

# Training opportunity to increase access to patients with developmental disability

*Workgroup conducts survey to assess barriers and provides CE to increase team confidence; Be a part of upcoming course offerings in Springfield, Sikeston and Lee's Summit*

by Karen Dent, CDA

During the spring of 2008, in response to concerns expressed by the Department of Mental Health's Division of Developmental Disabilities, a work group was assembled to determine how to increase access to comprehensive dental services for individuals who have a diagnosis of developmental disability.

The work group was composed of representatives from the Missouri Dental Association, the Missouri Primary Care Association, the Missouri Department of Mental Health, Federally Qualified Health Centers, UMKC School of Dentistry and Dental Hygiene, The Missouri Dental Assistant's Association, UMKC's Institute for Human Development, the Missouri Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities, The Elks Mobile Unit and private practitioners.

The group decided to focus on developing a survey of Missouri dentists and providing training opportunities to increase practitioners' confidence in treating individuals with a diagnosis of developmental disability.

## PRACTITIONER SURVEY

The survey received Internal Review Board approval from the University of Missouri Kansas City in the fall of 2009. The purpose of the survey was to assess the extent to which dentists in Missouri are addressing the needs of individuals who have a diagnosis of developmental disability, as well as to determine barriers to providing treatment to this population. In November 2009, the survey was mailed to each dentist in Missouri.

The survey results revealed that among those who returned the survey, the top four developmental disability patient diagnoses that Missouri dentists provide dental services for are:

- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- Down Syndrome
- Autism/Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Mental Retardation

The survey also identified the top four barriers

to serving patients with a diagnosis of developmental disability:

- Patient cooperation
- Complicated dental needs
- Experience/knowledge with the population
- Insufficient financial reimbursement

## DON'T MISS THIS NEW EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU & YOUR TEAM

*Provided by Dr. Robert Rada, a private practitioner and Clinical Associate Professor who is an expert on the provision of dental care to individuals with various diagnoses and complex medical conditions.*

Survey results indicate that 62% of the dentists who returned the survey are interested in continuing education on treatment of patients who have a diagnosis of developmental disability.

While the survey was being developed and reviewed for Internal Review Board approval, funds were solicited from the workgroup's representative organizations to host a "Dental Care for the Developmentally Disabled" training session. The training was offered in April 2009 at Truman Medical Center in Lee's Summit. The facilitator for the course was Dr. Ray Lyons. Nine dental teams participated in a two-day course, which included lecture, round table discussions and clinical experience with patients. Course evaluations were positive and indicated that all teams felt better prepared to provide comprehensive care to patients who have a diagnosis of developmental disability.

The Department of Mental Health's Division of Developmental Disabilities was pleased with the outcome of the April 2009 training session and arranged to fund at least three additional sessions scheduled for the spring and summer of 2010.

It is the hope of the organizations involved that the training sessions scheduled for 2010 will address the perceived barriers to care for individuals with a diagnosis of developmental disability and increase access to comprehensive dental care for this population.

## UPCOMING TRAINING SESSIONS

The 2010 training sessions will be facilitated by Dr. Robert Rada, a private practitioner and Clinical Associate Professor at the University of Illinois Chicago. Dr. Rada is an expert on the provision of dental care to individuals with various diagnoses and complex medical conditions. Training sessions will be two days in length and will consist of a day of lecture and demonstration followed by a day of clinical practice with patients. This training will be offered free of charge to Missouri dental teams. Continuing education credits will be offered.

Training facilities can accommodate 11 to 16 dental teams (a team constitutes the dentist(s) and assistants or hygienists—up to four persons from an office). Registrations will be accepted in the order that they are received. Training sessions will be held on the following dates:

- April 16-17 at Jordan Valley Community Health Center in Springfield
- May 21-22 at Southeast Missouri Health Network in Sikeston
- June 11-12 at Truman Medical Center Lakewood Campus in Lee's Summit

All MDA members and their teams are welcome and encouraged to participate. For questions or additional information about the training sessions or the activities of the workgroup, contact Karen Dent at 573-634-4022, or [kdent@mailohnm.org](mailto:kdent@mailohnm.org).

In addition to these courses, if your Study Club or Component Society is interested in hosting a speaker from the workgroup on this topic, contact Melissa Albertson at the MDA.

*Karen Dent is the Director of the Oral Health Network of Missouri. She has served in a leadership capacity to organize the efforts of this workgroup.*