

Delta Dental of Oklahoma / Fall 2009

# Dentist Check Up



## Where's oral health in healthcare reform discussion?

Much of the recent discussion of health care reform has ignored oral health. That's unfortunate, because it's essential to overall health and well-being of Americans and our nation's productivity. In fact, dental-related absences total 51 million hours for students across the country and more than 164 million work hours for adults annually.

More importantly, dentists are among the first to spot warning signs of potential systemic disease during a checkup. That's why we at Delta Dental are so concerned about the health care reform bills moving through Congress.

Oral health should be a top priority in any health care reform; yet it is being treated as an afterthought.

For example, the health reform bill moving through the House of Representatives, H.R. 3200, creates "exchanges," in effect national marketplaces where consumers can purchase insurance. As originally drafted, it stipulated only comprehensive medical insurance plans could be offered through the exchange. Stand alone dental coverage - well over 80 percent of the dental coverage provided in this country - would not be permitted to be offered.

The only exception is when the medical plan includes dental benefits for children under 21. Well-intentioned as it may be, even that change makes no sense as most Americans purchase dental insurance as a family. H.R. 3200 would force parents to purchase two separate dental policies inside and outside the exchange, one for their kids and one for themselves. That's inefficient and runs counter to President Obama's promise that you can keep your coverage if you're happy with it.

Delta Dental, as with most dental benefit plans, offers stand alone independent benefits. We serve more than 54 million Americans, and provide

access to nearly 675,000 in Oklahoma. Dental coverage is all we do and it is distinctly different than medical coverage.

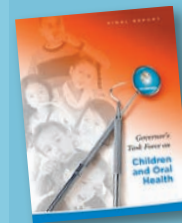
While medical focuses on treating diseases and illness, dental concentrates on prevention through low-cost check-ups and cleanings. Additionally, dental is separately licensed and regulated by the states and administered through procedure codes and plan economics that are far different than those governing medical plans.

A recent poll by Oral Health America found that 63 percent of American adults think it is important that dental coverage be part of an overall health reform package; 40 percent say it is very important. Unfortunately, the way H.R. 3200 was originally drafted, dental coverage for an overwhelming majority of Americans would be at risk.

Just before the bill was approved by the House Energy and Commerce Committee, H.R. 3200 was amended to permit stand-alone dental benefits options to be offered within the Exchange. But that's no assurance that the problem is fixed, in fact, the next step is for this bill to be "blended" with two other bill proposals. Given the enormous number of issues to be reconciled, and the way Congress has typically handled the subject, there's a serious risk that oral health care will end up on the cutting-room floor.

Health care reform is important, but so is the oral health of every American. Don't let Congress put that at risk. Tell them how important it is that dental coverage receives fair treatment in this legislation. We need to assure that every American-including the 130 million who do not have dental coverage-are given the opportunity to purchase stand alone dental coverage.

## Governor's task force on children's oral health concludes



In 2007 Governor Brad Henry created a special task force to extensively study the issue of children's oral health in Oklahoma and develop a State Oral Health Plan. In September 2009, the

task force completed its work and presented the final report to the governor. When released to the public, a link to the final report will be available on our Web site at [www.DeltaDentalOK.org/foundation](http://www.DeltaDentalOK.org/foundation).

## Foundation funds ODF mobile unit expansion project



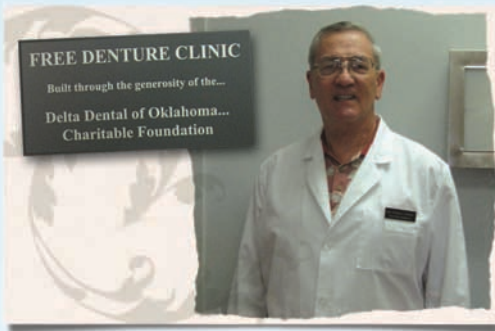
The ODF Mobile Dental Care Unit is a fully-equipped dental office on wheels that travels throughout the state providing care to those who cannot afford it, those who must travel too great of a distance to make dental care possible, and at-risk populations of children. The Delta Dental of Oklahoma Charitable Foundation has committed up to \$400,000 to fund a two-year pilot project designed to more than double the reach of the program. Keep an eye out for the fun and colorful new RV "wrap" when the Mobile Dental Care Unit comes to your town.

Even with the new funding, the success of the mobile unit depends on a variety of volunteer dental professionals and others. Dental professionals can receive continuing education credits and the ODF now has an online program that makes it easier than ever to sign up and track your volunteer hours. Visit their Web site at [www.okdf.org](http://www.okdf.org) to learn about becoming a site partner or volunteer.

Delta Dental of Oklahoma / Fall 2009

# DDOK Charitable Foundation

## Foundation Spotlight: Good Shepherd Denture Clinic (OKC)



*Dr. Frank Lipsinic,  
Good Shepherd's Dental Director*

For many years the Good Shepherd Dental Clinic at 222 N.W. 12th Street in Oklahoma City has provided a free extraction clinic for adults and a free

restorative clinic for children. The clinic is made possible by volunteer students and faculty from the OU College of Dentistry as well as volunteer dental professionals from the community.

With help from Delta Dental of Oklahoma Charitable Foundation grants, the clinic is expanding to become the state's first free denture clinic. The new facility is the vision of Dr. Frank Lipsinic, Good Shepherd's dedicated Dental Director. The Good Shepherd Denture Clinic will soon partner with D-DENT and others to help Oklahomans unable to afford the dentures they need. We congratulate Dr. Lipsinic and look forward to seeing what great things will be accomplished for those in need.

## Foundation awards mid-year grants

Congratulations to the following mid-year recipients of DDOK Charitable Foundation grants:

- **Catholic Charities Mother Teresa Dental Care Center (Tulsa)** – Equipment for new clinic opening in December.
- **Good Shepherd Clinic (OKC)** – Supplemental grant to complete denture clinic.
- **Health for Friends Dental Clinic (Norman)** – Supplies and equipment.
- **Perry 1st Baptist Church Free Dental Clinic (Perry)** – Supplies and equipment.
- **Neighborhood Services Organization**

**Dental Care Fund (OKC)** – Providing dental care to participants in their transitional living program for the homeless.

- **Okla. State Dept. of Health** – To send dental educators to the National Smokeless Tobacco Summit to gain new knowledge for the fight against the use of smokeless and spit tobacco - a cause of gum recession, tooth decay, and oral cancer.
- **American College of Dentists** – For establishment of a national ethics resource clearinghouse for dental schools, organizations, and professionals.

## Oklahoma volunteerism beats national average

Volunteers are absolutely critical for most of the clinics and programs supported by Delta Dental of Oklahoma Charitable Foundation. One volunteer can literally extend a nonprofit's service by thousands of dollars. And when it comes to volunteering, Oklahomans beat the national average!

According to this year's Volunteering in America Report, 29.1 percent of Oklahomans volunteered compared with the national average of 26.2 percent. In a comparison of 51 large cities, Oklahoma

City was ranked 7th in number of volunteers and 2nd in annual service hours per resident. Among 75 mid-size cities, Tulsa ranked 27th in number of volunteers and 36th in hours per resident.

The report is based on surveys collected by the U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics and is released by the Corporation for National and Community Service. For more details visit their Web site at [www.volunteeringinamerica.gov](http://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov).



## Classified Giving

### WANTED: TRACK LIGHTING

Desperately need two used ceiling-mount track lights. Good Shepherd Ministries of Oklahoma, Inc.; a 501 (c) (3) organization. Contact Dr. Frank Lipsinic. H: 405-842-8303; W: 405-271-5346.

### DENTISTS NEEDED

The OU/Southern Oklahoma Technology Center in Ardmore needs volunteer dentists for their Dental Hygiene Clinic. There is also an opening for a part-time Supervisory Dentist. Contact Christy McCullers at 580-223-2070 ext. 268 for details.

### CITY RESCUE MISSION DENTAL CLINIC

is in need of a replacement x-ray process unit and x-ray processing chemicals. They also need volunteer dentists, assistants, and hygienists. Contact Rev. Debbi McCulloch MS, ARNP at 405-517-3114.

### VHS TO DVD CONVERTER

Dental educators need to transfer their old VHS tapes to DVD for use by schools. If you can donate a converter or any dental education resources, please contact Kristi Love, RDH, at 580-338-8544 or [kristil@health.ok.gov](mailto:kristil@health.ok.gov).

**Do you have dental equipment or supplies to donate?** To list them in our Classified Giving column call Terrisa at 405-607-4771 or e-mail [foundation@DeltaDentalOK.org](mailto:foundation@DeltaDentalOK.org)

