

March 2009

MCCPTA Health Committee Report

Chair: Susan Young

The Montgomery County School Health Council met on February 19. The featured speaker was Dr. Harry Goodman, Director of the Office of Oral Health at the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH).

Dr. Goodman presented the Maryland Strategic Plan for Improving Oral Health. The case of Deamonte Driver, a Prince George's County 12 year old, brought dental reform issues to the forefront. A Dental Action Committee (DAC) was convened at DHMH and issued 7 main recommendations. The recommendations are supported by Governor O'Malley and Secretary Colmers.

Recommendations include:

- a single dental vendor for Medicaid;
- increase the Medicaid dental reimbursement rates;
- enhance the dental public health infrastructure (several counties statewide did not have a dental clinic for Medicaid patients);
- widen the scope of practice performed by a public health dental hygienist;
- training healthcare providers, including training dentists in working with pediatric patients, and training pediatricians to apply fluoride varnish;
- create a unified oral health message and a statewide oral health literacy campaign; and
- performing dental screenings in public schools.

Screenings in public schools are still being developed. They will be most likely be incorporated with the vision and hearing screenings, as opposed to an alternative option of requiring dental exams for all children prior to entering school. Parental consent will likely be passive, and the screenings would target students in public schools and Judy Centers in grades pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, 3rd grade, 7th grade and 9th grade. The plan would be instituted over three phases until all screenings are performed. Funding may be approved in the April 2010 budget with a goal of disbursement of funds between May and September 2011. For the complete DAC report go to:

[http://www.fha.state.md.us/pdf/oralhealth/DAC Final Report.pdf](http://www.fha.state.md.us/pdf/oralhealth/DAC%20Final%20Report.pdf)