

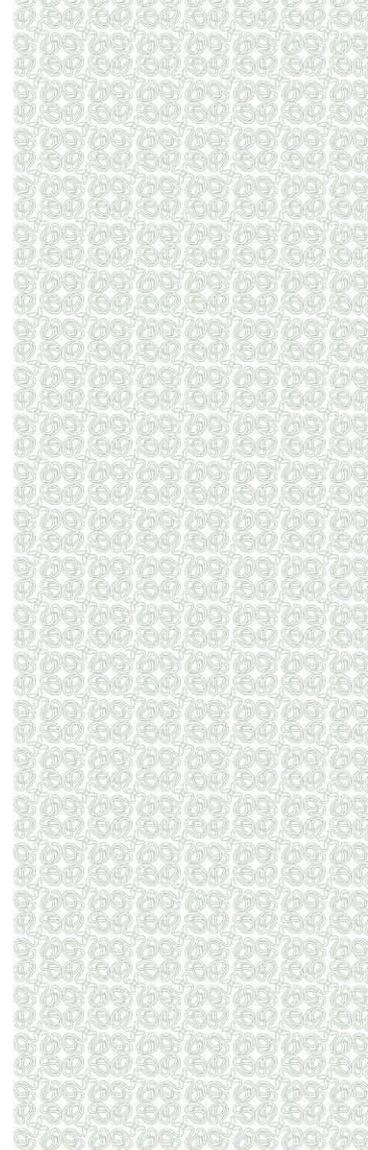


# Advancing Oral Health in America



**INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE**  
OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES

Advising the nation/Improving health



# Oral Health Today

- The overall health status of the U.S. population is improving, but significant disparities persist.
- Oral diseases remain prevalent.
- Discrete segments of the U.S. population have difficulty accessing oral health care.

## Challenges

- Lack of awareness of the causes and consequences of oral diseases.
- Inadequacy of education and training of nondental health care professionals.
- Divisiveness of efforts to create new types of dental professionals.
- Paucity of evidence on the quality of oral health care, in part due to the lack of quality measures.

## Committee on an Oral Health Initiative

- **Richard D. Krugman** (Chair), University of Colorado Denver
- **Jose F. Cordero**, University of Puerto Rico
- **Claude Earl Fox**, Florida Public Health Institute and University of Miami
- **Terry Fulmer**, New York University
- **Vanessa Northington Gamble**, George Washington University
- **Paul E. Gates**, Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center, Dr. Martin L. King Jr., Community Health Center, and Albert Einstein College of Medicine
- **Mary C. George**, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

*continued*

## Committee on an Oral Health Initiative (cont'd)

- **Alice M. Horowitz**, University of Maryland, College Park
- **Elizabeth Mertz**, UCSF Center for the Health Professions
- **Matthew J. Neidell**, Columbia University and National Bureau of Economic Research
- **Michael Painter**, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- **Sara Rosenbaum**, George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Sciences
- **Harold C. Slavkin**, University of Southern California
- **Clemencia M. Vargas**, University of Maryland Dental School
- **Robert Weyant**, University of Pittsburgh

## Statement of Task

- Assess the current oral health care system for the entire U.S. population.
- Examine preventive oral care interventions, their use, and promotion.
- Explore ways of improving health literacy for oral health.

*continued*

## Statement of Task (Cont'd)

- Review elements of a potential HHS oral health initiative, including possible or current regulations, statutes, programs, research, data, financing, and policy.
- Recommend strategic actions for HHS agencies and, if relevant and important, other actors, as well as ways to evaluate this initiative

# Committee Process

- 5 in-person meetings
- 1 commissioned paper
- 2 public workshops with 33 speakers
- 15 external reviewers

# A New Oral Health Initiative

- 10 organizing principles
- 7 recommendations
- Overall mission: attainment of *Healthy People* goals and objectives

## Organizing Principles

- Establish high-level accountability.
- Emphasize disease prevention and oral health promotion.
- Improve oral health literacy and cultural competence.
- Reduce oral health disparities.
- Explore new models for payment and delivery of care.

*continued*

## Organizing Principles (Cont'd)

- Enhance the role of nondental health care professionals.
- Expand oral health research, and improve data collection.
- Promote collaboration among private and public stakeholders.
- Measure progress toward short-term and long-term goals and objectives.
- Advance the goals and objectives of Healthy People 2020.

## Recommendation 1

The secretary of HHS should give the leader(s) of the New Oral Health Initiative (NOHI) the authority and resources needed to successfully integrate oral health into the planning, programming, policies, and research that occur across all HHS programs and agencies:

*continued*

## Recommendation 1 (Cont'd)

- Each agency within HHS that has a role in oral health should provide an annual plan for how it will integrate oral health into existing programs within the first year.
- Each agency should identify specific opportunities for public-private partnerships and collaborating with other agencies inside and outside HHS.

*continued*

## Recommendation 1 (Cont'd)

- The leader(s) of the NOHI should coordinate, review, and implement these plans.
- The leaders(s) of the NOHI should incorporate patient and consumer input into the design and implementation of the OHI.

## Recommendation 2

All relevant HHS agencies should promote and monitor the use of evidence-based preventive services in oral health (both clinical and community based) and counseling across the life span by:

- Consulting with the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force and the Task Force on Community Preventive Services to give priority to evidentiary reviews of preventive services in oral health;

*continued*

## Recommendation 2 (Cont'd)

- Ensuring that HHS-administered health care systems (e.g., Federally Qualified Health Centers, Indian Health Service) provide recommended preventive services and counseling to improve oral health;
- Providing guidance and assistance to state and local health systems to implement these same approaches; and
- Communicating with other federally administered health care systems to share best practices.

## Recommendation 3

All relevant HHS agencies should undertake oral health literacy and education efforts aimed at individuals, communities, and health care professionals. These efforts should include, but not be limited to:

*continued*

## Recommendation 3 (Cont'd)

- Community-wide public education on the causes and implications of oral diseases and the effectiveness of preventive interventions;

Focus areas should include

- The infectious nature of dental caries,
- The effectiveness of fluorides and sealants,
- The role of diet and nutrition in oral health, and
- How oral diseases affect other health conditions.

*continued*

## Recommendation 3 (Cont'd)

- Community-wide guidance on how to access oral health care;
  - Focus areas should include using and promoting websites such as the National Oral Health Clearinghouse and [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov).

*continued*

## Recommendation 3 (Cont'd)

- Professional education on best practices in patient–provider communication skills that result in improved oral health behaviors.
  - Focus areas should include how to communicate to an increasingly diverse population about prevention of oral cancers, dental caries, and periodontal disease.

## Recommendation 4

HHS should invest in workforce innovations to improve oral health that focus on:

- Core competency development, education, and training, to allow for the use of all health care professionals in oral health care;
- Interprofessional, team-based approaches to the prevention and treatment of oral diseases;

*continued*

## Recommendation 4 (Cont'd)

- Best use of new and existing oral health care professionals; and
- Increasing the diversity and improving the cultural competence of the workforce providing oral health care.

## Recommendation 5

CMS should explore new delivery and payment models for Medicare, Medicaid, and CHIP to improve access, quality, and coverage of oral health care across the life span.

## Recommendation 6

HHS should place high priority on efforts to improve open, actionable, and timely information to advance science and improve oral health through research by

- Leveraging resources for research to promote a more robust evidence base specific to oral health care, including but not limited to
  - Oral health disparities, and
  - Best practices in oral health care and oral health behavior change;

*continued*

## Recommendation 6 (Cont'd)

- Working across HHS agencies, in collaboration with other federal departments (e.g., Department of Defense, Veterans Administration) involved in the collection of oral health data, to integrate, standardize, and promote public availability of relevant data bases; and
- Promoting the creation and implementation of new, useful, and appropriate measures of quality oral health care practices, cost and efficiency, and oral health outcomes.

## Recommendation 7

To evaluate the NOHI, the leader(s) of the NOHI should convene an annual public meeting of the agency heads to report on the progress of the NOHI, including

- Progress of each agency in reaching goals;
- New innovations and data;
- Dissemination of best practices and data into the community; and

*continued*

## Recommendation 7

- Improvement in health outcomes of populations served by HHS programs, especially as they relate to *Healthy People 2020* goals and specific objectives

HHS should provide a forum for public response and comment and make the final proceedings of each meeting available to the public.

# Key Areas for Future Success

- Strong leadership
- Sustained interest
- Involvement of multiple stakeholders

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