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OHS Staff Retirements



Benjamin E. Mays once said, “we today, stand on the shoulders of our predecessors who have gone before us...”

The Oral Health Section (OHS) has benefited greatly from three long-time staff members: Stacey Ballweg, Rose Mutzbauer, and Mary Christen, who combined have more than 75 years in oral health. Stacey, Rose, and Mary will be retiring by January 1, 2023.

Stacey, Grants and Data manager, has led many programs, including the Dental Sealant Grant Program, the Oral Health Promotion Program, and the Continuing Education Program. Over the years, she has assumed leadership roles to ensure OHS programs run smoothly during periods of staffing shortages. Stacey has been instrumental in building the current cohesive OHS staff. Stacey’s knowledge and expertise display a legacy of hard work and commitment.

Rose, Fluoridation Data manager, has overseen the more than 1,800 water systems that provide residents with optimally fluoridated water. She monitors the process that includes data collection, compilation, and submission for public access, which are core public health functions. Through an annual review process, she also determines the water system and operators that receive awards for consistently maintaining community water within the optimal fluoridation range. For many years, Rose also led efforts to reach families with craniofacial health information and helped collect wide-ranging information that has helped the public’s access to oral health services and programs.

Mary, oral health consultant, for the southern Illinois region, is a registered dental hygienist who provided support and oversight for the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services’ All-Kids school-based oral health program, which required extensive travel throughout her assigned region. Mary also worked with local health departments to expand early oral health interventions and prevention services, such as risk-based fluoride varnish and dental sealants to very young and school-aged children. She assisted with special projects and grant development over many years of service. Mary, alongside the rest of the OHS team, collected fluoride data from regional Illinois Environmental Protection Agency offices to assure water fluoridation compliance and supported other statewide oral health initiatives.

It is with deep gratitude that we say farewell to these three oral health champions. They will each be missed for their unique contributions.

We wish them well in their next endeavors and will strive to build upon the firm foundation they created. We celebrate each of these amazing individuals and congratulate them on their retirement. If you would like to send a message to any of the retirees, send it directly to them or to mona.vankanegan@illinois.gov and we will make sure they get your good wishes.

All the best to Stacey, Rose, and Mary.

TAG Oral Care Center Offers Free Dental Care to Qualifying Adult Patients

On July 26, 2022, the Aspen Group Oral Care Center (TAG OCC) opened its doors to provide dental care for underserved adult patient populations at no cost to qualifying individuals. TAG OCC, located at 1040 W Randolph St, Chicago, IL 60607 is a 25,000 square foot clinic, with 16 dental care rooms, located near several public transportation options.



TAG OCC is collaborating with organizations throughout oral health, medical and social services fields to connect with patients in need of dental care services. Interested patients can call 1-866-TAG-OCCE or [visit https://www.aspendental.com/tag-oral-care-center/patient](https://www.aspendental.com/tag-oral-care-center/patient) to see if they qualify.

The free oral health care will cover non-surgical periodontal treatment, restorative dentistry that includes dental fillings, crowns, bridges, and partial and complete dentures, extractions, implants and associated services such as 3D imaging, and scanning and 3D printing. Organizations interested in learning more about the TAG OCC and potentially setting up a referral partnership can reach Dr. Julie Frantsve-Hawley, who is serving as the executive director - julie.frantsvehawley@teamttag.com.

To qualify for the TAG OCC program, the following criteria must be met: Illinois resident eligible for Medicaid or uninsured with a household income not greater than 200% of the federal poverty level.

IOHP IV Objective 2.D.10. Identify process, use of use of incentives for completion of dental care plans, and establish individualized maintained intervals.

IOHP IV Objective 2.D.13 sets the goal to increase the proportion of adults who receive an oral health examination or preventive or periodontal services at least once annually.



Coordination of Oral Health Services Grant

Dental caries and periodontitis are common oral diseases that are preventable, but remain highly prevalent. More so, the oral care of those with low income, uninsured, with a permanent disability, or over age 65 is often challenging to access without coordination support.

IDPH funded one grant-based program [Coordination of Oral Health Services Grant \(COHS\)](#) in fiscal year 2023 to establish an intake process, provide coordination and comprehensive care referrals to donated dental care for persons who are deemed eligible due to:

- **Low income**
- **Uninsured**
- **With a permanent disability**
- **Over age 65**
- **Have with physician documentation of dental care need before essential medical treatment can be provided**

The COHS program will improve the oral health status of at-risk, eligible adults by treating oral disease, improving mouth function, and in so doing, limiting the negative impact on systemic health and quality of life. In addition, this competitive grant will support personnel who will coordinate care for eligible persons, reinforce, and establish provider networks, and provide progress reports of activity and the impact of the program.

The grant, up to a total of \$72,000, will provide funding to implement the required activities according to program priorities and expected outcomes.

Illinois Fluoridation Monitoring Program



Tooth decay is the most prevalent dental disease in society, and community water fluoridation remains one of the most effective public health measures available to prevent and to control dental caries. The health benefits of fluoride are most beneficial when the water fluoridation level is maintained within an optimal range. Illinois' fluoridation law, enacted in 1967, requires the state's nearly 1,800 community water systems to adjust fluoride to optimal levels. Illinois is one of only 15 states that mandates fluoridation.

The goal of the Community Water Fluoridation Program is to prevent dental decay through public health surveillance by monitoring the fluoride level in community water systems (CWS) to assure optimal levels of fluoride are delivered to the public, providing education to CWS operators, and recognizing operators for excellence in maintaining optimal fluoride levels.

Most Illinois water systems adjust the fluoride level since not all water systems in Illinois have enough naturally occurring fluoride in the water. The program has been collaborating with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and, since 1984, has recognized and commended water systems for maintaining perfect compliance with continuous water fluoridation for 12 consecutive months in accordance with the state law. In 2018, CDC reported 98.2% of Illinois' 12.8 million residents received fluoridated drinking water through community water systems.

Key activities in monitoring and surveillance of the fluoridation program include

- Maintaining records of all the community water systems in Illinois.
- Reporting to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) through the Water Fluoridation Reporting System to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency by means of quarterly reports of monthly split sample data.
- Compiling and analyzing data to select Illinois community water fluoridation awardees.

***NEW* FAST FACT RESOURCE**

The updated English Version of Oral and Dental Care 2022 and the various language translations can be accessed via the link <https://dph.illinois.gov/covid19/healthcare-providers/routine-oral-and-dental-care.html>

Bright Smiles from Birth II Oral Health Program



A project of the Illinois Chapter of
the American Academy of Pediatrics

Bright Smiles from Birth (BSFB) is a program designed to provide information on children's oral health to primary care providers and their staff. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that primary care providers begin providing oral health risk assessments and anticipatory guidance at 6 months of age.

The Bright Smiles from the Birth II curriculum and technical assistance program will provide the necessary tools and online training to incorporate:

- Oral health anticipatory guidance
- Risk assessment
- Fluoride varnish application
- Referral to oral health home into routine primary care well-child visits.

Through a competitive funding opportunity IDPH is able to announce that the Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (ICAAP) has received a grant award to execute the enhanced Bright Smiles from Birth II Oral Health Program.

The objectives at the end of the BSFB II training for pediatricians and family medicine providers include:

- **Describe the pathogenesis of early childhood caries (ECC).**
- **Determine risk factors associated with ECC.**
- **Conduct an oral health screening and apply fluoride varnish.**
- **Provide anticipatory guidance to families and share resources with parents/caregivers to improve the child's home oral care routines.**
- **Provide referral to Dental Home when appropriate.**
- **State the importance of a health care providers role in oral health.**

Upon completion of training, continuing medical education (CME) and continuing education (CE) will be available, and primary care providers in Illinois will be eligible to receive Medicaid reimbursement for the application of fluoride varnish on children under 3 years of age. The new enhanced courses will be available in spring 2023.

For more information visit [Oral Health - Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics \(illinoisAAP.org\)](https://www.illinoisAAP.org)

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DPH.OralHealth@Illinois.gov**