
From: Howard Mark [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, November 24, 2013 7:01 PM
To: SIM, OHA
Subject: Comment on SIM Model Grant

Dear All,

As a member of the Board of Directors of the Connecticut Oral Health Initiative and one who has been involved with trying to stress the importance and impact of oral health as relates to general health for a number of years, I am writing to submit some commentary on the grant proposal in this regard.

While there are statements that seem to include oral health on various levels, nowhere have I found any that give emphasis to the important relationship of oral health to overall general health. That gives me pause as I ponder why the somewhat second tiering of oral health is occurring. There is no question that the oral cavity reflects in many instances problems that may be taking place elsewhere in the body, i.e. diabetes, anemias, blood dyscrasias, etc., besides the fact that infections in the oral cavity have a decided impact on the heart and other organs, and can create brain involvement by extension. All of this is well-documented. In addition, dental infections interfere with productivity by causing pain, the need for potent medications, and interfere with good masticatory function. Loss of teeth with its secondary effect of inability to masticate properly can have an effect on the intake of nutrition, among other constraints.

Prevention is a by-word for the dental profession, which implies the need to start creating an environment of good oral health beginning with good diet and early oral examinations of the new-born and early aged children. This also calls for coordination of oral health reviews by primary care providers, including such as Ob-Gyn physicians and pediatricians, to keep mothers-to-be healthy and knowledgeable prior to giving birth, with follow-up by pediatricians who can refer to dental professionals by age 1. Prevention early on can most decidedly decrease the need for costly dental therapies later on in life, saving dollars of care and keeping the population healthier. This also lessens the need for emergency room visits and that attendant cost as well.

To downplay this important role and minimize all the above is short-sighted. The dental profession should be at the table and a vital part of the discussion as to how to make this program the very best it can be.

Thank you for reading this.
Sincerely,
Howard I. mark, D.M.D.