
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR RONNIE MUSGROVE
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: GOVERNOR
FROM: SMITH
SUBJECT: NGA POLICY ACADEMY ON IMPROVING ORAL HEALTH FOR CHILDREN UPDATE
DATE: 6/20/02
CC: RENICK, BOYD, SEWELL, PHILLIP

As you know the NGA Policy Academy addressing improving oral health for children was conducted last fall. Since the academy, the Department of Health has initiated several initiatives to address problems and needs identified by the state team during the academy. The following is a summary of activities that have or will be initiated soon:

1. A full time Public Health Dentist position is being established with the Bureau of Child Health. The position will be funded with funds from the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant. The Public Health Dentist will help develop a statewide action plan for improving oral health in Mississippi; will create and reinforce relationships with the dental community; and will provide consultation to the agency with regard to improving the oral health status of the children of the state.
2. A collaborative project with UMC School of Dentistry and Delta Hills Public Health District III will provide dental sealants to public school second graders in Attala, Bolivar, Carroll, Holmes, Humphreys, LeFlore, Montgomery, Sunflower, and Washington counties. The project will be funded with funds from the Maternal Child Health Block Grant. Successful completion of this project will hopefully lead to replication in other areas of the state.
3. The Department of Health is currently working with UMC School of Dentistry, the Division of Medicaid, and the Social Science Research Center at Mississippi State University to develop a grant application for Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for its State Action for Oral Health Access Program. The grant application, due June 21, 2002, has four primary focus areas: further development of financing and purchasing strategies, broadening the provider network, expanding the dental safety net, and enhancing consumer and provider education.

I have attached the report from the policy academy, submitted by Connie Lane, Executive Director, Mississippi Dental Association.

The Division of Medicaid was the host of this policy academy and Denny Lea, Director of Medical Services at Medicaid was leading this effort. Denny is no longer with Medicaid and his position has not been replaced. When his replacement is hired, the new Public Health Dentist is hired, and if and when the state receives this RWJ Grant, I would suggest a press conference to show results of the policy academy.

Two key contacts to keep up to date are Dr. Stephen Silberman at UMC School of Dentistry (984-6060) and Danny Bender at the Department of Health (576-7464). Connie Lane (at the Mississippi Dental Association also said she'd do whatever she can to help with good dates for press events related to Dental Health and the academy. Her number is 982-0442. One of the recommendations of the team was for the Governor or Legislature to appoint an ongoing, permanent Oral Health Task Force. This could all be announced in a press conference when items (1) and (3) are actually in place.

I have briefed Boyd about this so it will stay on the radar screen after I'm gone and my replacement is hired.