

14th International Conference on

Clinical Pediatrics

June 14-16, 2018 | Rome, Italy

Community dental health coordinators: Reducing dental disease in children to help families smile

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Community dental health coordinators (CDHC) are dental professionals who fill an important role of interacting with populations who are at risk for dental disease, and do not know how to access a dental care program, or stop tooth decay at the very start. CDHCs can perform clinical preventive services and community-based outreach duties but also help families know which dental services are needed, how to schedule appointments and arranging transportation for those appointments. CDHC trained individuals can manage behaviors that frequently accompany dental treatment such as fear and anxiety. By carefully explaining how dental disease begins and the various ways to treat it, parents gain understanding of their important role in safeguarding their child's oral health. CDHCs address upstream determinants of poverty to assist clinicians in oral health integration within a child's overall treatment plan. CDHC also encourage regular oral health services for special populations such as pregnant women, teething infants, and diabetics. Family centered optimal oral health helps build healthy populations! The audience will understand the value of this program, developed by the American Dental Association in 2007, to their quality clinical outcomes, how this program could begin in their area, the online educational modules necessary to complete this program and the key aspects of dental case management to reduce untreated dental disease in their communities.

Biography

Jane Grover became the Director of the Council on Advocacy for Access and Prevention of the American Dental Association in April 2013. She oversees association activities on topics such as community water fluoridation, dental sealants; school based dental programs, community health center, access to care and funding of public health dental programs. She is a native of Detroit, Michigan and received both her Dental degree and Master's degree in Public Health from the University of Michigan prior to joining the ADA. She was the Dental Director of an FQHC in Michigan, Adjunct Faculty of the University of Michigan School of Dentistry and AEGD Residency Director for Lutheran Medical Center. She has been an Advocate for public – private partnerships to promote oral health programs for underserved populations. She was awarded the Clinician of the Year award from the Michigan Primary Care Association in 2004 for her role in advocating for the return of dental Medicaid benefits for adults in Michigan. She testified before a US Congressional Subcommittee on dental Medicaid benefits for underserved populations in 2008. She was awarded the distinguished Alumni of the Year award by the University of Michigan School of Dentistry in 2014.

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