring, the program has evolved into a peer support program to help new directors and managers by enhancing the knowledge and skills they need to manage a state oral health program.

Developing, implementing and evaluating a S/TOHP is a tremendous undertaking and requires a great deal of knowledge, skill, flexibility and diplomacy. S/TOHP leaders bring a variety of backgrounds to the position and often occupy the sole oral health position within their health agency

The new S/TOHP director/manager will complete an application for the Peer Support Program. A dental director from another state/territory will be selected to mentor the new director/manager and together they will complete a technical assistance plan. The selected peer will help acquaint the new director/manager with ASTDD resources for effective program administration and management.

If you are a new state/territorial oral health program director/manager and you are interested in participating in the peer support program, please complete the application form and provide a copy of your CV to assist us in matching you with an appropriate peer. This will also allow ASTDD and the peer to develop and tailor the learning objectives to your needs and interests.

Here is what our members say about ASTDD's mentoring and peer support efforts:

"It is a great program and I recommend it to all new oral health program directors." ~V. Nguyen

"I think the peer support program should be the 'first stop' for all new state oral health program directors." ~H. Goodman

"In addition to the vast resources on the ASTDD website, it is helpful to connect with other new directors." ~C. Taylor-Osborne

New directors/managers will be expected to complete an evaluation within two weeks of the completion of the peer support program to evaluate the program and make recommendations, if any, to improve the peer process.

ASTDD realizes that technical assistance and peer support do not need to end after the initial assignment, and ASTDD hopes that peer collaboration will continue during future years.

Developing Individual or Program Learning Plans – ASTDD offers technical assistance in conducting competency assessments to help S/TOHPs assess how well they are performing the Ten Essential Public Health Services to Promote Oral Health based on the core competencies of Assessment, Assurance and Policy Development. ASTDD consultants can help staff identify individual skill levels based on the State Oral Health Program Competencies, provide an overall assessment of how those skills translate into program effectiveness or gaps, assist in developing learning plans to enhance professional skills, and identify strategies to fill areas where there are gaps in expertise or skills. To request assistance with an individual or program learning plan, complete and return the ASTDD Technical Assistance Request form.

Hiring Assistance - ASTDD posts job announcements on its Job Opportunities webpage and disseminates information about open positions in the ASTDD Weekly Digest via the ASTDD listserv. ASTDD also helps identify essential skill sets and competencies that might be augmented through strategic hiring, contracting, or targeted learning plans. In addition, ASTDD can provide and review examples of job descriptions and interview questions and provide information on salary ranges for state dental directors and managers (salary information is updated every two years). Contact the ASTDD Central Office to request hiring assistance.

To request technical assistance focusing on infrastructure and capacity development, complete and return the ASTDD Technical Assistance Request form.

Oral Health Surveillance Plans and Data

The Institute of Medicine has recommended that every public health agency regularly and systematically collect, assemble, analyze, and disseminate information on community health status to carry out the assessment function. Public health agencies accomplish this task through public health surveillance -- the ongoing, systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of health data. Surveillance is essential for planning, implementing, and evaluating public health practice and, ideally, is closely integrated with data dissemination to public health decision makers and other stakeholders. The overarching purpose of public health surveillance is to provide actionable health information to guide public health policy and programs. This section describes the technical assistance ASTDD can provide around data and surveillance. When requesting technical assistance for data or surveillance, please use the Data Technical Assistance form.

The National Oral Health Surveillance System (NOHSS) – NOHSS is a collaborative effort between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Division of Oral Health and ASTDD. The main focus of NOHSS is tracking 12 basic oral health surveillance indicators. States submit data to NOHSS so ASTDD can monitor the burden of oral disease, use of the oral health care delivery system, and the status of community water fluoridation on both a national and state level. Forms and instructions for preparing and submitting data to NOHSS are available on the ASTDD website in the Members Only section.

State Surveillance Data Reference Guide – ASTDD can provide technical assistance on the use of the State Surveillance Data Reference Guide. This updated tool is an editable Microsoft Word document that includes links to data sources with state and national estimates for key oral health indicators, including those from NOHSS and *Healthy People 2020*. The purpose of the template is to help state oral health program staff find oral health data relevant to the population they serve. Staff can modify the document to create a personalized template, adding indicators and links to additional state and local data sources.

ASTDD Basic Screening Survey Tool – The ASTDD Basic Screening Survey Tool contains the information needed to plan and conduct a Basic Screening Survey of preschool-age children, school-age children, or older adults. To request technical assistance on how to use the tool, download the Data Technical Assistance form and follow the submission instructions.

State-Based Oral Health Surveillance Systems: Conceptual Framework and Operational Definition –This document provides (1) an overview of oral and craniofacial health surveillance at national and state levels, including components of a state oral health surveillance system; (2) an overview of the development and revision of NOHSS and of other national public health surveillance initiatives; (3) a new operational definition for Healthy People 2020 objective OH-16 (Increase the number of states and DC that have an oral and craniofacial health surveillance system); and (4) a discussion of future potential changes and directions for oral health surveillance systems.

Other Data Questions – ASTDD has developed documents such as the Oral Health Surveillance Plan Template, Using Oral Health Data to Inform Decisions and Policy Development, and Guidance on How to Analyze Data From a School-Based Oral Health Survey, to provide information on these respective data issues.

Other Resources

Evidence-Based Prevention and Programs – ASTDD's collection of Best Practices and State Activities provides a wealth of information and examples of how states have implemented a variety of successful prevention strategies and programs. ASTDD consultants, committee chairs, and members are available to answer questions about how program models can be adapted for implementation in other states.

In addition, many of ASTDD's committees focus on specific age groups or underserved populations such as perinatal, Early Head Start/Head Start, children with special health care needs, school age children and adolescents, and older adults. See the list of committees and consultants on the ASTDD website and the relevant webpages and complete your request on the ASTDD Technical Assistance Request form.

Fact Sheet Templates on Fluoridation and Sealants – State Oral Health Programs can insert state specific information into the templates to create state fact sheets that can be used to educate the public and policy makers. Contact the ASTDD Central Office for electronic copies of the state template fact sheets.

Communications – ASTDD can help state oral health programs plan, implement and evaluate communications strategies and timelines to achieve one specific goal or multiple goals. ASTDD can also assist with questions about using social media. To request technical assistance, complete and return the ASTDD Technical Assistance Request form.

Evaluation – ASTDD consultants are available to assist states with evaluation planning and implementation. To request technical assistance, complete and return the ASTDD Technical Assistance Request form.

Partnerships – ASTDD has tools and tip sheets and can provide technical assistance to help state oral health programs sort through multiple partnership opportunities to determine which will best suit their needs, especially as needs may change over time. The Association also can help identify effective ways to partner with programs or groups representing Chronic Diseases, Maternal and Child Health, Dental Medicaid/CHIP, Primary Care Associations, Dental and Dental Hygienists' Associations, other healthcare professions, state and local Oral Health Coalitions, Head Start, WIC, community health centers and others. To request technical assistance, complete and return the ASTDD Technical Assistance Request form.

Guidelines for the Development of State Oral Health Issue Briefs can help state oral health programs develop materials to educate policy makers and advocates on significant issues. The guidelines provide suggestions for what questions to ask and describe major components of an issue brief, and lessons learned from others. Individualized assistance is available upon request to the ASTDD Central Office.

Infection Prevention and Safety – ASTDD and the Organization for Safety, Asepsis and Prevention (OSAP) have partnered through their websites and consultants to provide the latest information to help state oral health programs operate or assist others in operating safe school-based and other mobile or portable programs and to respond to questions/provide guidance when infection control breaches or other issues arise. Contact the ASTDD Central Office for referral to the appropriate resource or assistance from OSAP.

Emergency Preparedness and Response – The ASTDD Emergency Preparedness/Response manual highlights the essential operations and relationships that should be in place to enable effective recovery from a crisis event and advises the state's oral health community, health agency officials and public health administrators on the development and operation of oral health emergency preparedness and response at the state and local level. Individualized technical assistance is available upon request to the ASTDD Central Office

Fiscal Agent – ASTDD is a 501(c)(6) organization with the capacity to serve as a fiscal agent for projects or programs whose purpose is aligned with ASTDD's vision and mission. As a fiscal agent, ASTDD can:

1. File reports
2. File taxes
3. Pay invoices related to the project
   (ASTDD will require documentation related to project expenses)
4. Maintain insurance

Contact the ASTDD Central Office for assistance.

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