

<u>Location:</u>	Boston Public Health Commission, Boston, MA.
<u>Time and Date:</u>	12pm to 2pm and 3pm to 5pm, September 16, 2009
<u>Coalition Members Present:</u>	Michael Monopoli; Myron Allukian Jr.; John Morgan; Gerry Thomas; Sandra Vasquez. David Cole (BPHC) was lead.
<u>Community Attendees:</u>	Young men of color working at the Boston Public Health Commission, Boston EMS and other organizations in Boston.

Issues Discussed

- Accessing dental care
 - Lack of knowledge of where to go to for care and how to select a dental provider
 - Lack of knowledge about dental insurance, with no clear explanation of extent of coverage and the different tiers of insurance
 - It is hard for unemployed young men to get dental coverage because:
 - They are not offered private dental insurance
 - MassHealth requires too many qualification criteria
 - Even when you have insurance, most procedures are not covered and you still have to pay out-of-pocket
 - Dental treatment is generally perceived to be very costly, no matter what; a situation worsened by the fact that you often cannot predict the bill you will receive at the end of dental treatment.
 - For MassHealth coverage, it is difficult get a dentist in Boston.
 - More affordable/accessible insurance
 - Community health centers are generally not attended because:
 - They carry a stigma and are perceived to provide lower quality care, in comparison to private practice: by virtue of their locations in minority neighborhoods mainly, word of mouth circulation of bad clinical and front-desk/reception experiences and long wait-times.
 - Many people do not know that CHCs provide specialist services and have dental clinics
- Information about preventive and support services
 - Many are not aware that free dental services, oral health screening programs, preventive dental services targeted at school-children, adults and other populations, and support services like the Mayor's Health Line exist.
 - Information about these services does not get to the right people
 - Many members of the community also have very little knowledge of what to do to have good oral health beyond brushing your teeth.
 - People in general do not place a high priority on taking care of their teeth.

Suggested Solutions

- Utilize specific access points to spread information about dental care and insurance, preventive dental services and affordable support services in Boston and the entire state.
 - Radio: 94.5FM, 88.9FM
 - Newspaper: everybody reads the Metro.
 - Community programs and sponsorships
 - Word of mouth
- Spread the word specifically about community health centers, the Mayor's Health Line, available dental preventive services and the connection between oral health and overall health.

- Push to have dental care covered under medical care and to have other health providers aligned with dental providers.
- Make more oral health services available to ensure proper coverage
- Dental practices should have the following characteristics, regardless of location:
 - Cleanliness
 - Very important to be up front with cost
 - Provide timely service
 - Private practices should accept more insurances, and clearly communicate the extent of coverage