

**Oral Health Coalition of Alabama (OHCA)**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**United Way of Central Alabama**  
**Birmingham, AL**  
**May 11, 2017**

**Members Present:**

Dr. Ric Simpson – Academy of Pediatric Dentistry/OHCA Chair, Lynn Beshear – Envision 2020, Sherry Goode – ADPH/Oral Health, Summer Gagnon – ADPH/Oral Health, Edwina Taylor – Cahaba Valley Health Care, Dr. Conan Davis-UAB School of Dentistry, Kaye Melnick – ADPH/ALL Kids, Stuart Lockwood - Retired dentist, Dr. Lillian Mitchell - UAB School of Dentistry, Christine King – DentaQuest/Sarrell Dental, Laurie Carey – Kid Check/Sight Savers, Nanette Phillips – Tuskegee/Macon Head Start/DentaQuest Foundation, Jackson Clinton, guest of Dr. Simpson. Call In: Rob Boyles – ADPH/Office of Rural Health, Zack Studstill - ALDA

**Minutes:** Dr. Simpson called the meeting to order and asked all attending to introduce themselves. The minutes were presented, and with no corrections, they were approved and accepted.

**Presentation:**

Before Lynn’s presentation, Dr. Simpson provided a brief summary of the State of Decay Report and why Alabama received such a low score of “0” and why Alabama ranked 50<sup>th</sup> among states based on the oral health access and needs for our underserved senior adults. One of the factors impacting the score was a lack of data (no BSS) and no State Oral Health Plan (SOHP). The presentations today would provide information regarding some programs that are being provided for senior adults, as well as ways that OHCA can help support future initiatives to address the areas of need.

Lynn Beshear shared information on two programs being provided in the Montgomery area. One is the River Region ER Referral Pilot Project, with a goal to reduce the number of adults who are seeking dental services through community hospital ERs. Through the project, signage has been placed in the ERs stating that if a patient is there with a dental problem, they would be seen and, if indicated, provided a non-narcotic pain reliever and an antibiotic. The patient is then referred to a dental office/clinic for necessary treatment. Some patients leave once they see the sign. The data collected indicates that a total of 510 patients needed dental appointments during the pilot project period. Of those, 123 patients actually completed their appointments.

Their data also indicates a 14% reduction in patients accessing the Baptist Hospital System with dental issues as compared to the previous year. This was significant, particularly since some patients were accessing the ER with dental needs 2, 3, or 4 times. The hospitals are unsure about funding to continue the program. Their cost estimates were approximately \$60,000 to continue the

program in 3 area hospitals. They approached the Joint Public Hospital Charity Board, which allows counties to provide indigent care up to \$170,000 for medical indigent care. They agreed to provide \$30,000 if the hospitals would provide a \$30,000 match. So far a decision has not been made. Baptist Hospital's Wellness Coalition, which has case managers onsite in the ERs, have become the managers of the ER Referral Project, and they will help figure out the logistics of moving patient from the ER to dental services and address other needs.

Dr. Simpson asked whether they had met with Dr. Don Williamson, Executive Director of the Alabama Hospital Association, and Lynn advised that they will be meeting with Dr. Williamson soon to share details of the project and potentially identify new funding sources.

Dr. Simpson also asked how many dental providers had signed up to receive the ER referral patients. Lynn explained that they did not have a dental provider database yet. Instead they used the FQHC dental clinics located in Montgomery for the referrals. It was a good system for the 2 FQHC clinic as well as the patients needing dental care. He strongly recommended that whether funds are located to continue the program or not, someone will hopefully document "do's, don'ts, what has worked, what hasn't," since it such a good model and it's one that we would like to see replicated in other communities.

Lynn also provided an overview of the Pay It Forward (PIF) Project that is being implemented in the River Region area. It was created after a Pay It Forward model in Battle Creek, Michigan. Dr. Art Steinaker and Sarah Kathryn King that works with Dr. Steinaker are coordinating this project. They have created a list of agencies that will accept qualifying dental patients to provide community service. Free dental services are provided for certain hours of service. It has been a very successful and rewarding project for all participants. Currently, the project is referring the patients to a local FQHC, and they hope to eventually have a network of volunteer dentists to serve these patients of need. Another piece of this project is through the Gift of Life partnership. They refer pregnant women in their 4<sup>th</sup> month of pregnancy into the PIF project, and these women receive dental care in return for community service as well. Dr. Steinaker is working to get more local dentists involved to provide dental homes for these women and eventually their babies.

Lynn also reported on the opioid abuse in Alabama and advised that she serves on a statewide opioid task force that is addressing this issue. Dr. Jason Parker, a Montgomery MD, DMD, also serves on the task force legislative/policy advisory committee and represents the dental community. Since Alabama is # 1 in the nation with opioid prescriptions/abuse, all partners and health professions need to be involved in finding solutions to this statewide problem.

Dr. Lillian Mitchell, Geriatric Dentistry program director at the dental school, reported on the BSS that the dental students are providing for senior adults in the Birmingham, Jasper, Walker, Jefferson, and Bibb County areas. They are funded by the Alabama Department of Senior Services (ADSS) and are taking portable dental equipment into senior centers, private home visits, and other facilities serving seniors. They provide simple cleanings, exams, and referrals to UAB dental clinics for more extensive care as needed. The ADSS commissioner has provided

demographic information that they have incorporated into the ASTDD BSS model for the survey. So far, the commissioner has chosen the counties and centers for them to serve, and all have been within 2 hours from the dental school. All dental students participate in the program sometime during their 3 and 4<sup>th</sup> year of dental school. She explained barriers that they face with these senior adults such as interference with other program activity, lack of transportation, the fear factor associated with dental care, etc. They provide education with a pre and post test and find that their oral health knowledge at the post test is still quite limited. Dr. Simpson asked if they had considered writing a grant through the dental school to support the program. Dr. Mitchell stated they had not, but that the commissioner has funded the program for two years, and they are hopeful he will fund it again next year. The commissioner plans to present the data they collect to the governor and legislature for additional funding and opportunities to expand the program. Dr. Simpson expressed appreciation and support for the program and was glad to see that through OHCA partnerships such as these between the dental school, public health, ALDA and others, some very good tangible results are being realized.

### **Old Business:**

Sherry updated OHCA on the ADPH response to Kaiser Health regarding the State Of Decay Report that was published by Oral Health America. (See Executive Committee Minutes for complete update.) Dr. Simpson provided an update on the State Oral Health Plan that OHCA members will be involved with. He plans to develop a survey similar to one used by Michigan and request input from members to create a list of goals then ranking the goals by Need and Feasibility. From that OHCA will work with ADPH and the new Dental Director to develop a new SOHP. (See Executive Committee Minutes for more SOHP information.)

Sherry introduced Summer Gagnon, the ADPH fluoridation coordinator, and shared some of her duties and responsibilities. She also shared information regarding the status of Piedmont's fluoridation program and how they and other OHCA members will be presenting information at a city council meeting. Dr. Simpson asked about renewed plans for Summer to get OHCA's webpage moving again, and Sherry reported that Summer would be working towards getting that developed and activated within the near future.

### **Member updates:**

Edwina (Cahaba Valley Health Care) reported on their Cooper Green clinic and the numbers they are seeing there through their dental clinic. She also shared information about her idea to work through the Alabama Association of Free Clinics to provide access to dental care for our underserved senior adults. She feels that of the 15 free clinics statewide, those with medical only can add a dental component and provide free screenings and emergency dental care using donated dental clinics and volunteer services by retired dentists from each community. Senator Arthur Orr from Decatur serves on the Free Clinic Board of Directors and provided \$150,000 (\$10,000 each) for medical/dental care through these clinics. Edwina feels that with Senator Orr and Senator Busman's (Cullman dentist) assistance we can use the Cahaba Valley Healthcare model to add

dental care to these clinics statewide. Once they screen the patients and provide emergency care, they can then link the senior adults to FQHC clinics who are using sliding fee scales for low income populations.

Dr. Davis (UAB School of Dentistry) reported that he is working with legislators to increase funding for dental students to locate in rural settings. Many Alabama dentists located in rural communities are aging, and the dental school needs to promote new dentists into these areas. They hope additional funding can be added through the Board of Dental Scholars to support this need. He also reported on Dentistry Cares Day which is scheduled for November 15, 2017. This year the dental school will be joined by ALDA and many other dental organizations to make it more of a statewide effort.

Christine King (DentaQuest/Sarrell Dental) reported that they have provided funds to support Kid One Transport, which ensures kids keep their dental appointments. She also reported that Dr. Ric Simpson has received national recognition as a DentaQuest Health Equity Hero for Exceptional Efforts to Enhance Health. He was chosen from over 20 candidates for his outstanding service and contributions on so many levels. OHCA is very proud of Dr. Simpson and everyone who has worked with him feels this recognition is most deserving.

Laurie Carey (Kid Check/Sight Savers) reported that they provided 22,240 dental screenings for children in K - 12 grades last school year. Of these, 12,780 received dental follow up. They partner with Sarrell Dental, who treats about 70% of the children screened.

Nanette Phillips (Tuskegee/Macon Head Start/DentaQuest Foundation) reported that she is DentaQuest's grassroots representative for Alabama. She expressed a desire to partner with OHCA and many others to promote awareness about the importance of oral health, not only for children, but for families and seniors as well. Dr. Simpson also emphasized the importance of the Head Start partnership with dentists throughout the state. He is actively involved with the Head Start program in his dental district and recommended that the Alabama Head Start regional directors invite dentists from their community to speak at their meetings and become more involved in their local programs.

Dr. Simpson announced that the next two OHCA meetings will be held on August 10, 2017 in Montgomery and November 9, 2017 in Birmingham.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm.

Submitted by:

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Dr. Ric Simpson, Chair

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Sherry Goode, Recorder

