

May, 2012

Message from the Chair

In the February newsletter, I mentioned that the Coalition is at an interesting crossroads. Indeed, the NYSOHC Steering Committee has been engaging in lively discussions about our future, in terms of direction, philosophy, even continuation. Now, don't panic.

With any coalition, the issue of maintenance is a crucial question that often goes untended. But coalitions, like people and cars and just about everything else in life, require maintenance. Renewal is vital.

According to an article on this issue by Bill Berkowitz, which appeared in Community Tool Box, what needs to be maintained in a coalition are:

The coalition's reason for being; its vision, mission and objectives

The basic governance and operating rules

The coalition leadership

The division of labor, within and among the leaders and members

The coalition's strategic and action plans, both short and long term

The coalition's actions and results, so that it accomplishes something to the world

The coalition's funding

The coalition's visibility in the community

The coalition's public support

The spirit of the coalition

That's quite a list for a tune-up, but at least we've accepted the need to address it. One of the first steps the Steering Committee is taking is to develop a webinar to examine how successful coalitions, even those not working in oral health, have, well, succeeded; how and why coalitions have transitioned over time, even how coalitions have decided to fold up the proverbial tent.

Then, we're thinking of including a strategic planning session at the fall annual meeting.

Maintaining a coalition is important, but – and again, don't panic, but just read through - it may not be what we want to do. That is, maybe we need to change. Or modify our focus, cut back or edit our vision and mission, even cease existence. A coworker forwarded me another article, this one from CUNY, which spelled out reasons that coalitions sometimes fail, and they include conditions at large which are not conducive to their existence; the volunteer members and organizations are not committed to the goal or to sustaining the coalition; they have not accumulated sufficient contributions (vision, resources or power) to accomplish what they seek to do, and they lack the competence to manage the complex set of strategies and relationships involved in sustaining a coalition effort.

It's certainly true that our membership numbers have grown over the years, but with that growth comes the need to spend more resources – be they time, money or other – to keep the pace. The question has occasionally come up as to whether the Coalition has, in effect, completed its stated mission, which is to vigorously implement the New York State Oral Health Plan in order to maximize oral health for all New Yorkers. The question has

also arisen as to whether this should be revised, and if so, to what extent and purpose?

I throw these questions and ideas out again, not to foretell doom and gloom, but to give the membership an idea of some of the issues and concerns which are being discussed by the Steering Committee, and to give you the opportunity to weigh in with what you think the Coalition's future should look like. We need to hear from you! Email your suggestions to me at lbleon@nysdental.org, or if you'd prefer to discuss, call me at (518) 465-0044. I'd also welcome examples of coalitions – any kind - with which you are familiar which have had similar growing pains, and how those were resolved.

As always, thank you for your support and commitment to improving oral health in New York. And as always, I welcome your questions, critiques and recommendations.

Laura Leon

We have redesigned our
website!
Come see what's new.

www.nysohc.org

Workforce Conference Stresses Appeal of Rural Practice

NYSDA headquarters in Albany was the setting for a May 12 Dental Student/Resident Workforce Conference sponsored by NYS Area Health Education Center System (AHEC), the New York State Dental Foundation, National Health Service Corps, and Community Health Care Association of New York State (CHCANYS). This was one of three such conferences, with another occurring a week earlier in New York, and a third planned for May 19 in Fairport.

The Conference was part of AHEC's commitment to developing opportunities for future health professionals to receive their clinical training in underserved areas and for residents and practicing dentists to consider relocating to such areas. Lottie Jameson, Executive Director, Hudson Mohawk AHEC, moderated the event, which included an in-depth presentation about the differences between the proposed Primary Care Service Corps Loan Repayment program and the National Health Service Corp Loan Repayment program. Justin Hurlburt, DMD, dental director at Hometown Health Center in Schenectady, provided perspective as an NHSC Loan Repayment recipient.

The "nuts and bolts" of practicing in an underserved area were amplified by Sean Hudson, partner, Hudson Transition Partners, and Jonathan Miller, assistant vice president, Bank of America Practice Solutions. The former discussed how to transition to an associate/owner position, while the latter discussed financing options, including very cogent advice to new practitioners to avoid splurging on big ticket items and concentrate on building credit.

Clearly, the mal-distribution of the dental workforce in areas such as upstate New York and the Southern Tier, to name just two, presents myriad issues in relation to dental treatment and oral healthcare maintenance. Programs such as the Primary Care Services Corp, which will be available to provide loan forgiveness up to \$32,000 a year to both dentists and dental hygienists who practice in underserved areas, and NHSC are important resources which deserve greater promotion and attention. So, too, does the fact that enormous opportunities await those who take the time to consider practicing "outside the beaten path."



Committee on Water Fluoridation

Working with the NYS Bureau of Dental Health and the Technical Assistance Center in Rochester, we have been able to partner with the Pew Trust Children's Project to launch a website that features water fluoridation. I urge all of you to visit the website because it moves us up the food chain when people search on the internet for water fluoridation. You can reach this site by going to ilikemyteeth.org, then click on Local Campaigns and then click on New York. An alternative is to go to:

<http://newyork.ilikemyteeth.org/fluoridation>

When you visit the website, if you have any suggestion, please contact me at:
tcurran@stny.rr.com

On Tuesday May 15, 2012 NYC Councilman Peter Vallone from Queens held a press conference on the steps of City Hall in Manhattan. In January 2011 he had proposed discontinuing water fluoridation for all of NYC. This legislation is stalled in the Health Committee because it is supported by only 10% of the 57 members of the NY City Council.

A member of the faculty of the NYU Dental School who observed the press conference said that it was poorly organized and drew less than 60 people. Vallone, who is a lawyer, proposed substituting subsidized tooth brushing with fluoride toothpaste in city schools for water fluoridation. The City Hall gathering included fifteen or twenty elementary school students from Queens who carried handmade posters objecting to water fluoridation. An African American pediatrician from outside of Atlanta, GA complained about toxicity of fluoride but forgot about the dilution to 1 mg/L. A dentist voiced his opposition to water fluoridation but neglected to present any evidence to support his position.

Although this press conference was not impressive when witnessed in person, the limited television coverage presented a more alarming view. Some representatives of local and national health foundations pointed out that Vallone did get the

attention he desired from the repetitive coverage on NY1 and Time Warner News channels that day. This demonstrates the impact between direct observation of the event and often repeated reruns of the event through the controlled lens of television.

This all points to the necessity of being ever vigilant to guard against the unsubstantiated propaganda from those who attack water fluoridation. It is a safe and effective public health advantage that has been available for over sixty years in NY State. It deserves our enthusiastic support.

Tom Curran, Chair of the Water Fluoridation Committee

Want to
SHARE
with the
group?

Oral Health Headlines will be distributed quarterly by the NYSOHC.

If you have something for our next edition, please email to Bridget Walsh at bwalsh0210@yahoo.com.

Check out our Committees!



Contact the Appropriate Chairs to become involved:

Access to Care

Steven Russell, MEEM, MSHA, CPHIT
Healthcare IT and Operational Excellence Executive
Rochester, NY
stevenrussell@frontiernet.net

Public Policy

Lydia Hollis-Barad, R.D.H., M.P.H., PAHM
Director, GHI/Emblem Health Dental Management at Emblem Health
New York, NY
LBarad@EmblemHealth.com

Fluoridation

Tom Curran, D.D.S.
Oral Surgeon, Retired
Maternal & Child Health Block Grant Advisory Board
Elmira, NY
tcurran@stny.rr.com

Maternal and Perinatal

Anne M. Varcasio RDH MA
Public Health Specialist IV
Bureau of Dental Health
New York State Department of Health
Albany, NY 12237
AMV02@health.state.ny.us

Research & Surveillance

Jay Kumar, D.D.S., M.P.H.
Acting Director, Bureau of Dental Health
New York State Department of Health
Bureau of Dental Health
Albany, NY
jvk01@health.state.ny.us

Workforce

Lottie Jameson
Executive Director
Hudson Mohawk Area Health Education Center
Queensbury, NY
LJameson@gohealthcareer.org

Operations

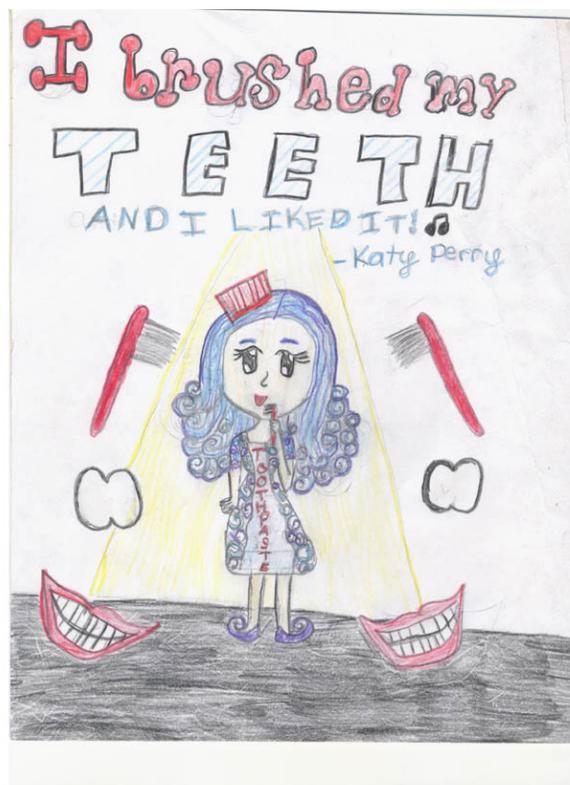
Mary Ellen Yankosky, R.D.H., B.S.
Director, Policy and Advocacy
Dental Hygienists' Association of the State of New York
Co-Executive Director
New York State Public Health Association
Albany, NY
MEYankosky@comcast.net

Finance

Nicholas Tucci, D.M.D.
General Dentistry, Private Practice
Nassau County Dental Society
Great Neck, N.Y.
n.tucci@verizon.net

National Children's Dental Health Month Contest in Nassau County, Long Island

The theme for the 2012 Nassau County Dental Society NCDHM contest was "Rock Your Smile". The Grand Prize winner was Jillian Smith, age 10 of the Walt Whitman School. Jillian, shown here with her teacher, Ms Brooke Schroeder, received \$50 and a Pizza party for her class. There were over 130 entries in this year's contest. The event was a complete success and the children couldn't wait to get home to brush their teeth!



Jillian Smith contest winner with her teacher Ms. Brooke Schroeder and classmates. Also, Dr.s' Tucci, Shreck, Granger and NCDS Executive Dir. Mr. Jim Garnett.