PTSD After Fluoride and Other Adventures in Advocacy

Avenues for advocacy in a Community Health Center setting

National Primary Oral Health Care Conference

November 11, 2013

Lisa Bozzetti DDS, Dental Director
Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center
Windansea Beach, San Diego, CA
Where it all started…
Loma Linda University School of Dentistry
Banepa, Nepal 2001
Service Learning trip between 3rd and 4th year of Dental School
Virginia Garcia
Virginia Garcia (VG) Memorial Health Center

• Founded in 1975 after the untimely death of Virginia Garcia
• Began in a 3 car garage - now over 300 employees
• Private non-profit, FQHC
• 4 primary care clinics, 3 dental clinics (each site has pharmacy and behavioral health embedded)
• 4th dental clinic slated to open this Fall/Winter
• 4 SBHCs – all include oral health program element
• Mobile Dental/Medical Van
Dental Director Roles

• Oversees/Responsible for dental program direction and development
• Clinical supervisor - dentists and dental hygienists
• Represent Dental Department in Executive Leadership Team of Health Center
• Address dental disease in the target population through prevention and community partnerships
  – Partner with state and local public health organizations to deliver preventive services (ie sealants, fluoride varnish programs, advocate for water fluoridation)
Dental Director Roles

• Responsibility to your clinic and community to be involved and advocate for sound oral health policy
• Develop and maintain community partnerships and relationships
  – *Schools involved in training dental professionals (rotations)*
  – *Oral health stakeholders around the State and local area*
• You are the face of your CHC: advocate far and wide for the things that are important
Oral Health Advocacy

• **Water Fluoridation** *(Yes on 26-151 in Portland)*
• Lecture to students at OHSU SOD, Pacific University
• Oregon Oral Health Coalition (OrOHC)
• Participating in State Oral Health planning
• School-Based Health Center (SBHC) oral health program
• Oral Health Advocacy at our State Capitol
• First Tooth Program
• Promoting expanded use of non-dentist roles in oral health delivery *(expanded practice hygienist, etc.)*
  – *Support and promote expanded practice dental hygienists (conferences, teaching)*
Everyone deserves healthy teeth!

Vote Yes on 26-151 by May 21st
Advocating for Water Fluoridation

• Local non-profit (Upstream Public Health) spearheaded the effort to create a grassroots coalition to support water fluoridation in Portland

• Research and public opinion polls had showed support for water fluoridation as well as a large segment of the population that was undecided – timing seemed right to try again.

• Ultimately by the time this reached City Hall for a vote, the coalition had over 70 local groups endorsing water fluoridation
Sobering Statistics

• Long been contentious in Oregon (passed and failed twice previously)
• Portland, OR is the largest city in the US without access to fluoridated water
• Currently Oregon ranks 48th in US in terms of percentage of the population that has access to fluoridated water – 19.4%
• Oregon continues to struggle with early childhood caries rates
Process of Involving VG

• Present topic and elicit support of the our Board
• Became one of the over 70 local supporting organizations
• VG’s support seen as critical specifically to the Hispanic population
• VG is well-respected in the community and our stand on a topic like this is important.
Testimony at City Hall
September 6, 2012

• Asked to testify as part of an expert panel in support of water fluoridation at City Hall
• Invited by the mayor—our goal was to set the stage for the dental health crisis we have in Oregon
• Shared stories of our patients, severe dental problems, touted the benefits of fluoride
• This was our first introduction to the anti-fluoride folks— it was a colorful afternoon full of people escorted out of chambers by security and even had an arrest
Transitions: Endorsement to political campaign

- City Hall unanimously approved adding fluoride to Portland’s water (September 12, 2012)
- Immediately followed by a gathering of signatures that led to a ballot initiative
- Moved into unfamiliar territory, a true political campaign, with a public vote
- Since this was not endorsing a particular candidate, and our Board had endorsed, was able to continue our support throughout the campaign.
Virginía García Memorial Health Center
for Healthy Teeth & Healthy Kids
Involving VG and keeping everyone informed

- Sent out regular e-mails to all VG staff
  - *Updates on the campaign, general info/stats*
  - *Invites to phone bank, canvass, outreach, etc.*
- Responded to employees questions
- Set up VG phone banking event that brought new non-dental volunteers
- Updated Executive Team regularly
- Included piece on advocacy for fluoride in lecture to School of Dentistry students at OHSU
Escalating Involvement

- Recommended by partner colleague to sit on the Steering Committee for the campaign.
- Although unable to attend most meetings – on my clinical work day – I was part of all planning and strategizing for the campaign.
- Many additional hours: both volunteer and work hours
  - Developing messaging, letters to the editor, helping at HQ
  - Reviewing and approving next steps for campaign
Steering Committee

• 19 people served as a Board of Directors for the Health Kids Healthy Portland Campaign
  – Responsible for approving campaign plan and budget

• Represented broad local interest groups
  – Local Foundations (Oregon Community Foundation, Northwest Health Foundation), Kaiser Permanente, Metro Councilor & Coalition for Community health Clinics, Upstream Public Health, Oregon Dental Association, Providence Health and Services, Oregon Nurses Association, Latino Network, Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon, Center for Intercultural Organizing & Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center
Other Spheres of Influence

- Local Officials very involved in Campaign
  - Representative Tina Kotek
  - City Council Member Nick Fish
  - Elected City Council Member Steve Novick
  - State Representative Earl Blumenauer

- General Consultant: Representative Ben Unger
  - Representative for Hillsboro where we have a clinic
  - Ben grew up on a farm in Cornelius
YOUR VOTE
FLUORIDE RESULTS

• YES - 40.07
• NO - 59.93
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Lectures

• Present lectures at OHSU SOD and Pacific University: Oral Health Promotion, Careers in Dentistry, and Dental Hygiene Care for Diverse Populations

• Educating students before their required rotations in our clinics

• Introduction to community health dentistry and advocating for careers in this field
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Our Mission is to serve as the central source for advocacy, information and communication about oral health issues in Oregon, and to organize stakeholders’ individual strengths into a collective power for oral health.

"Improving general health through oral health for all Oregonians"
Early OrOHC Involvement

- Participated in Original Early Childhood Caries Prevention Committee (ECCP) – 2008
- Asked to be on the advisory Board for First Tooth – 2009
- Arranged VG hygienist to be First Tooth Trainer -2009
- Asked to join the Board of Directors - 2010
Current OrOHC Involvement

• Co-Chair newly formed (again) ECCP Committee

• Member Communications Committee
  • *Helped Develop Website and Messaging*

• Member Conference Planning Committee
  • *Planning Annual Meeting*
  • *Selecting and planning Speakers and setting agenda*
    • *This year particularly successful by securing well-recognized, out of state speakers for our meeting*
    • *Advocating for changes in our oral health structure in Oregon*
Oregon’s 2014-2020 Oral Health Strategic Plan - Coming to a City Near You!

The Oregon Oral Health Coalition and the Oral Health Funders Collaborative are leading the effort to develop a new Oral Health Strategic Plan for Oregon.

The DRAFT Strategic Plan for Oral Health in Oregon contains three key focus areas: Prevention, Workforce, and Infrastructure. It incorporates Healthy People 2020 oral health objectives, a set of national benchmarks developed by the Centers for Disease Control and the Health Resources and Service Administration, Oregon’s Healthy Future: A Plan for Empowering Communities, and the 2013 Oregon Dental Association’s Oral Health Act Outline.

Please join us when we come to your community!

Below is a list of the cities we will be visiting over the next several weeks. Please watch for more information from us as we complete logistical details. .......and please feel free to forward this information to others you know of with an interest in oral health!

Oregon’s 2014-2020 Oral Health Strategic Plan Input Schedule.

Klamath Falls
October 7, 2013
12:00-2:00
Oregon Tech
Boardroom
3201 Campus Drive
Klamath Falls, OR 97601
Local Coalitions

• Became involved in start of local oral health coalition in Yamhill county
  – *One of our clinics is located in this county*

• Regular participant in the coalition’s meetings

• Member of the Emergency Room Diversion Workgroup
  – *Work with local hospitals and partners*
  – *Strategy to provide dental care for folks seeking at local EDs*
  – *Partnership with local health department and county*
Oral Health Strategic Plan – Oregon

- Time to update our Oral Health Strategic Plan
- Work group created which included different stakeholders from all over the state
- Invited to represent community health centers
- The DRAFT Strategic Plan for Oral Health in Oregon contains three key focus areas: Prevention, Workforce, and Infrastructure.
- One key area is advocating for a State Dental Director or other high level dental representation in Oregon
- Now going on a tour of all of Oregon to get input before being finalized
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SBHC Oral Health Program

• Originally had only primary care and behavioral health
• Regular requests for dental needs
• Our SBHC system is rapidly growing: 1st SBHC clinic in 2008 to 4 clinics in 2013
• Seed funding: Kaiser Permanente NW Oral Health Initiative Grantee
• Started oral health services in 2011
SBHC Services

• Co-located Hygienist
• Dental Van (VGMHC or MTI or Tooth Taxi) and portable dental equipment
• Referrals/Coordinate with NP, school counselors, teachers
• Advocate for student’s dental coverage – ODS Children’s Program and OHP
• Advocate at the State for payment for DH screenings
• Goal: Dental home for all students
Oral Health Policy Advocacy

• Kaiser Oral Health Initiative Grantee (SBHC – video)
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gmthGZWZyAo
• Oral Health Advocacy Day in our State Capitol Salem, OR
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• History
• Curriculum Development for medical and dental providers
• Implementation of ECC prevention services in non-dental settings
• Participation in advisory board
Early Childhood Caries Disease
Impact of First Tooth

Trained over 1800 medical and dental providers in 30/36 counties - improving access to dental services for children at most risk.

Presenting First Tooth at the ODC, OAFP, and NPO with Dr. Prashant Gagneja.
Baby Days

- Group Class for 0-24 month olds
- Nutritional Counseling, OHI, exam, Fluoride varnish
- Dental Exam
Baby Days
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Strengthen Community Actions

- Partnerships with other organizations to provide for the community.
- Ex: Pacific University, WIC, HeadStart (often with a DH)
- Reach out to community partners to provide consistent messaging and help fill in gaps of care
- Working with Promotores de Salud
Advocacy

How to get involved
Tips for Getting Involved

• REMEMBER: You have a responsibility to your community to get involved in advocacy
• Work with your CEO or direct supervisor to advocate for admin time (if you are a DD)
• Get out of the clinic!
• Don’t expect instant results – takes time
• Get to know your community partners, get invited to their events, support them and engage in conversations
• Invite folks to your clinic, offer a tour, share stories
• Your time spent outside the clinic will help open opportunities for partnership that you never knew existed
Tips for Getting Involved

• Don’t take on too much but do take on SOME activities
• Know when to say “no”
• Practice...Practice...Practice...
  – Most of us are not trained to do this type of thing
  – Speaking to groups can be uncomfortable
• Spread your message far and wide
• Share your activities with the leadership at your CHC
  – Often the dental department is a bit under the radar
  – Give regular updates at your Executive Team meetings (if you’re on them) or find out a way to share your activities with upper management
Thank you!