

## **The ADA CDHC Program: Frequently Asked Questions**

*The ADA is committed to exploring new allied personnel categories to assist the profession in addressing access to care needs of the population. This section is designed to answer questions regarding the Community Dental Health Coordinator (CDHC) pilot program.*

### **Why was the CDHC position created?**

The ADA is committed to exploring new allied personnel categories to assist the profession in addressing access to care needs of the population. The CDHC was developed in response to ADA House Resolution 3H-2006 and 25H-2006.

### **How will the CDHC help the underserved?**

As a member of the dental health team, the CDHC will work in communities where residents have no or limited access to dental care. The concept of the CDHC in reaching the underserved communities is that the CDHC will come from the community in which they will serve. Because they come from this community, the CDHC understands the culture, language and barriers to care.

### **How does this position address access to oral health care?**

Aside from working in health and community settings, the CDHC will collect information to assist the dentist in the triage of patients and address the social, environmental, and health literacy issues facing the community population. Another important role of the CDHC will be educating community members on preventive oral health care and assisting them in developing goals to promote and manage their own personal oral health. Linking patients to avenues of oral health care will also be an important role for the CDHC in working with underserved populations going through the maze of the health and dental care systems.

### **Why is the CDHC a pilot and not a permanent program?**

A pilot program provides an opportunity to carefully assess the effectiveness of the proposed competencies for the CDHC. Additionally, evaluated outcomes will provide objective evidence regarding the future viability of this new personnel category for dentistry.

### **How long is the pilot program?**

The 18-month training programs are piloted over three years. The training was started in the spring of 2009.

### **How is the pilot program funded?**

Phase 1, which included development of the comprehensive curriculum materials, was funded by a \$334,000 grant from the ADA Foundation. Phase 2, which calls for the curriculum to be piloted and evaluated at three different sites (rural, urban and Native American) has been funded with \$2M in start-up funds from the ADA. Additional funding to support the pilot programs is being sought from national and local foundations, associations, government agencies and corporations.

### **Where are the pilot sites?**

The rural site: University of Oklahoma, with Rio Salado College (AZ) delivering the on-line components of the curriculum. The hands-on clinical training will occur in Indian Health Service facilities and Federally Qualified Health Centers.

The Native American site: UCLA and Salish Kootenai College, with Rio Salado College (AZ) delivering the on-line components of the curriculum. The hands-on clinical training will occur in Indian Health Service facilities in several different states.

An urban site, to be finalized in 2009, will be announced very soon. The training for urban-based CDHCs will occur in Federal Qualified Health Centers.

**Can I apply for a position as a CDHC?**

Yes, the recruitment of students is done by the site directors from clinics affiliated with their institutions.

**What particular skills does a CDHC need?**

Some of the unique skills include the ability to be a community-based advocate for health; assist with enrollment of community members in state and federal funded dental programs; provide social support; have knowledge of public transportation, food distribution centers, mental health clinics and other services; interview and counsel patients; make preventive recalls in the community (such as to homes of those who are or homes of those with high-risk for oral and dental diseases); and assess patients and contribute to improving their nutritional literacy.

**Who will supervise the CDHC?**

The CDHC will work under a dentist's supervision.

**Will the CDHC work in the dentist's office?**

No. Primarily, the CDHC will work in health and community settings such as clinics, schools, churches, senior citizen centers, Head Start Programs and other public settings with residents who have ethnic and cultural backgrounds similar to the CDHC.

**What type of training is necessary to be a CDHC?**

The first part of the training will focus on the foundation of working within a community and building oral health capacity within that community. This training will consist of development of communication skills, understanding the role of a CDHC, working as a team member in oral health and developing a process of care for the community. The program proposes to train CDHCs to provide preventive services including screenings, fluoride treatments, placement of sealants, placement of temporary fillings and simple teeth cleanings (selective scaling for periodontal type I [gingivitis] such as removing gross debris, stains, and calculus using anterior and posterior sickle hand scalers until the patient can receive comprehensive treatment from a dentist or hygienist).