OHRC: 30 Years of Service to the MCH Community

In 1995, the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB), Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), conducted a comprehensive needs assessment to determine professionals' access to timely and current information and resources focusing on the oral health needs of pregnant women, infants, children, adolescents, including those with special health care needs, and their families (maternal and child health [MCH] population). The needs assessment was completed by representatives of federal and state agencies, national professional associations, and community programs. Based on this input from the field, MCHB established the National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center (OHRC) in 1996 to respond to the needs of states and communities addressing current and emerging public oral health issues.

Since 1996, OHRC has served as a national hub for providing technical assistance, including developing and sharing resources, to health professionals, program administrators, and educators to advance oral health care for the MCH population.

National Maternal & Child Oral Health RESOURCE CENTER

30 years serving the MCH community

To bridge science to practice and strengthen capacity across the MCH safety net, OHRC delivers robust, national-scale services:

- **Virtual Knowledge Repository**: Curates and maintains a comprehensive website and a digital library of oral health educational and programmatic resources focused on the MCH population.
- **Specialized Support**: Responds to inquiries from professionals on a variety of oral health topics. Coordinates training to strengthen health professionals' capacity to improve oral health care for the MCH population. Convenes multi-state learning collaboratives, facilitating efforts to integrate

oral health care into prenatal care and pediatric care at state and local levels.

- **Resource Development**: Creates science-based resources (e.g., conference proceedings curricula, fact sheets, guides, manuals, reports) tailored specifically for professionals and consumers.
- **Outreach and Education**: Promotes oral health priorities for the MCH population through presentations, conferences, and service on professional committees.

Key Accomplishments and Ongoing Activities

National Practice

- Developed Bright.Futures¿Oral.Health–_Pocket.Guide to provide guidance to health professionals on oral health care during five critical periods—prenatal, infancy, early childhood, middle childhood, and adolescence. The guide is updated as science and practice evolve.
- In collaboration with the Health Care Financing Administration (now the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services) and HRSA, convened the Building. Partnerships.to.Improve.Children's.Access.to.Medicaid.Oral.Health.Services meeting in 1998 to identify access barriers and develop action plans for improving oral health for children eligible for Medicaid. Produced the meeting proceedings, Building.Partnerships.to.Improve.Children's.Access.to. Medicaid.Oral.Health.Services¿National.Conference.Proceedings.
- In collaboration with federal agencies, convened The.Face.of.a.Child¿ Surgeon.General's.Conference.on.Children.and.Oral.Health in 2000 to elevate the visibility of children's oral health as a key indicator of overall well-being; prioritize children in the allocation of health resources; and promote partnerships across national, state, and local levels.
- In collaboration with HRSA, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and the American Dental Association, convened an expert workgroup in 2011, which resulted in the development of Oral.Health.Care. During.Pregnancy¿A.National.Consensus.Statement to provide guidance on

oral health care for pregnant women for both prenatal care health professionals and oral health professionals. It also includes guidance for health professionals to share with pregnant women. The consensus statement is updated as science and practice evolve.

- In collaboration with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and national professional organizations, convened the Healthy.Futures¿Engaging.the.Oral.Health.Community.in.Childhood.Obesity.Conference in 2016 to increase awareness of evidenced-based recommendations; identify strategies; and promote collaboration efforts that oral health professionals, oral health-related organizations, and others can employ to prevent obesity in children under age 12. Coordinated the development of the Journal of Public Health Dentistry special issue.

Educational and Programmatic Resources

- In collaboration with federal and state agencies, national professional organizations, and foundations, developed curricula and manuals to provide education and training for health professionals and community-based program staff on topics such as dental sealants, fluoride varnish, integration of oral health care into primary care, and children with special health care needs.
- In collaboration with MCHB-funded oral health projects, developed a tool to conduct environmental scans to gain knowledge about state-level factors that could impact the integration of oral health care into primary care at the local level, and produces chartbooks with aggregated information. Also developed the Capacity.Inventory.for.Integrating.Oral.Health.Care.into.Primary.Care.for.Children.and.Pregnant.Women to assess systems-level capacity, prioritize needs, and create action plans to enhance oral health care in states.
- Created Leadership.and.Legacy¿Oral.Health.Milestones.in.Maternal.and.Child.Health, a timeline presenting significant events impacting the oral health and overall health and well-being of the MCH population. Routinely update the timeline with current events.

- Developed Opioids.and.Pregnant.Women¿Information.for.Oral.Health.Professionals and Opioids.and.Children.and.Adolescents¿Information.for.Oral.Health.Professionals to provide information about pain management, including use of opioids, for pregnant women, children, and adolescents during dental procedures; prescribing opioids with caution and being aware of the potential for misuse or abuse; and understanding laws, policies, and recommendations.
- In collaboration with the Dental Quality Alliance, developed the report, Oral Health Quality.Indicators.for.the.Maternal.and.Child.Health.(MCH).Population¿An.Overview, to provide a set of quality indicators to monitor oral health care delivered in public health programs and systems of care.

Support for States and Jurisdictions

- Provide technical assistance to help health professionals in all states and jurisdictions acquire knowledge, skills, and resources to improve access to and use of oral health care for the MCH population. In addition, provide support to MCH programs and oral health programs in states and jurisdictions addressing the Title V national performance measure on a preventive dental visit for pregnant women, children, and adolescents.
- Coordinate on-site trainings on preventive oral health care to strengthen health professionals' capacity to support the MCH population in the Pacific jurisdictions. Trainings have been held in American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands.
- Facilitated funding for a pilot project in Puerto Rico to provide oral health care to children enrolled in the San Juan Head Start program and to provide their families with oral health education.

Support for MCHB-Funded Oral Health Initiatives

- Provide specialized technical assistance for Title V Special Projects of Regional and National Significance oral health demonstration projects designed to integrate public and private delivery systems, leverage Medicaid

and the Children's Health Insurance Program, and apply science-based care to promote oral health and reduce oral disease burden. Current and past oral health demonstration projects include

» Maternal and Child Health–Improving Oral Health Integration (2024–2028)

» Networks for Oral Health Integration Within the Maternal and Child Health Safety Net (2019 –2024)

» Perinatal and Infant Oral Health Quality Improvement Initiative (2013–2019)

» School-Based Comprehensive Oral Health Services (2011–2015)

» Targeted Oral Health Service Systems (2008–2011)

- Coordinate MCHB-funded multi-state learning collaboratives to help projects test and advance models integrating preventive oral health care into prenatal care and pediatric care for the MCH population.

Impact

For the past 30 years, OHRC has significantly contributed to advancing oral health care for the MCH population.

The resource center has curated a digital collection of resources produced by federal and state agencies, national professional associations, and community programs in a central location for easy reference and retrieval and has broadly promoted them to help ensure awareness of and access to timely, current, and science-based resources for health professionals and consumers.

OHRC has also collected knowledge gained (lessons learned) and resources from completed and ongoing MCHB-funded oral health projects; these resources are widely available to help professionals develop, implement, and evaluate programs and services.

In addition, OHRC has supported learning collaboratives for projects to share information about successes, challenges, and lessons learned related to implementing models of care and building capacity. The cross-pollination of resources and strategies shared among members enhanced project activities and enabled projects to achieve more collectively than they could as individual projects.

MCHB's decision to establish OHRC three decades ago has resulted in a rich and varied repository of knowledge, resources, and strategies related to improving oral health for the MCH community, which would not otherwise exist today.