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Michigan Withdraws as Pilot Site for ADA's CDHC Program

MDA Announces New Partnership, Plans Comprehensive Dental Access Study

The MDA announced today that it is withdrawing as a pilot site for the American Dental Association's proposed Community Dental Health Coordinator (CDHC) program due to the closure of a Detroit Federally Qualified Health Center dental clinic where the study was to take place.

The program would have established pilot sites in Detroit and Jackson and trained community residents as Community Dental Health Coordinators to perform preventive services in conjunction with a dentist.

The CDHC program was first introduced by the ADA in 2006 and the MDA House of Delegates agreed to serve as a pilot site. The MDA then pursued legislation to allow the pilot project to proceed in Michigan. Due to the closure of the dental clinic in Detroit, the urban pilot project would best be implemented in another state where facilities are available to provide the care.

"We maintain our strong support for the three CDHC pilot sites nationwide, and will now renew our efforts to expand Michigan's own Healthy Kids Dental program to the 22 counties still lacking this crucial program," said Dr. Joanne Dawley, president of the Michigan Dental Association.

The MDA also announced a new partnership with Lansing-based Public Sector Consultants to conduct a comprehensive study of oral health care in Michigan to identify opportunities to improve oral health. The partnership will be overseen by the MDA's new Special Committee on Access to Care. According to Dr. Norman Palm, chair of the special committee, the MDA expects to release the report in November 2009.

"This landmark Michigan study will serve as the definitive report on dental access—where we are, the problems we are facing, and the potential solutions," Palm said. "This effort will include representatives from across a wide spectrum of Michigan dentistry and health care and will be the most in-depth analysis of this critical issue to date."

"We are committed to expanding dental health care in Michigan and our new partnership with Public Sector Consultants will give us the tools to get that job done," Dawley said.