Planning an Oral Health Hero Celebration
Hosting a State Oral Health Hero Event

Introduction

Oral Health Hero recognition events are an effective way to support community coalitions who are dedicated to improving oral health. Oral Health Hero events are a way to celebrate oral health accomplishments in a state, to recognize the hard work of individuals that are supporting change, and to bring attention to critical issues of oral health.

The DentaQuest Foundation has aligned our work with the U.S. Surgeon General *National Call To Action To Promote Oral Health*. The Call to Action, issued in 2003, came three years after the Surgeon General’s landmark report, *Oral Health in America*, which described oral disease as a “silent epidemic” afflicting the most vulnerable people in our nation.

The *Call to Action* urged public agencies and private groups to work collaboratively to address the challenges of improving oral health for all Americans. Specifically, the *Call to Action* encourages healthcare organizations to contribute expertise and resources to the following five recommended action steps:

1. Change perceptions of oral health
2. Overcome barriers by replicating effective programs and proven efforts
3. Build the science base and accelerate science transfer
4. Increase oral health workforce diversity, capacity, flexibility
5. Increase collaborations

Oral Health Heroes celebrations support the first goal—change perceptions of oral health. By calling attention to work that has been done on behalf of improvements to oral health access and programming over the previous year, Heroes events are a reason for the public and the media to talk about oral health. Oral Health Heroes events are another way to involve and recognize supporters in the legislature and the public policy arena. They also provide an opportunity to highlight work in process in the state and to make the case for continued improvement. Finally, Heroes events are an opportunity to educate the community about oral health, and to demonstrate your leadership bringing effective change to your community.

Goals:

An Oral Health Heroes event meets several goals:

1. Raises awareness of the importance of oral health in your state and the improvements that you (your organization/coalition) are making
2. Acknowledges the accomplishments of oral health leaders in the state—in the legislature, in public health and public policy, and in dentistry
3. Informs others involved in community health work and medical programs about oral health and asks them to include it in their work
4. Calls attention to the work of local communities and coalitions engaged in oral health advocacy
5. Involves and educates policymakers and legislators
6. Is a reason for the media to focus on good oral health news

**Strategies:**

- **Put a Face on Oral Health:** The issue of good oral health and the consequences of ignoring it are more easily recognized when people can put a face on it. The special work of the individuals selected as heroes can become compelling human interest stories on behalf of oral health improvements.

- **Be Collaborative:** You are already working with a number of different stakeholders. They can and should be enlisted to be part of your event, either as planners, panelists, or as an audience who can provide testimonials about your work.

- **Elevate Yourself by Elevating Others:** In finding and awarding “Oral Health Heroes” you will be seen as a group that gives credit to others for their great and important work. This will position you well among opinion leaders in your state and help raise your profile in the process.

**Planning Team:**

Assemble a planning team—assign roles and responsibilities.

- **Project Leader**—Maintains the master list of all action items, roles assigned, budget, design of the Heroes event, time of day, location, select a master/mistress of ceremonies

- **Venue Management:** Reviews/seeks proposed locations, manages onsite details like tables, chairs, podium, microphones (A/V), signage

- **Hero Nomination & Selection (a committee):** Determines criteria, issues call for nominations, sets deadline for nominations, evaluates applications, select awardees, contacts and confirms awardees will be present

- **Awards:** Designs and orders plaques for awardees

- **Panelist Committee:** Selects a topic, identifies panelists, contacts and confirms panelists.

- **Refreshment Committee**—Breakfast items or fruit & cheese, depending on the time of day

- **Invitations and RSVPs**—Design invitation, do you have lists? Who will manage RSVPs. Its nice to know how many people are committed to attending.

- **Communications** – Prepare background information on the host group, oral health in your state, your accomplishments. Make these available at the Heroes event.

- **Sponsors** – Do you want sponsors for this event? Some sponsors help finance the event? Some help promote it to the broader community? Identify the best role for sponsors.

- **Promotion** – To community and media. Think about all opportunities to get the word out. Distribute flyers to state/county agencies, post at health related community events, contact local public health and dental societies.
papers to get this event on community calendars. Invite media to attend and to interview program staff and Heroes.

- **Day of Event Team**—Who will greet guests, provide handouts, replenish refreshments, answer questions?

**Who to Invite?**

- Heroes (and their families)
- Oral health leaders in the state
- Politicians (both state and national)
- Government officials
- Community programs for health/oral health/prevention
- Hospitals and clinics that provide dental services
- Coalition members
- Academics working in the field of oral health

**Game Plan:**

- **Plan (At least 3-4 months before event)**
  Assemble a core committee
  - Secure a high profile location, set a date and a time for the event
  - Determine the event’s format – awards only, panel discussion and awards, a high profile speaker and awards, or a combination
  - Determine a realistic number of attendees
  - Determine awards and award process
  - Develop a budget and work plan
  - Get the event on calendars across the state
  - Find a master/mistress of ceremonies
  - Get a high profile individual(s) to provide a welcome (Governor, Secretary of Health, Congressman)

- **Location**
  Hold the “Oral Health Heroes” event at a respected, public venue, easily accessible to legislators and policy makers.
  - In Massachusetts, the Oral Health Heroes Celebration is held at the Massachusetts State House where legislators can easily leave their offices for a few minutes to attend.
  - In Maryland, the Oral Health Heroes Celebration is held at the National Museum of Dentistry in Baltimore, a central and easily accessible location for all across the state.
  - Consider access by public transportation and parking.
• **Who are the Heroes?**
  Nomination Process:
  - Develop criteria for Heroes and number to be honored. (Examples: Administrative Hero, Legislative Hero, Community Hero)
  - Develop nomination form and set a deadline
  - Ask for nominations from your community
  - Request that the Hero is present to receive award at event
  - Establish a committee to review nominations and select Heroes
  - Notify Heroes and confirm they will be present to receive their award
  - Design and order a personalized recognition item for each Hero (plaque) (Check vendor for production time)

• **Get People Talking About Oral Health**
  - Host a Panel Discussion (before the awards) that defines oral health issues in your state or invite a high profile guest speaker.
  - Panel Discussion:
    - Select a Theme:
      - Identify legislative, academic, policy, community voices for the panel (3-5 individuals)
      - Identify and confirm a moderator for panel
      - Contact and confirm availability of panelists and moderator
      - Poll panelists for 8 questions to discuss
      - Get biographical information for program and media outreach
      - Keep moderator informed
    - Invite and confirm guest speaker. Provide background info to guest speaker about oral health in state, accomplishments.

• **Enlist Co-sponsors:**
  Identify sponsors willing to lend their names and promote the Heroes event to their mailing lists, or fund. (This may not always be possible.)
  - Local newspapers
  - Local associations
  - Dental and medical groups

• **Develop Supporting Materials**
  - Consolidate mail lists of coalition members, partners, sponsors
  - Send a Save the Date email—to all likely attendees (60 days before event)
  - Send Invitation or e-invitation with details (30 days before event)
  - Order award plaques for Heroes (check vendor for production time)
• Write talking points for all speakers (non-panelists)
• Name tags for guests
• Table top name cards for panelists
• Event Packet:
  • a fact sheet about oral health in your state
  • a background piece about your coalition
  • program with the agenda, panelist biographies and hero biographies/accomplishments
• Media Advisory (before event) what, when, where, why
• Press Release (following the event)
• Op Ed or Letter to the Editor about heroes and oral health in your community

• Prepare Panelists
  • Identify 8 compelling questions to discuss (30 days before event)
  • Hold a pre-program briefing call with all panelists (2 weeks before event)
    • Review the questions
    • Determine which panelist answers the questions. (You want balanced participation of all panelists)

• Build Community Interest in the Event
  • List the event in community and newspaper calendars (as soon as you have the date)
  • Ask all coalition members to send save the date to their email lists.
  • Use social media (twitter and blogs) to promote event
  • Invite business, health media to attend
  • Invite legislators and state political leaders
  • Invite local newspapers, radio & tv stations to attend and cover the event. Reporters can interview the Heroes.
  • Having a high profile individual (Governor, Congressman, Mayor) deliver introductory remarks may attract media to attend.

• Event Management.
  • Visit suggested locations & select a venue. Consider accessibility and your desired audience. (In Massachusetts, the Heroes event is held at 11 am at the Massachusetts State House where it is easy for legislators & state department heads to attend for an hour. In Maryland, the Heroes event is held at 9am the National Museum of Dentistry in Baltimore, a central city for all. The format is a panel discussion followed by an awards presentation.
  • Coordinate logistics with venue
    • Audio/Video, table microphones, hand held microphones, projector, screen, computer (if using Power Point presentations)
    • Chairs for guests
• Tables for panel
• Tablecloth for panelist tables
• Water for panelists
• Arrange light refreshments for guests
• Secure photographer and videographer (or tape record)
• Signs for podium, entrance to event
  o Who will track RSVPs before event? Promote event at local events.
  o Assign onsite hosts to welcome guests, provide name tags

Day Before Event.
  o Visit venue to be sure chairs, tables, tablecloths, microphones, etc. are in place. Be sure there is an area for refreshments if you are providing some. This is the last chance to make adjustments!
  o Confirm food arrangements with caterer.

Day of Event.
  o Arrive 60 -90 min before start of event
  o Welcoming team is in place before heroes, speakers, guests, attendees arrive
  o Name tags for attendees
  o Programs and info folder
  o Assign an individual to identify and greet dignitaries. Provide names of dignitaries to the moderator so they can be recognized.
  o Set our refreshments.
  o Set up panelist table. Tablecloth, table top name cards for panelists, water for panelists
  o Photographer takes pictures during event, and of panelists, awardees
  o Videographer present or tape record panel
  o Use social media at event – twitter

After Event.
  o Send thank you note to panelists and other speakers with photo
  o Send each Hero a photo
  o Send press release and Hero photo to hometown papers
  o Send press release and group photo to major newspapers
  o Transcribe/edit panel discussion comments into a white paper that can be posted to your website and emailed to supporters.
  o Review budget
  o Debrief team and set date for next year and start the planning again.
Sample Documents

- **From Maryland Oral Health Heroes**
  - e-invitation
  - program
  - planning excel sheet
  - Handouts
    - The State of Oral Health in Maryland
    - About the Maryland Dental Action Coalition
    - DentaQuest Foundation Grants in Maryland
  - op ed
  - press release
  - photos

- **From Massachusetts Oral Health Heroes**
  - Nomination Form

Referenced Documents


We’re Honoring Maryland’s Oral Health Heroes on June 4th!

The Maryland Dental Action Coalition invites you to join us for the 1st annual **Maryland Oral Health Heroes** awards, honoring administrators, legislators and community leaders committed to improving oral health in Maryland.

9:00 a.m.  Welcome and Opening Remarks

9:30 a.m.  Dental Care in Maryland in 2010

10:00 a.m.  “Closing the Gap: Making Oral Health Accessible, Affordable, and Achievable,” a panel discussion including leading voices in oral health in Maryland.

11:00 a.m.  **Presentation of Awards**

**Administrative Heroes**
- Secretary John Colmers, DHMH
- Dr. Harry Goodman, DHMH

**Legislative Heroes**
- Sen. Thomas McClain Middleton, Maryland General Assembly
- Delegate Peter Hammen, Maryland General Assembly

**Community Heroes**
- Dr. Scott Wolpin, Choptank Community Health Systems
- Dr. Winifred Booker, Pediatric Dentist

Every year, individuals in our communities give outstanding leadership in oral health advocacy and a strong commitment to improving oral health in Maryland. The Maryland Dental Action Coalition wants to thank them for their hard work and dedication.

Don’t miss this special event! **RSVP to Kayla Bate** at (410)964-2880 or Kayla@msda.com.

Parking: 75 parking spaces have been reserved (first come, first serve) at the **Grand Parking Garage, corner of Paca and Baltimore Streets.** Guests will be given a voucher for a reduced parking fee of $6 instead of the usual rate of $14+.

The Oral Health Heroes Event is sponsored by the Maryland Dental Action Coalition with support from the DentaQuest Foundation.
Maryland’s Oral Health Heroes

June 4, 2010

National Museum of Dentistry
About the Maryland Dental Action Coalition

The Maryland Dental Action Coalition (MDAC) is committed to tackling issues affecting the oral health of Marylanders. The MDAC was first established as the Dental Action Committee (DAC). The DAC was convened in June of 2007 by Maryland Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene John M. Colmers in the wake of the death of 12-year-old Deamonte Driver from an untreated dental infection. The DAC took on the charge of finding a way to assure dental access for all Maryland children and preventing such a tragedy from happening again. Now, the Coalition aims to increase access to dental care, prevent oral disease, and increase oral health education and literacy throughout the state of Maryland for residents from all walks of life.

About the DentaQuest Foundation

The DentaQuest Foundation is committed to optimal oral health for all Americans through its support of prevention and access to affordable oral health care, and through its partnerships with funders, policy makers and community leaders. For more information please visit dentaquestfoundation.org.

Program

9:00 a.m. Welcome and Opening Remarks
Christian S. Stohler, DMD - Dean, University of Maryland Dental School
Elizabeth A. Lowe - Chair, Maryland Dental Action Coalition
Congressman Elijah E. Cummings - U.S. Representative, 7th Congressional District, Maryland

9:30 a.m. Dental Care in Maryland in 2010

10:00 a.m. Closing the Gap: Making Oral Health Accessible, Affordable, and Achievable
A panel discussion including leading voices for oral health in Maryland:

- Catherine M. Dunham, Ed. D, Children's Dental Health Project
- Laurie Norris, Campaign Manager, Pew Charitable Trusts' Children's Dental Campaign
- Norman A. Tinanoff, DDS, Department of Health Promotion and Policy, University of Maryland
- Dr. Leslie Grant, Legislative Committee Chair and Past President, National Dental Association
- Barbara Klein, MPA, Associate Vice President, Government and Community Affairs, University of Maryland

Moderator: Ralph Fuccillo, President, DentaQuest Foundation

11:00 a.m. Presentation of Awards

Administrative Heroes
- Secretary John Colmers, Department of Health & Mental Hygiene
- Dr. Harry Goodman, Department of Health & Mental Hygiene

Legislative Heroes
- Senator Thomas McClain Middleton, Maryland General Assembly
- Delegate Peter Hammen, Maryland General Assembly

Community Heroes
- Dr. Scott Wolpin, Choptank Community Health Systems
- Dr. Winifred Booker, Pediatric Dentist

The Oral Health Heroes event is sponsored by the Maryland Dental Action Coalition with support from the DentaQuest Foundation
Leslie E. Grant, Dental Committee Chair and Past President, National Dental Association, Dental Compliance Officer, Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners

Dr. Grant received her DDS Degree in 1986 from the University of Maryland Dental School. She also earned a Master of Speech Pathology and Audiology Degree from the University of Washington in Seattle. Dr. Grant has given testimony several times before State Hearings and Legislative Committees regarding Medicaid Dentistry in Maryland to solicit access to dental care for underserved and uninsured residents. In 2006, she was named one of the “One Hundred + Most Influential African Americans” by Ebony Magazine. Dr. Grant is a member of the National Dental Association, The Academy of General Dentistry, The American Association of Women Dentists, The American Dental Association and The American Speech, Language, Hearing Association. She served as Secretary of the Maryland Dental Society for six years and as a delegate for six years. Dr. Grants’ NDA activities include serving on the Reference Committee, Chairing the Committee on Constitution and By-Laws and serving as Speaker of the House for five years. She was the President of the National Dental Association in 2006 and presently serves as Legislative Chair.

Ralph Fuccillo, President, DentaQuest Foundation - Moderator

Ralph Fuccillo has contributed to the field of prevention through more than 30 years of professional and volunteer experience in education, health and human services, and organizational development for the non-profit sector. Through a collaborative leadership approach, he has focused on the social determinants of health, policy development, and behavior change models to reduce injury and violence, HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, and oral health disparities. Fuccillo joined the DentaQuest Foundation in 2006, and has overseen its growth from a small local foundation into a reliable partner in oral health solutions across the United States. Previously, he directed the Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation, responsible for the oversight of its investments and partnerships in community health promotion through Community Service Programs, and the training and development activities conducted by the Institute for Linguistic and Cultural Skills. Fuccillo serves on the board of a number of non-profit organizations including Elderhostel, Neighborhood Health Plan, and Funders Concerned About AIDS. He is the Board Chair of the Schweitzer Fellowship and the immediate past president of the AIDS Council.

Catherine M. Dunham, Ed.D., Executive Director, Children’s Dental health Project

Dr. Dunham is the Executive Director of the Children’s Dental Health Project, a national non-profit organization focused on improving children’s access to oral health care through research-driven policies, innovative solutions, and the engagement of a broad base of like-minded partners. Dr. Dunham is also President and Founder of The Access Project, a research and advocacy organization that has worked to improve access to health care for people without adequate health insurance since 1998. She served as the Special Advisor to the President of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation from 1991 to 1998 and was national program director of the Community Health Leadership Program supported by the Johnson Foundation from 1991 to 2007. From 1984-1991 she was the chief health and human services policy advisor to Massachusetts Governor Michael S. Dukakis. Prior to that, Dr. Dunham was the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Council of Human Service Providers. Dr. Dunham received her Masters in Education and her Doctorate in Social Analysis in Education from Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts. She has faculty appointments at the University of Massachusetts Medical School and Brandeis University.

Our Panel

Barbara A. Klein, MPA, Associate Vice President, University of Maryland

Ms. Klein is a Certified Public Accountant with a MS degree from Loyola College. As the Associate Vice President for Government and Community Affairs at the University of Maryland, Baltimore, she is responsible for representing all professional schools and clinical practices at the federal, state and local levels. She also oversees community outreach on behalf of the President, serving as Chair of the UMB Outreach Council. Previously, Ms Klein worked with the State legislature for 15 years, serving most recently as the Deputy Director of Fiscal Services, the non-partisan central staff to the Maryland General Assembly, with responsibility for guiding and overseeing State fiscal policy matters. She also held prior positions as primary staff to various legislative fiscal committees in Annapolis. Earlier in her career, she served as the Chief of Auditing for a State agency and as an auditor for Deloitte Touche.

Laurie Norris, Campaign Manager, Pew Charitable Trusts’ Children’s Dental Campaign

Laurie Norris is the state campaign manager for the Pew Charitable Trusts’ Children’s Dental Campaign. Prior to joining Pew in November 2009, Laurie was with the Public Justice Center in Baltimore where she served as Director of both the Health Rights Project and the Homeless and Foster Children’s Education Project. Laurie was instrumental in helping to raise the nation’s awareness of the critical need for better access to dental care for poor children by securing media attention about her client, 12-year-old Deamonte Driver, who died in 2007 of a preventable dental abscess that spread to his brain. She has dedicated her work ever since to turning this tragedy into tangible improvements in children’s oral health. Laurie holds a law degree from New York University School of Law.

Norman A. Tinanoff, DDS, Department of Health Promotion and Policy University of Maryland

Dr. Tinanoff’s principal interests are preventing dental caries and improving oral health access for underserved child populations. As a practicing dentist involved in policy decisions and the chair of the University of Maryland Department of Health Promotion and Policy, Dr. Tinanoff has a strong point of view on oral health policy and scientific development. He was co-chair of the Dental Action Committee in Maryland and as a member of multiple committees, he has been involved in deliberations on improvements in Medicaid, and has helped craft legislation aimed at improving Medicaid practices.

Dr. Tinanoff has authored or co-authored over 140 full-length publications, primarily on fluoride mechanisms, antimicrobials, caries risk factors, early childhood caries and prevention. He received his DDS from the University of Maryland, a Masters Degree in Pediatric Dentistry from the University of Iowa, and completed a research fellowship at the Veteran’s Administration hospital in Iowa City. After two years of military service at the Army Institute of Dental Research at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Dr. Tinanoff spent 16 years as Director of Pediatric Dentistry Program at the University of Connecticut Health Center. In 1999, he became Chair of the Department of Pediatric Dentistry at the University of Maryland and in 2003 became Chair of the Department of Health Promotion and Policy which includes Pediatric Dentistry, Dental Hygiene, and Community Dentistry. He joined the DentaQuest Foundation Board of Directors in 2009.
2010 Oral Health Heroes

Administrative Heroes

Secretary John Colmers, Maryland Department of Health & Mental Hygiene

As Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene for the State of Maryland, John Colmers has been a champion of oral health in Maryland government and across the health care community. Recognizing the need to improve the oral health delivery system in Maryland, Secretary Colmers established the Dental Action Committee and supported its recommendations. It is because of Secretary Colmers’ support and leadership that the State of Maryland has increased access to oral health care services for thousands of children around the state.

Dr. Harry Goodman, Maryland Department of Health & Mental Hygiene

As Director of the Office of Oral Health, Dr. Goodman championed oral health issues with passion throughout the ranks of Maryland government. He played a key role in developing innovative solutions such as the Fluoride Varnish program which has enabled thousands of children to get basic oral health screening, fluoride varnish and referrals to dentists through their pediatrician. Dr. Goodman provided essential leadership on key oral health issues and has developed the Maryland Office of Oral Health into a national model for state oral health programs.

Legislative Heroes

Senator Thomas McClain Middleton, Maryland General Assembly

As a member of the Maryland Senate, Senator Thomas McClain Middleton has been a champion of oral health and has supported significant policy, funding and legislative/political efforts that positioned Maryland to where it is today. Through his participation on the Task Force on Health Care Access and Reimbursement, the Maryland Health Care Reform Coordinating Council, and several other committees, Senator Middleton has ensured visibility of key oral health issues. He has also encouraged cooperation between the dental and dental hygiene communities to improve access to care and ensure the dental needs of Marylanders are met.

Delegate Peter Hammen, Maryland General Assembly

As a member of Maryland’s House of Delegates, Senator Peter Hammen has been a champion of oral health and has supported significant policy, funding and legislative/political efforts that positioned Maryland to where it is today. Through his role as the Chair of the Health and Government Operations Committee, Senator Hammen has worked with the Dental Action Committee (now the Maryland Dental Action Coalition) to pass legislation over the past few years that has greatly improved access to dental care for Maryland citizens.

Community Heroes

Dr. Scott Wolpin, Choptank Community Health Systems

Dr. Scott Wolpin has demonstrated his commitment to improving access to oral health care services on Maryland’s Eastern Shore for the past 20 years by developing and sustaining an excellent model of a comprehensive, community approach to oral health. This model has been used to provide primary care services to thousands of uninsured and Medicaid children including those in local migrant camp settings. Dr. Wolpin also has been recognized nationally for establishing a model comprehensive school-based dental program that assures a dental home for school children in the region. Whether it is as President of the Eastern Shore Dental Society or as President of the Association of Clinicians for the Underserved, Dr. Wolpin has served as a lifelong advocate and voice for the dental needs of poor and needy populations everywhere.

Dr. Winifred Booker, Valley Dental Pediatrics

Dr. Winifred Booker has demonstrated her commitment to improving oral health care in our community through the pediatric dental services she has provided to thousands of Maryland Medicaid children in the Baltimore area. She has developed creative programs that help parents, children and school administrators understand the importance of oral hygiene. Dr. Booker has also used her pediatric dentistry knowledge to assist general dentists in incorporating techniques for treating children into their practices.
The State of Oral Health in Maryland

In the mid 1990’s, the American Dental Association reported that low-income populations in Maryland had the lowest access in the country to oral health care services. At this time, an Oral Health Advisory committee was established that brought together many different communities around this issue. This was a very prominent committee that was able to work with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) to accomplish some legislative goals including greater oral cancer awareness and the establishment of dental loan assistance repayment initiatives. While some of the key dental care access issues were addressed, this was really most important because this early committee began to develop a plan in 2000 that the Dental Action Committee would later expand upon, formalize, and put into action.

While there was continued progress in the state around oral health initiatives, it wasn’t until 2007 that a formal plan of dental access reforms was put into action. This was the result of the community becoming galvanized in the wake of the death of 12-year-old Deamonte Driver, who tragically died from an untreated dental infection, an entirely preventable occurrence.

In June 2007, in response to Deamonte’s death, the Dental Action Committee (DAC) was convened and charged by Maryland DHMH Secretary John M. Colmers to prevent such a tragedy from ever happening again and to find ways to assure dental access for all Maryland children.

With the support of Governor Martin O’Malley, the Maryland General Assembly instituted a number of dental reforms recommended by the DAC. The reforms established a new roadmap to permanently and effectively address the dental access crisis that existed in Maryland.

These reforms encompassed a broad spectrum of issues including new public health strategies; increases in Medicaid payment rates and alternate delivery models; education and outreach for parents and caregivers; and strategies to improve provider participation, capacity, and scope of practice. All focused on making the system work better for people, increasing the number of dentists available to provide care and addressing access to care itself, measured by one visit per year.

Today, as a result of these reforms:

- More than 300 new dental providers joined the state Medicaid dental program.
- More than 60 percent of pediatric dentists in Maryland now participate in Medicaid.
- Medicaid now reimburses medical providers to apply fluoride varnish on young children ages 9 months to 3 years of age during routine medical well-child visits.
  - 292 medical providers now participate in Fluoride Varnish Program
  - More than 8,000 medical provider claims have been submitted for this service
- 250 general dentists received training in didactic and clinical pediatric dentistry so that they may competently treat young children.
- Public health dental programs and school-linked centers are now recruiting public health dental hygienists to provide educational and preventive services.
• New clinical dental public health programs have been initiated statewide and new or expanded school-linked programs have been instituted, including the Deamonte Driver Dental Van Project

Looking ahead, improving oral health literacy, implementing a dental case management system and instituting dental screenings in schools will be the next major steps for Maryland.

This is why the DAC, now the Maryland Dental Action Coalition (MDAC), will be working with many state partners to develop these projects. The University of Maryland at College Park School of Public Health recently received a $300,000 grant from DentaQuest Foundation, and the DHMH Office of Oral Health will also receive $1.2 million federal grant to develop a science-based oral health literacy campaign for the public. Concordantly, the University of Maryland received a $220,000 grant from DentaQuest Foundation to demonstrate a dental case management project which in the future would be linked to a statewide school dental screening initiative. Collectively, these projects aim to ensure that Maryland children and their families obtain a dental home and have ample access to needed education, prevention and treatment dental services.

For more information about the state of Oral Health in Maryland, please visit the Maryland Office of Oral Health website at http://fha.maryland.gov/oralhealth/.
About the Maryland Dental Action Coalition

The Maryland Dental Action Coalition (MDAC) was first established as the Dental Action Committee (DAC). The DAC was convened in June of 2007 by Maryland Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene John M. Colmers in the wake of the death of 12-year-old Deamonte Driver. Deamonte Driver died from an untreated tooth abscess that spread to his brain. The DAC was charged with preventing such a tragedy from ever happening again and finding a way to assure dental access for all Maryland children.

Led by Chair Jane Casper, RDH, MA, and Vice-Chair Harry Goodman, DMD, MPH, the DAC convened to draft recommendations that promised to comprehensively reform the state's pediatric dental access system. This culminated in September 2007 with a published report that outlined seven key recommendations:

1. Initiate a statewide single vendor dental Administrative Services Only Medicaid Provider
2. Increase Medicaid dental reimbursement rates to the 50th percentile of the American Dental Association’s South Atlantic region for all dental codes
3. Maintain and enhance the dental public health infrastructure to ensure that residents in every local jurisdiction have access to a public health safety net dental clinic
4. Incorporate dental with vision and hearing screenings for school children and/or require dental exams prior to school entry
5. Create a “public health dental hygienist” category to enable dental hygienists working for public health programs to provide services within their scope of practice in off-site settings under general supervision and without a dentist first having to see the patient
6. Provide training to medical providers to conduct oral health risk assessments, apply fluoride varnish, educate parents and caregivers, and to assist families in establishing a dental home; and provide training for general practice dentists to feel more comfortable treating very young children
7. Develop a unified and culturally appropriate oral health message

The full report can be viewed online at the Office of Oral Health’s website: http://fha.maryland.gov/oralhealth/.

Once the report had been published, the DAC continued to convene to support implementation efforts. In April 2009, when their formal charge from Sec. Colmers was complete, the group began discussions to form a new independent coalition with a broadened mission that would tackle other issues affecting the oral health of Marylanders. This Coalition would now take on issues concerning residents of all ages from all walks of life, aiming to increase access to dental care, prevent oral disease, and improve oral health behaviors through health education and literacy.

**MDAC Goals Include:**

- **Enhancing Advocacy for Oral Health Policy**
  Keeping federal and state legislators informed of the importance of oral health, and proposing and supporting key legislation such as:
- The 2007 “Oral Health Safety Net Bill,” which provides funding to expand the dental safety net clinics across the state;
- The 2008 “Public Health Dental Hygiene Act” which enables dental hygienists working in dental public health programs to provide the full scope of dental hygiene service without the need for a dentist to first initially examine a patient and to be physically present;
- The 2008 “Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act,” which authorized the expenditure of $7 million (with a $7 million federal match) for three years in order to increase dental reimbursement rates;
- Monitoring the oral health provisions in federal health care reform efforts and how these initiatives can potentially benefit Maryland.

**Monitoring of the Maryland Medicaid System**

Dental services used to be part of the Medicaid managed care system called HealthChoice. Now dental is “carved-out” from this medical system, and there is a single dental administrator. This has given the State the opportunity to develop administrative processes designed to increase provider participation and increase utilization of oral health services among Medicaid beneficiaries. Many Medicaid dental rates also were increased to the ADA 50th percentile for the South Atlantic region but because of budget problems, increases have not been enacted for all dental procedures. The MDAC will continue to monitor the progress of these important Medicaid initiatives and advocate for more dental rate increases once the economic climate in Maryland improves.

**Implementing Mandatory School Screenings**

Continue to develop a statewide plan to implement dental screenings for public school children. Currently the MDAC is working on a pilot “proof of concept” project that will demonstrate the effectiveness and feasibility of the screening model.

**Developing a Statewide Oral Health Literacy Project**

Now that funding has been secured, assist in the development of an oral health literacy messaging and training campaign targeting families and human services providers to incorporate personal preventive and dental utilization behaviors aimed at improving oral health in Maryland;

**Sustaining MDAC Sustainability Efforts**

To seek funding and other resources, increase membership, expand partnerships and institute strategic planning to enhance the long-term sustainability and viability of the MDAC so it can efficiently and adequately achieve its goals in reducing oral health disparities in Maryland. This includes working with the Maryland Office of Oral Health to develop a comprehensive State Oral Health Plan for the State of Maryland to be released at the end of 2010.

For more information about the MDAC or to get involved, please visit the Maryland Office of Oral Health website at [http://fha.maryland.gov/oralhealth/](http://fha.maryland.gov/oralhealth/). You can also join us at the next general session of the MDAC to be held on Monday, June 14th, 2010 at 5:30 p.m. at the Maryland State Dental Association offices in Columbia.
DentaQuest Foundation Grants in Maryland

The DentaQuest Foundation has made major investments to improve oral health literacy and close the disparities gap among children and youth throughout the state of Maryland.

Within the past year, the Foundation has awarded grants totaling $753,855 to the state of Maryland:

- $202,886 was awarded to support the development of the Maryland Dental Action Coalition (MDAC), an independent advocacy organization that will implement the oral health literacy plan throughout the state.
  - The Coalition has worked with an array of organizations—ranging from policymakers, health care providers, hospital groups, and educational entities to child welfare advocacies—to prioritize oral health as a critical component of health and to promote community and statewide solutions.

- $219,626 was awarded to the University of Maryland Dental School to develop and implement a dental case management program pilot model in a targeted area of Baltimore.
  - The pilot will ascertain the impact of case management as a vehicle to establish dental homes.
  - The project seeks to:
    - Increase the number of children receiving care
    - Increase the number of children with a dental home
    - Reduce the number of no-show appointments
    - Strengthen the patient and provider perception that oral health is integral to overall health
    - Increase the number of dentists participating in the Maryland Medicaid program
    - Heighten awareness of case managers regarding dental issues

- An additional $331,343 was awarded to the University of Maryland for a statewide oral health literacy and awareness campaign.
  - Researchers at the University of Maryland’s School of Public Health surveyed 4,000 parents and health care providers for their knowledge, opinions and practices about preventive oral health and used the information to develop an oral health literacy intervention model for use in Maryland and other states.

These grants support the mission of the DentaQuest Foundation to strengthen community initiatives and strategies, to strengthen the dental care safety net, to increase access to care for vulnerable children, and ultimately, to improve oral health. In addition to these two grants, the Foundation also made a special grant to the Deamonte Driver Dental Project.
Deamonte's legacy
Tragic case of Maryland boy who died from a toothache has led to great improvements in dental health

After Deamonte Driver, a 12-year-old Maryland boy, died from an untreated dental infection in 2007, it's hard to forget that an $80 tooth extraction could have saved his life. Never have the words "system failure" rung so true.

For more than 10 years, the U.S. surgeon general has recognized dental disease as a "silent epidemic" impacting low-income and minority children most severely. Maryland was no different. By 2006, more than one-third of all Maryland kindergarteners and third-graders had untreated decay in their primary teeth, but more than 70 percent of children in the state's Medicaid program had not seen a dentist in the past year.

All that changed after Deamonte Driver.

His tragedy spurred a comprehensive response. Maryland's federal legislators decried the situation and called for federal reforms to help bolster state Medicaid and public health dental programs. Gov. Martin O'Malley and Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene John Colmers convened the Dental Action Committee — a statewide coalition of dental and medical health care providers, insurers, advocates, policymakers and academics — to study the oral health system.

The committee quickly realized there were several fundamental problems in our system of oral health care, hitting low-income and minority children the hardest, and it recommended a roadmap to address the disparities. The governor included many of these measures in his budget, and the Maryland General Assembly took action, modestly increasing Medicaid rates, simplifying the Medicaid system, providing for additional safety net dental clinics and approving a new public health dental hygienist work force to provide educational and preventive services in schools, Head Start, and similar settings.

The results are real. In the three years since the Deamonte Driver tragedy, Maryland has become a nationally recognized model for oral health care. According to a February 2010 report by The Pew Center on the States, Maryland was one of only six states to earn an "A" for its oral health programming.

We applaud state policymakers and health professionals for this tremendous progress. That is why the newly formed Maryland Dental Action Coalition, with support from the DentaQuest Foundation, recently recognized Maryland's leading oral health advocates with the Oral Health Hero Award for their contribution to making the state a national leader in oral health.
But the work can't stop there.

The Dental Action Committee also found that most people don't understand the importance of oral health, resulting in missed dental appointments and inadequate oral hygiene and dietary practices.

Only one-third of mothers thought oral health was important for their infants, according to a survey by the American Dental Association. The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry also found that just 14 percent of parents realized that tooth decay in children can ultimately lead to the need for a root canal — even in infants.

With an estimated 1 out of 10 children reporting mouth pain from untreated dental decay, we have to do more to raise awareness. After all, what good is a top-notch oral health system if no one knows how to use it?

The good news is that oral health literacy campaigns can help. The ADA also found that 78 percent of parents would take their children to visit a pediatric dentist before their first birthday, if only they knew oral health care early in life would lead to improved oral health as their children developed. Getting that early care is critical for a child’s overall development, since we know that children who have untreated dental disease face greater learning challenges, impaired nutrition and, in the case of Deamonte Driver, even death.

Now that we have the infrastructure, we need the public education. People must understand the importance of oral health, how to prevent oral disease and how to access dental services. With the help of new federal and private foundation funding, an oral health literacy campaign is being planned to empower the public to improve dental behavior and have a better idea of how to find dental services. The Maryland Dental Action Coalition is working hard to get the word out across the state.

We also have to consider the national state of oral health awareness. Important provisions in the national health care reform law require a national oral health prevention education campaign that focuses on reaching those who would benefit most, especially low-income and minority families. Now it’s up to Congress to fund it. And we urge them to do so.

But as we consider the challenges ahead, we also encourage Marylanders to take this moment to appreciate how far we’ve come — how tragedy has been transformed into a legacy of commitment and cooperation to improve the lives of Maryland's children.

Jane Casper is a dental hygienist at Children's Dental Office in Baltimore and an advocate for access to dental care for children. She recently served as chair of the Maryland Dental Action Coalition. Her e-mail is jcasperrdh@gmail.com. Ralph Fuccillo is president of the DentaQuest Foundation, which is committed to optimal oral health for all Americans (www.dentaquestfoundation.org). His e-mail is ralph.fuccillo@dentaquestfoundation.org.

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Maryland Dental Action Coalition Honors Maryland’s Oral Health Heroes

Leading oral health advocates recognized for their commitment to oral health; speak to current state and future of oral health in Maryland

June 4, 2010 – Leaders in health in Maryland gathered today at the National Museum of Dentistry in Baltimore for the first annual “Maryland Oral Health Heroes” awards ceremony, hosted by the Maryland Dental Action Coalition (MDAC). The ceremony combined an insightful panel discussion focused on Maryland’s role as a national leader in community programming for oral health, and recognized six legislators and community leaders who have made a real difference in improving the oral health of Maryland’s residents.

Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) Secretary John Colmers and Dr. Harry Goodman, director of the Office of Oral Health at DHMH were recognized for championing oral health within state government and across the health care community and for their role in developing creative programs that are designed to increase access to dental care in creative and practical new ways.

State Sen. Thomas McClain Middleton and State Del. Peter Hammen were recognized for championing oral health in the Maryland General Assembly and for the significant policy, funding and legislative efforts that have begun to improve the oral health of Maryland’s residents.

Dr. Scott Wolpin, dental director of Choptank Community Health Systems was recognized for developing and sustaining a comprehensive community approach to the delivery of oral health care on Maryland’s Eastern Shore. Dr. Winifred Booker, a practicing dentist and leader in the Maryland dental community, was recognized for her grassroots work to improve oral health through creative programs like “Lessons in a Lunchbox” and “Project Clean Toothbrush.”

“Congratulations to all of the outstanding 2010 Maryland Oral Health Heroes. These awards celebrate their accomplishments as individuals and as community leaders,” said MDAC Chair Beth Lowe. “It is important to remember that dental disease is nearly 100 percent preventable. All Marylanders are better off because of the thoughtful work of each hero in developing solutions to very real problems in the state. Thanks to their efforts, today, Maryland has become a national model for improving the oral health of its citizens.”

The awards ceremony was preceded by a panel discussion, entitled: “Closing the Gap: Making Oral Health Accessible, Affordable and Achievable,” moderated by DentaQuest Foundation President Ralph Fuccillo. Panelists included Catherine Dunham of the Children’s Dental Health Project, Dr. Norman Tinanoff from the University of Maryland Department of Health Promotion and Policy, Laurie Norris from the Pew Children’s Dental Campaign, Barbara Klein, Associate Vice President for Government and Community Affairs for the University of Maryland, and Dr. Leslie Grant, National Dental Association Past President and Chair of the Legislative Committee. They spoke about the opportunities to continue to improve access to oral health care in Maryland, and how oral health will be affected by national health reform.

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“It is important to convene thoughtful leaders whose experience and expertise addresses all aspects of the oral health issue so that we can continue to work together and share best practices with the greater health care community as well as with policy and other decision makers,” said DentaQuest Foundation President Ralph Fuccillo, moderator of the panel discussion. “The DentaQuest Foundation is committed to convening groups like this to support and advocate for improvements in oral health prevention and access to care.

About the Maryland Dental Action Coalition
The Maryland Dental Action Coalition (MDAC) is a diverse and independent group of organizations and individuals committed to tackling issues affecting the oral health of all Marylanders. The MDAC was first established as the Dental Action Committee (DAC), convened in June of 2007 by Maryland Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene John M. Colmers in the wake of the death of 12-year-old Deamonte Driver from untreated dental disease. The DAC took up Secretary Colmer’s charge of making recommendations to assure access to oral health care for all Maryland children. Today, the MDAC continues its predecessor’s work to advocate for increasing access to oral health care, preventing oral disease, and improving oral health education and literacy throughout Maryland. The MDAC has received grant funding from the DentaQuest Foundation. The Oral Health Heroes Event is sponsored by Maryland Dental Action Coalition with support from the DentaQuest Foundation.

About the DentaQuest Foundation
The DentaQuest Foundation is committed to optimal oral health for all Americans through its support of systems that create better oral health care, and through partnerships with funders, policy makers and community leaders. For more information please visit www.dentaquestfoundation.org.

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This year, the Watch Your Mouth campaign’s Oral Health Hero Award will honor legislators, community leaders and organizations that have improved the state of oral health in Massachusetts. Please help us by nominating a community hero(es) (individuals, organizations, or groups in Massachusetts) that have demonstrated:

- Outstanding leadership in oral health advocacy and/or organizing;
- Strong commitment to improving the state of oral health in Massachusetts

The honoree must be present to accept this award on **February 25, 2010 from 11am-12pm** at the Watch Your Mouth’s annual *Oral Health Heroes Event* at the State House.

Please complete the following.

Nominator’s Name: ______________________________________________

Organization: ____________________________________________________

Address: _________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

Day Phone: __________________________ Evening Phone: _______________________

Fax: __________________________ Email: ____________________________

NOMINEE/GROUP NAME:

ORGANIZATION:

ADDRESS:

DAY PHONE: EVENING PHONE:

FAX: EMAIL:
Please answer the following questions as completely as possible.

1. Describe the ways in which this group or individual improved the state of oral health in Massachusetts and why they should be honored as an Oral Health Hero.

2. Is there anything else you would like us to know about this nominee?

You can also view this form online at: [www.hcfama.org/oralhealth/wym](http://www.hcfama.org/oralhealth/wym)
Submit completed nomination forms via mail, e-mail, or fax by **February 3, 2010** to:

Christine Keeves  
Oral Health Communications Coordinator  
Health Care For All  
30 Winter St., 10th Floor  
Boston, MA 02108  
ckeeves@hcfama.org  
Fax: 617.451.5838  
Phone: 617.275.2919

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**Past Heroes (2006-2009)**

**Legislative Hero Award Recipients**
- Senator Harriette Chandler
- Senator Bruce Tarr
- Representative Kathleen Teahan
- Representative Cheryl Coakley Rivera
- Senate President Robert Travaglini
- House Speaker Salvatore DiMasi
- Senator Richard Moore
- Senator Susan Fargo
- Representative Patricia Walrath
- Representative Peter Koutoujian
- Senator Gale Candaras
- Representative John Scibak
- Senate President Therese Murray
- Representative Smitty Pignatelli

**Community Hero Award Recipients**
- Bruce Morrell (*PACE, Inc.*)
- Mark Stone, DMD (*Elder Dental Services*)
- Nancy Johnson (*Tufts Community Dental, BEST Oral Health*)
- Dr. Joel Pearlman (*Tufts Dental Facility for Persons with Special Needs*)

**Administrative Hero Award Recipients**
- Tom Dehner, *Director of Massachusetts Medicaid Program*