Older adults’ oral-health crises targeted

Oral Health America Wisdom Tooth Project aims to reverse dental-care/knowledge gap

By Jennifer Gilbert, Oral Health America

Older adults — the most rapidly growing segment of the population in the United States — are facing a crisis when it comes to oral health. According to a 2013 Harris Interactive survey commissioned by Oral Health America, 23 percent of older adults have not seen a dental provider in five years, 70 percent do not have dental insurance, eight out of 10 uninsured seniors could not pay for a major dental procedure and 33 million live where dentists and clinics are scarce.

Oral Health America, a national nonprofit that aims to change lives by connecting communities with resources to increase access to care, education and advocacy for all Americans, is working to turn these statistics around through the Wisdom Tooth Project™ (WTP), a program that focuses entirely on older adults.

The WTP recently launched www.toothwisdom.org, a first-of-its-kind web portal providing oral-health information and local and national resources for older adults, caregivers and oral health professionals.

At the same time, the WTP released “A State of Decay,” a biennial publication that evaluates states on five leading indicators of adult oral health: adult Medicaid dental benefits, inclusion of older adult strategies in state oral health plans, edentulism, dental health professional shortage areas and community water fluoridation.

The report garnered local and national media attention when more than half of states failed to achieve a rating of 50 or greater. Regional symposia also unite diverse groups of health professionals and community leaders with the aim of inspiring strategic change to improve the oral health of older adults.

The WTP’s latest endeavor is “Tooth Wisdom: Get Smart About Your Mouth,” a health education program designed to enable older adults who are aging at home to improve their oral health through daily self-care and increase their knowledge about oral health.

To ensure the program is scientifically accurate and accessible, an older adult advisory committee has been assembled, composed of professionals who attended last year’s “Collaborative Health Care for Older Adults: A Symposium for Creating Inter-professional Community Models” and have a continued interest in geriatric oral health. The committee meets regularly to discuss the education program and offer recommendations.

To learn more about Oral Health America and the WTP, you can visit www.oralhealthamerica.org and www.toothwisdom.org.

Crest Oral-B names four as ‘Pros in the Profession’

In the third year of its Pros in the Profession awards program, Crest + Oral-B has recognized four registered dental hygienists who demonstrate excellent patient care, a passion for the profession and a dedication to learning.

The winners acknowledge the pivotal role these hygienists play in their patients’ lives — and their unwavering personal commitment to promoting good oral health in their communities.

“We have seen extraordinary entries over the past several years, which is why we must continue to honor those hygienists whose passion shine through in their everyday work,” said John Scarchilli, global scientific communications director, Procter & Gamble Oral Care. “These individuals dedicate countless hours to furthering the oral health cause, so we are pleased to be able to applaud them publicly.”

The winners in this third year of the award are Michelle Vacha, Heather Stich, Mallory Edmondson and Amy Kinman. While earning the honor in her own unique way, each winner shares the same dedication to promoting and participating in good oral care for patients.

More about the winners:

**Michelle Vacha, RDH, BS, received her degrees from Northern Arizona University and has been practicing in Colorado Springs, Colo., for the past 24 years. “I am so honored to be receiving this award,” said Vacha about being named a winner for year three. “I am hoping the attention from it will bring awareness to the public and other hygienists who care for older adults. Throughout my work, I help seniors deal with specific health factors they face due to lack of dental support. We want to ensure that all of the good work that has been done to maintain oral health throughout life is also preserved once insurance is no longer available through retirement or fixed income.”**

**Heather Stich, RDH, received her degree at the University of the Pacific, Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry, and has been practicing in San Francisco for the past five years. “I will be taking my second oral health service/mission trip to Honduras this year,” said Stich about winning $1,000. “Last year I used my own funds for the trip, but this year I plan on using the award toward the expenses of the trip. In effect, the award will be going back to the community I love to serve.”**

**Mallory Edmondson, RDH, BS, received her BSDH from Indiana University South Bend and is currently at the University of Bridgeport Fones School of Dental Hygiene for her MSDD. She has been practicing in Merrillville, Ind., for the past two years. “My favorite aspect of dental hygiene is the limitless opportunities available within the profession,” said Edmondson about being an RDH. “We are educators, managers, practitioners and much more. Hygienists are able to adapt to any given situation and apply their knowledge and skill sets far beyond the dental chair.”**

**Amy Kinmanon, RDH, received her degree from Shawnee State University and has been practicing in Athens, Ohio, for the past 17 years. “Last year I was invited to the U.S. National Oral Health Alliance board because of my research concerning ways to increase compliance in dental care amongst Appalachian children. This year, I have the honor of giving a continuing education course concerning my research at Ohio’s dental hygienist total development weekend. This has been a career goal of mine since returning to my hometown in Appalachia almost 20 years ago.”**

**About Pros in the Profession**

Crest + Oral-B has rewarded the four RDH winners with:

- An all-expense paid trip to visit the Procter & Gamble German Innovation Center in Kronberg, Germany
- A $1,000 monetary prize
- A recognition plaque
- Recognition in dental periodicals and announcements on Crest + Oral-B for Dental Professionals Facebook page and www.dentalcare.com
NiteBite provides preventive incentive

By Keystone Industries Staff

Many goals of minimally invasive, preventive oriented dental practices can be realized using the unique treatment advantages of NiteBite. The device helps ensure your patients’ dental health investment by reducing the need for future treatments.

With the NiteBite in place, the jaws’ opening reflexes achieve a “non-contacting” introral relationship. Wear facets and wear patterns, worn down and loose teeth, broken teeth and broken restorations are prevented when the NiteBite maintains the teeth and broken restorations are prevented. The NiteBite will reduce pain in and around the head and neck — eliminating muscle spasms and nighttime clenching, grinding and bruxism.

The success of periodontal treatment can improve as the NiteBite eliminates occlusal mandibular contact and the forces of bruxism. Post-operative stabilization is enhanced because the teeth do not touch at night when the jaw opening reflex is triggered by the NiteBite.

“Hot” or endodontically involved teeth can easily be discluded with the aid of the NiteBite. Grinding and clenching at night can easily be discluded with the aid of the NiteBite. Grinding and clenching at night are reduced or eliminated. Post-operative instability is enhanced because bruxism. Post-operative stabilization is enhanced because the teeth do not touch at night when the jaw opening reflex is triggered by the NiteBite.