Advancing Oral Health in America: Recommendations to HHS on an Oral Health Initiative

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Scope of the Problem

In 2000, the Surgeon General’s Report in Oral Health stated:

- OH is part of general health
  - OH care remains largely separated from overall health care (e.g., services, financing, education, workforce).

- Inequalities in OH and OH care
  - Silent epidemic among the most vulnerable
  - OH care is provided in a two tier “system”
Relevance of OH within HHS has been inconsistent.

Previous HHS OH initiatives have suffered from lack of:
  - high-level accountability
  - coordination among agencies
  - resources
  - sustained interest
IOM Committee: Statement of Task

- Assess the current U.S. oral health care system
- Examine the use and promotion of preventive OH interventions
- Explore ways of improving OH literacy
- Review elements of a potential HHS oral health initiative
- Recommend strategic actions for HHS agencies
IOM Committee Process

5 committee meetings

2 public workshops with 32 speakers

1 commissioned paper

15 external reviewers
Recommendations
#1. Establishing and Evaluating the New Oral Health Initiative (NOHI)

HHS should give the leaders of the NOHI the authority and resources to **integrate oral health into** planning, programming, policies and research across all HHS programs and agencies.
#1. Establishing and Evaluating the NOHI (cont).

Actions:

- Annual plan of each agency within the first year
- Public-private partnerships by participant agencies
- NOHI leader(s) coordinate, review, and implement these plans
- Incorporate patient and consumer input in the design and implementation of NOHI
#2. Focusing on Prevention

Promote and monitor the use of evidence-based preventive services and counseling, both clinical and community-based, and across the life span.
#2. Focusing on Prevention (cont.)

Actions to implement preventive services and counseling:

- Consult with USPSTF and TFCPS
- Ensure services are provided by all HHS-administered health care systems
- Help state and local health care systems
- Share best practices with other federally-administered systems
Also:

- Prevention and counseling services should be provided by **all competent health providers**
- Evaluate the adequacy and support needed for the **public health infrastructure**
#3. Improving Oral Health Literacy

Oral health literacy and education efforts should be aimed at individuals, communities, and health care professionals.

Community-wide education and guidance*:

- Causes and implication of oral diseases
- Effectiveness of preventive interventions
- The role of diet and nutrition in OH
- How to access OH care

* culturally and linguistically appropriate
Professional education

- Best practices in patient-provider communication
  - to change behaviors
  - to work with diverse populations

- Competence to address oral diseases prevention
#4. Enhancing the Delivery of OH Care

Invest in **workforce innovations** to improve OH

- Involve all health care professionals in OH care
- Inter-professional, team-based approaches
- Best use of new and existing OH professionals
- Increase diversity and improve cultural competence
#4. Enhancing the Delivery of OH Care

Pressing need of OH care:

- Outcome evaluation
- Quality indicators
  - Example: DHAT evaluation report
#5. Delivery and Payment of OH Care

Considerations:

- Disparity in access to OH care
- Lack of dental insurance results in access problem
- Insufficient OH care availability
- OH is part of general health
HHS should explore new delivery and payment models for Medicare, Medicaid, and CHIP to improve access, quality, and coverage of OH care across the lifespan.
#6. Expanding Research

HHS should place a high priority on efforts to improve open, actionable, and timely information to advance science and improve oral health.
#6. Expanding Research (cont.)

Actions:
- Promote research for more robust evidence base
- Integrate, standardize, and promote public availability of OH data
- Creation and implementation of:
  - quality measures of OH care practices
  - cost and efficiency
  - OH outcomes
#7. Measuring Progress

- Convene **annual public meeting** of agency heads to report on:
  - Progress of each agency in reaching goals
  - New innovations and data
  - Learned best practices
  - Improvements in health outcomes of populations served by HHS programs

- Provide forum for **public response and comment**

- Make **proceedings** available
Looking to the Future

The recommendations in this report align with the mission and responsibilities of HHS.

Three key factors are needed for future success:

- Strong leadership
- Involvement of multiple stakeholders
- Sustained interest
Advancing Oral Health in America

For more information visit
www.iom.edu/oralhealthinitiative
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- Terry Fulmer, New York University
- Vanessa Northington Gamble, George Washington University
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