



PUBLIC HEARING ON HEALTH EDUCATION STANDARDS RE: ORAL HEALTH

MARCH 28, 2005

ACCORDING TO THE 2000 REPORT OF THE SURGEON GENERAL, DENTAL CARIES IS ONE OF THE MOST COMMON CHILDHOOD DISEASES, MORE THAN 5 TIMES AS COMMON AS ASTHMA AND 7 TIMES AS COMMON AS HAY FEVER. EACH YEAR, AN ESTIMATED 51 MILLION SCHOOL HOURS ARE LOST BECAUSE OF DENTAL-RELATED ILLNESS.

THE U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE REPORTS THAT POOR ORAL HEALTH HAS BEEN RELATED TO DECREASED SCHOOL PERFORMANCE, POOR SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS, AND LESS SUCCESS LATER IN LIFE. CHILDREN EXPERIENCING PAIN ARE DISTRACTED AND UNABLE TO CONCENTRATE ON SCHOOLWORK.

BECAUSE OF THE SURGEON GENERAL'S REPORT, WE KNOW THAT THE IMPORTANCE OF ORAL HEALTH GOES WELL BEYOND A PRETTY SMILE. ORAL DISEASE HAS BEEN LINKED TO OVERALL HEALTH CONDITIONS SUCH AS CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE, DIABETES, STROKE AND ADVERSE PREGNANCY OUTCOMES. THE IMPACT OF DENTAL DISEASE IS ESPECIALLY FRUSTRATING BECAUSE IT IS *TOTALLY* PREVENTABLE, WHICH SPEAKS TO THE IMPORTANCE OF MAKING SURE THAT CHILDREN HAVE ACCESS TO INFORMATION ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF ORAL HEALTH. FOR THESE REASONS, ORAL HEALTH KANSAS SUPPORTS INCLUDING ORAL HEALTH WITHIN THE HEALTH EDUCATION STANDARDS FOR THE STATE OF KANSAS.

WE WOULD LIKE TO OFFER A FEW EXAMPLES OF HOW THAT MIGHT BE ACCOMPLISHED WITHIN THE CURRENT DRAFT OF THE STANDARDS.

INDICATORS SUCH AS THE FOLLOWING COULD BE INCORPORATED OR ADDED TO THE CURRENT STANDARDS:

- IDENTIFY PERSONAL PRACTICES THAT PROMOTE A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE (E.G., WASHING HANDS, BRUSHING TEETH, USING FLUORIDE, GETTING PROPER NUTRITION)

- IDENTIFY THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE MAJOR BODY SYSTEMS (E.G., DESCRIBE A HEALTHY MOUTH, THE FUNCTION OF TEETH, AND THE PROCESS OF LOSING TEETH)
- DESCRIBE WHAT HAPPENS DURING A VISIT TO THE DENTIST AND RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF REGULAR DENTAL CHECKUPS
- DETERMINE AND USE STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE OR MAINTAIN PERSONAL HEALTH, INCLUDING GOOD DENTAL CARE
- SELECT FOODS THAT WILL HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON ORAL HEALTH AS WELL AS GENERAL HEALTH
- PREDICT THE EFFECTS OF POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE NUTRITIONAL CHOICES ON ORAL HEALTH
- IDENTIFY WAYS THAT POOR ORAL HEALTH CAN AFFECT A PERSON'S SELF-ESTEEM
- EXPLAIN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POSITIVE HEALTH BEHAVIORS AND THE PREVENTION OF ORAL/DENTAL INJURIES
- IDENTIFY AND DEVELOP SAFETY STRATEGIES TO PREVENT ORAL/DENTAL INJURIES
- IDENTIFY THE SHORT- AND LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF THE USE OF SMOKELESS TOBACCO ON ONE'S ORAL HEALTH AND GENERAL HEALTH

IN ADDITION, THE FOLLOWING CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES COULD BE ADDED AS TEACHING EXAMPLES TO THE CURRENT STANDARDS:

- DEMONSTRATE THE PROPER WAY TO BRUSH AND FLOSS
- GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH YOUR MOUTH
- SOURCES OF FLUORIDE
- WHAT DOES A HEALTHY MOUTH LOOK LIKE?
- SAFETY RULES TO HELP PREVENT ORAL INJURIES
- HEALTHY RECIPES
- DENTAL FIRST AID

IN PUTTING THESE COMMENTS TOGETHER, ORAL HEALTH KANSAS LOOKED TO SOUTH CAROLINA AS AN EXAMPLE. IN SOUTH CAROLINA, THEY HAVE CREATED A SUPPLEMENTAL CURRICULUM RESOURCE GUIDE WHICH WHOLLY INCORPORATES ORAL HEALTH INTO THEIR STATE STANDARDS. ORAL HEALTH KANSAS HAS ESTABLISHED AN EDUCATION TASK TEAM THAT IS CURRENTLY LOOKING AT ORAL HEALTH CURRICULUM AND WOULD BE IN A POSITION TO CREATE A SIMILAR DOCUMENT FOR THE STATE OF KANSAS. WE WOULD LIKE TO CONTINUE TO WORK WITH THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AS THEY CONTINUE TO REFINE THE HEALTH EDUCATION STANDARDS AND LOOK FOR WAYS TO PLACE SOME EMPHASIS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF ORAL HEALTH.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,
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