

**Sponsors and Partners Meeting**  
**UMASS Club, 225 Franklin Street, 33rd Floor, Boston**  
**September 8, 2008, 8-10AM**

**Attendees**

1. John Auerbach, Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Public Health
2. Mary Ann Kozlowski, Delta Dental of Massachusetts
3. Judith Foley, Oral Health Foundation
4. Helene Bednarsh, Boston Public Health Commission
5. Brenda Cocuzzo, Oral Health Foundation
6. Corrine Culler, Boston University School of Dental Medicine
7. Mike Monopoli, Delta Dental of Massachusetts
8. Eileen Alvarez, Delta Dental of Massachusetts
9. Nancy Topping-Tailby, Massachusetts Head Start Association, Inc.
10. Patricia Edraos, Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers
11. Paula Friedman, Massachusetts Dental Society
12. Frank Robinson, Partners for a Healthier Community, Inc.
13. Jessica Collins, Partners for a Healthier Community, Inc.
14. Barry Major, Doral Dental USA
15. Lynn Bethel, Office of Oral Health, Massachusetts Department of Public Health
16. Anne Malkasian, Mount Wachusett Community College
17. Czarina Biton, Watch Your Mouth Campaign, Health Care for All
18. Paul Jean, Denterlein Worldwide Public Affairs
19. Mary Tavares, The Forsyth Institute
20. Christine Keeves, Watch Your Mouth Campaign, Health Care for All
21. Robyn Olson, Delta Dental of Massachusetts
22. Mary Leary, Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers
23. Karen Rafeld, Massachusetts Dental Society
24. Ralph Fuccillo, Oral Health Foundation
25. Stephen Shea, Community Health Connections, Inc., Fitchburg Community Health Center
26. Gerry Thomas, Boston Public Health Commission
27. Russet Morrow-Breslau, Tobacco Free Massachusetts
28. Jaime Corliss, Oral Health Advocacy Task Force
29. Mary Foley, The Forsyth School of Dental Hygiene
30. Myron Allukian, Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers
31. Mary Ellen Yankosky, Boston Public Health Commission
32. Catherine Hayes, Tufts School of Dental Medicine
33. Lisa Renee Holderby, Massachusetts Association of Community Health Workers
34. Katie Millet, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
35. Beth Richards, Delta Dental of Massachusetts
36. Fawn Phelps, Health Care for All
37. Taru Kinnunen, Harvard School of Dental Medicine
38. Brian Souza, Catalyst Institute
39. Allisen Tencza, Office of Senator Harriette Chandler
40. Daniel Rogers, (representing David Keller), University of Massachusetts Medical School
41. Courtney Chelo, Health Care for All
42. Brenda Lavasta, Oral Health Foundation
43. Biyi Ogunjimi, Better Oral Health for Massachusetts Coalition, Oral Health Foundation

**Introductions**

Ralph Fuccillo, President of the Oral Health Foundation kicked off the meeting at 8:15AM with a few words thanking those present for their commitment to improving the oral health of residents of the Commonwealth of

Massachusetts. Everybody present then got a chance to introduce themselves very briefly, followed by an introduction of the Commissioner of the Department of Public Health, who was to speak next.

#### **Promoting the Vision for Better Oral Health for MA**

John Auerbach, Commissioner for Massachusetts Department of Public Health started by talking about the success of the Summit at Sturbridge in June, commending the efforts of all the sponsors and partners. He moved on to the willingness of the Department of Public Health to support and champion the coalition, being committed to play a key role in the process, collaborate with other state departments and utilize the final oral health action plan.

He then asserted the importance of support from other organizations and individuals as well, in terms of funding (particularly as the state was not one of the recipients of the CDC oral health infrastructure grant), expertise and other forms of in-kind support. He asked that individuals be willing to volunteer for committees, engage in the work, and respond to the need for new collaborative relationships, as initiated by the summit.

The Commissioner wrapped up by reiterating the importance of a strong, well-represented coalition, if a useful oral health action plan is to be created. This plan would successfully tackle disparities in oral health care in Massachusetts, and prioritize the most important issues for action.

#### **Moving Forward with the Better Oral Health for MA Coalition**

Ralph Fuccillo opened up the meeting for discussion, first on creating a framework for the plan. This discussion was centered around the framework given on the Center for Disease Control and Association of State & Territorial Dental Directors websites ([http://www.cdc.gov/OralHealth/state\\_programs/infrastructure/a3\\_framework.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/OralHealth/state_programs/infrastructure/a3_framework.htm)). Several people got up to agree that gathering oral health data for the state was a key component of the process, serving as a foundation for the plan in the development of policy, making evidence-based decisions, prioritizing issues, for funding requests, and in establishing a unified voice for members of the coalition.

Lynn Bethel, the Director of Oral Health at the DPH acknowledged that it was possible to use the framework offered by the CDC, and mentioned that the Office of Oral Health was working on a burden document to be released soon, which goes as far as cross-referencing data with other health issues like diabetes and hypertension, and could be very useful for the work of the coalition.

This was followed by a discussion on how to organize the coalition for action. Reference was made to the impressive work done by the Tobacco Coalition, and the viewpoints of those that were active in the work of that coalition were received. Suggestions came from Lynn Bethel, Mary Ellen Yankosky, Myron Allukian, Paula Friedman, Catherine Hayes, Frank Robinson, Gerry Thomas, Mary Foley, Helene Bednarsh and Barry Major to make the steering committee active, broad-based but small. The committee should include non-typical members representing the voice of consumers and those that bear the burden of oral health disparities. Suggestions for member constituencies include community members, consumers and consumer advocacy groups, minority groups (racial, economic, migrant), dental providers (MDS, MDHA, CHCs etc), dental educators, policy organizations and think-tanks, high risk population groups (seniors, HIV, cancer, mental health and special care groups), legislative members, state departments (DPH, DESE, DEEC, in particular), public health organizations, non-dental providers (public health workers, nurses, pediatricians), health insurance companies, faith-based organizations and the business community.

A consensus on organizational structure and size was not reached, but various models were proposed, most prominently the creation of a small core/steering/working/design advisory team/committee carrying out most of the work and representing/reporting to a larger planning committee. Several people pointed to the importance of maintaining trust, respect and diversity in choosing the steering committee, so that there will be agreement when the final document is produced. Frank Robinson cited the Oral Health Advocacy Task Force structure and talked about the importance of process in the work of the Coalition. Lynn Bethel referred the Coalition to the best practices of the Washington State Coalition and its work on committee development. (<http://www.ws-ohc.org/>)

### **Next Steps**

This was focused on immediate steps with regards to organizing the coalition. Ralph Fuccillo suggested that the coalition employ an outside group with no vested interest to facilitate the work of the coalition. This was supported by Mary Foley, Mary Ellen Yankosky and Paula Friedman, with Dr Friedman making the observation that an outside group would help maintain trust and respect in the process. Possible working groups were also discussed: Oral health assessment/data, Workforce, Access to care, Policy, Marketing/communication, Prevention, Equity and Justice, Sustainability, and Funding.

On funding, Ralph Fuccillo pointed out that the Oral Health Foundation was willing to support the work of the coalition, but not to a level equivalent to the CDC grant. He asked for assistance from other organizations, and suggestions included sponsorship from the AAPD Head Start grant, local foundations and state departments.

Ralph introduced Biyi Ogunjimi to the group, who then invited attendees to fill the information and feedback forms in their folders, review the list of people that attended the conference in June, and encouraged people to visit the coalition website for updates on the work of the coalition.

### **Updates**

Upcoming Events (to be posted on the coalition website once details are available)

- Massachusetts Dental Society Conference
- Oral Health Advocacy Task Force Meeting
- New England Coalition for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Conference, on cost control, with Ralph hosting the panel on Oral Health.
- Health Care for All 2009 conference, to be focused on disparities.
- Watch Your Mouth Spokesperson training at Springfield Library on October 30. Contact Czarina Biton to attend.

News (to be posted on the coalition website)

- Boston Public Health Commission will soon publish a final report from the Oral Health Equity Project, an elder oral health screening and referral program in Boston. Contact Mary Ellen Yankosky for details.
- Office of Oral Health, Massachusetts Department of Public Health received a HRSA workforce grant and plans a statewide oral health assessment of elders and increased school-based programs. Contact Lynn Bethel.
- MassHealth enrolled 85 providers in the month of August. Great momentum. MassHealth now has 1483 dental providers. Contact Barry Major for details.
- Watch Your Mouth welcomes Christine Keeves as the new oral health communications coordinator for Health Care for All.
- Focus of upcoming MDS Journal is seniors and elderly.
- Mike Monopoli (Delta Dental of MA) and Ralph Fuccillo (Oral Health Foundation) are participating in a working group in Washington for Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) who is working to build national bipartisan support for oral health and plans to file an omnibus oral health bill this fall.
- At its annual retreat (July 2008), the Massachusetts Dental Society put many items on its call to action. The needs highlighted the fact that they cannot accomplish all this alone and are pleased to be part of the coalition. One priority is a partnership with MassHealth. Contact Paula Friedman for details.

### **Conclusion**

The meeting ended at 9:50AM.