Oral Health – Why it Matters

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Mission: To prevent oral disease and improve overall health.

*We do this through innovative programs and policies that produce permanent changes in the health environment so that over the long-term oral disease is prevented.*

Funding: Delta Dental of Washington - a non profit dental benefits company committed to improving oral health

Examples of Investments:
- Over $7M to increase dental safety net since 2000
- Access to Baby and Child Dentistry – now statewide
- Engaging Primary Care – national and state strategies
- The Mighty Mouth – influencing the public’s value of oral health
Children’s Health, Development and School Readiness

- Intense Pain
- Anxiety
- Fatigue
- Withdrawal
- Difficulty paying attention in school
- Nutrition problems
- Embarrassment
- Sleep Deprivation
- Disruption to language development
- 50 million school hours lost nationally

12% of children under age 6 require treatment under general anesthesia at an average cost of $7,200/case.
Source: Gary Hirsch, et. al. 2012
Tooth Decay is Highly Preventable

Early preventive visits = lower 5-year dental costs

While there has been significant growth in WA children accessing dental care and untreated decay is down, opportunities remain to reach children in WA’s 4 corners as well as Native American and Latino children.

Washington Dental Service Foundation
Community Advocates for Oral Health
Parent’s Access influences Children’s Access

- Children whose parents have dental visits are more likely to have a dental visit themselves when compared to children whose parents did not have a dental visit (86% vs. 63%)
  
  Source: Isong I, et. al. (2010)

- The VALUE that parents place upon oral health plays an important role in determining if they access available dental services for their children.
  
  Sources: Maserejian NN, et. al. (2008); Kelly SE, et. al. (2005)
Lost Productivity and Health Consequences for Adults

Untreated Oral Disease Can Have Serious Health Consequences:
• Untreated gum disease can exacerbate diabetes leading to costly medical complications (heart disease, renal disease, amputations)
• Gum disease is also linked to heart disease, stroke, and pneumonia
• Oral disease can cause the body to reject medically necessary organ transplants such as heart, lung, or kidney
• The longer oral disease goes untreated, the higher the risk for complications

Seniors are especially at risk:
• Nearly 1 in 3 low-income seniors have a dental problem that needs to be addressed in the next month.
• Medication use leads to dry mouth which causes tooth decay.
• Basic Medicare does not include dental care

Employed adults lose more than 164 million hours of work each year due to oral health problems.
Medical Cost Savings Associated with Reduction in Oral Disease

# Access to Prevention Matters

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Without preventive care small problems unnecessarily escalate</th>
<th>With preventive care disease is avoided or caught early</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teeth extracted, that could have been saved</td>
<td>Visits provide opportunity for preventive services and education</td>
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<td>Costly full mouth reconstruction</td>
<td>Less invasive treatment – lower cost, more pleasant</td>
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<td>Use of hospital Emergency Rooms for pain relief and antibiotics ($36M in 18 months)</td>
<td>More efficient use of health workforce – dental and medical</td>
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<td>Mission of Mercy events (e.g. RAM) draw thousands and can’t meet the need</td>
<td>Upstream approach provides ongoing care reducing the need for one-time charity events</td>
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<td>Poor eating and nutrition</td>
<td>Healthy eating is not disrupted</td>
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<td>Visible decay or missing teeth impacting employability</td>
<td>Higher productivity and community engagement</td>
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<td>Complications to chronic medical conditions</td>
<td>Better management of chronic disease and lower medical costs</td>
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The Opportunity

- Oral health impacts overall health and quality of life
- Oral disease is highly prevalent – opportunity to improve health for a large # of people
- Oral disease is nearly 100% preventable
- Oral disease contributes to un-necessary healthcare spending