

Oral Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc Advisory Committee Establishment
Prepared by Deputy Secretary Kimberly Berfield
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Purpose

The purpose of the Oral Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc Advisory Committee is to evaluate and strategically address the complex range of oral health workforce concerns ranging from public policy, professional practice issues, supply and demand influences currently and projected, educational and training matters, and regulatory questions.

History

As the challenge of access for basic physical healthcare continues to grow throughout our country, Florida faces an even greater challenge due to the diversity celebrated in our 33 rural and 34 urban communities. That monumental challenge of better comprehensive healthcare for Floridians, however, does not begin and end in a doctor's office. The US Surgeon General's 2000 Report, Oral Health in America concluded that "oral health is essential to the general health and well-being of all Americans and can be achieved by all Americans." Oral Health unfortunately can be overlooked as a critical piece to an accessible complete healthcare system. The Oral Health in America report goes as far as to state we are facing a "silent epidemic" which drastically impacts the overall health of individuals of every age, gender, socioeconomic level and ethnic background diminishing what could produce a greater quality of life.

The inability to access basic dental healthcare has grown in correlation with a workforce shortage in general and specialty dentistry practitioners. Currently, we are experiencing more dentists retiring than graduating; overall 35 percent of our Nation's dentists are over the age of 55. Approximately 90 percent of the dental workforce is in private practice and the majority do not work in inner city or rural areas where many poor and underserved people live; and there is a growing shortage of dental school faculty and dental researchers to train future providers and advance the knowledge and science base. All of these factors negatively impact access to dental care especially for disadvantaged persons.

The State Surgeon General has been these barriers and challenges first hand. At the beginning of her tenure the State Surgeon General committed to visit every county health department and children's medical services facility in the state. Striving to meet this commitment, along with the other extensive responsibilities, the State Surgeon General has realized that dentistry is commonly considered to be a secondary form of health care which many Floridians currently do not receive. The inability to provide this type of healthcare assistance is reflected on both a national and state level and negatively impacts the health and wellbeing of Florida's citizens.

Through establishment of this Oral Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc Committee by the State Surgeon General, the Florida Department of Health will develop and recommend a strategic plan to address workforce concerns regarding the challenge of limited access; the issues and concerns regarding oral healthcare practitioners, educators and

researchers; and the production and analysis of data to support the development of new approaches. This workforce committee will provide a significant forum to build upon the workforce recommendations contained in the State Oral Health Improvement Plan developed by a broad based representation of stakeholders.

Recent and Current Activities

In 2003 a four-year federal grant was received to facilitate the development of an oral health improvement plan for disadvantaged persons and to develop collaborative partnerships working toward common goals. Florida's State Oral Health Improvement Plan for Disadvantaged Persons (SOHIP) was developed through a broad-based collaborative partnership with over 100 organizations currently on the email distribution list. The state plan contains 7 broad recommendations and 31 strategies. Recommendation 5 addresses workforce issues with strategies that include assuring appropriate providers exist, expanding professional training opportunities regarding care for special needs populations, expanding volunteer incentives and considering reforms to better utilize the existing dental workforce. Florida received a new four-year federal grant in 2007 to continue and enhance SOHIP activities that consist of workgroups to address specific issues, statewide forums to increase awareness, local coalition development and enhanced website development. SOHIP information is located at www.oralhealthflorida.com.

Recently, the Florida Department of Health worked with interested parties to identify and create legislation focused on addressing the need for oral healthcare practitioners in rural communities. This proposed legislation is a priority for discussion by Governor Charlie Crist and the State Surgeon General.

Other legislation includes identifying other dental health care professionals who may assist in providing a form of public dental health care within rural communities. It is believed those reached will benefit from better overall health than they experience today. These are only two potential solutions which have been brought forward for consideration by stakeholders and legislators as they continue to look for a solution.

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Oral Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc Advisory Committee Parameter of Existence

1. Hereby an ad hoc advisory committee is created with the purpose of acting as the advisory body for the oral healthcare workforce initiative, 20.43(6) FS. As stated by Florida Statute 381.4018, the duties of the committee should include, but may not be limited to:
 - a. Identify and make recommendations to the State Surgeon General that will be evaluated for incorporation into a state-wide strategic plan.

- i. Discuss appropriateness of changes to statutes and administrative rules relating to priorities which will promote dental workforce development.
 - ii. Policy development discussions regarding key educational pipeline issues, including, but not limited to:
 1. education development and recruitment
 2. recruitment of minority students
 3. education capacity and funding
 4. recruiting and retaining Florida licensed dentists.
 - iii. Policy development regarding existing and to be developed auxiliary dental healthcare professions in a tiered approach, including a focus on primary care and on health access professions like hygienists, assistants and other allied health professionals.
 - b. Provide needed technical support to the Department in areas related to dental workforce and health practitioner's development, outreach, education strategic planning and expansion.
 - c. Act as a clearinghouse for information specific to changes in the provision of Oral Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc Advisory Committee.
2. The State Surgeon General may appoint no more than 17 members to this committee. The Oral Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc Advisory Committee shall exist one year from the date of the first convened meeting. The Chair will be the State Surgeon General; and the Vice-Chairman will be designated by the State Surgeon General to serve as chair in her absence. Vacancies shall be filled for the remainder of the unexpired terms in the same manner as the original appointment. Members shall receive no compensation. The State Surgeon General will retain the option to continue and to expand the ad hoc committee after one year, based on public health issues and the committee's recommendations.

Oral Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc Committee Establishment

1. Representation on the Oral Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc Advisory Committee shall be appointed by the State Surgeon General and include, but not limited to:
 - a. A designee from the Florida Department of Health
 - b. A designee from the Florida Dental Association
 - c. A designee from the Florida Oral Surgeons Association
 - d. A designee from the Florida Orthodontics Association
 - e. A designee from the Florida Board of Dentistry
 - f. A designee from the Area Health Education Center Network
 - g. The Commissioner of Education or his or her designee
 - h. A designee from the Florida Council of Dental School Deans
 - i. A designee from the Florida Academy of Pediatric Dentistry

- j. A designee from the Florida Public Health Association
 - k. The Secretary of Health Care Administration or his or her designee
 - l. The Secretary of the Agency on Workforce Innovation or his or her designee
 - m. The Secretary of Elder Affairs or his or her designee
 - n. The Chancellor of the State University System or his or her designee from the Board of Governors of the State University System
 - o. A designee from the Florida Dental Hygiene Association
 - p. A designee from the Florida Dental Assistants Association
 - q. An At-Large Member as determined by the State Surgeon General
2. The State Surgeon General, except for state agency representatives who shall be appointed by the respective agency head, shall make appointments to the Oral Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc Advisory Committee.
 3. Any Oral Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc Advisory Committee member shall be removed from their post for malfeasance; misfeasance; neglect of duty; incompetence; permanent inability to perform official duties; or pleading guilty or nolo contendere to, or being found guilty of a felony.
 4. The Oral Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc Advisory Committee shall hold meetings at the call of the Chair or Vice Chair, upon the written request of five members of the committee, or at the call of the staff director of the Oral Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc Advisory Committee. A majority of the members of the committee shall constitute a quorum. Minutes shall be recorded for all meetings of the workgroup and shall be maintained on file in Deputy Secretary for Advocacy and Policy's office.
 5. The Oral Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc Advisory Committee shall advise the Florida Department of Health on matters concerning current and future oral healthcare workforce issues; review, compilation and dissemination of materials as determined necessary; generate a recommended strategic plan to be pursued for implementation by the State Surgeon General, including review which may provide warranted on the status of oral healthcare needs in the state.

Oral Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc Advisory Committee Timeline

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| December 12, 2007 | State Surgeon General and Chief of Staff to present Oral Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc Advisory Committee white paper to the Executive Office of the Governor for input. |
| December 19, 2007 | Identify core groups and stakeholders to forward a request from the State Surgeon General for their participation with the Committee. Parameters of the committee such as: how long will the committee exist? How many meetings? Conference calls? What are the obligations of members to advise the department/General on issues? Should be addressed in the request letter. |

January 2008	State Surgeon General and designated vice chair decide membership.
March 4, 2008	Letters distributed to potential appointees asking them to serve. Appointees shall sign agreement and return to the Department.
April 7, 2008	First conference call of committee identifying objectives and obligations.
Spring 2008	Legislative change pursued by the Florida Department of Health.
Summer 2008	Agency on Health Care Administration will work to promulgate necessary rules if required and authority granted by legislation.
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