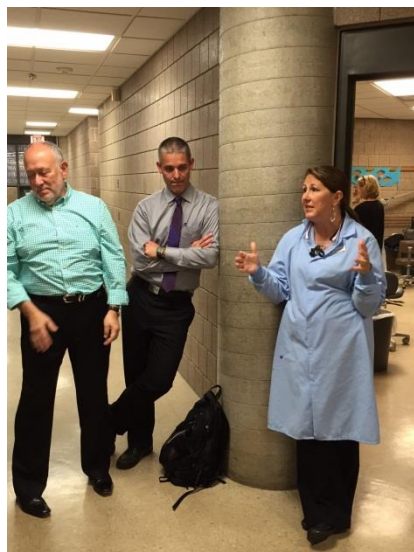


Odontia Article August 2015  
Beth Tronolone's - Dental Therapists in Action

June was a very eventful month attending ADHA Annual Session and then flying to Minneapolis, Minnesota for a busy 3 days to attend the Community Catalyst Dental Therapist Project Convening June 24-26, 2015. ODHA was invited by UHCAN Ohio to attend this event after the Board of Trustees voted to join the coalition which supports access to dental care.

On the first day of the Convening, I had the opportunity to hear Leon Assael, DMD, Dean, University of Minnesota School of Dentistry discuss the changes to the Dental Therapy curriculum to graduate all Advanced Dental Therapists, ADT. He spoke about the great need for access to care and provided insight in the benefits the ADT has provided as an addition to the dental team. Dr. Assael is a graduate of Columbia University and earned his Doctor of Dental Medicine from Harvard University, School of Dental Medicine. He completed his residency in maxillofacial surgery at Vanderbilt University. He has been presented various awards for his advancements in oral health in Appalachia. Dr. Assael is very passionate about providing access to dental care. Dr. Colleen Brickle also provided information on the ADT program at Normandale Community College.

The group of attendees included dentists, dental hygienists, and coalition members from Washington State, New Mexico, Vermont and Ohio. We had the opportunity to travel to the Anderson Community School and observe Advanced Dental Therapist Kristy Jo Fogerty and an RDH in action providing restorative and preventive care, respectively, to school children. The dental operatory looked like it had been an old storage room which was equipped with 2 full-size dental chairs. There was also a pedo unit pushed up against the wall. The pedo unit was originally donated, but was replaced with full-sized chairs as the dental care is not only available for the children but the parents and younger siblings as well. Across the hall is a smaller room which houses the x-ray unit and the sterilization area including an ultrasonic bath and autoclave.



Kristy Jo Fogerty first Advanced Dental Therapist



Registered Dental Hygienist Nadia in treatment area Anderson Community School



Kristy Jo Fogerty, ADT

It was amazing to see dental care being provided in the school setting. A mother with her small pre-school children waiting in the hallway in the “makeshift” waiting area, while the school age siblings had fillings placed by Kristy Jo (advanced dental therapist) and another child had a prophylaxis provided by the registered dental hygienist in the other chair.

It was calm, well organized and the staff talked to us and answered our questions as soon as they completed the children’s dental care.

We were whisked away back on the bus and traveled to the Apple Tree Dental Clinic in Mounds View. This was one of the finest dental clinics that I have ever seen. We toured the State of the Art facility that was inspired by the Mayo Clinic and has all oversized handicap access treatment rooms. One operatory has a chair that has an air cushion switch that when turned on, can move the chair with a fingertip. This is helpful with wheelchair bound patients. Several rooms also had ceiling mounted patient lifts to pick up handicapped patients and lift them into the dental chair.



Dentists, ADTs, RDHs and dental assistants worked side by side in this amazing facility. This facility treats Medicaid patients and the use of the ADT helps decrease costs and allows the low reimbursement of the Medicaid Dental to go farther and make ends meet from a business standpoint. Large donations are also provided by benefactors.

Dr. Helgeson also provided a tour of the upstairs facility that is currently raising funds to one day house a hospital type surgical treatment room to accommodate difficult cases that would previously have to have been treated in the local hospital. Several mobile units also run from this location to area nursing homes and schools.

The State of Minnesota recently released a report demonstrating the success of the Dental Therapist and the populations served. The document “Early Impact of the Dental Therapists in Minnesota” can be found <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/orhpc/workforce/dt/dtlegrspt.pdf>. The assessment of impact was measured by five outcomes: (1) Number of new patients served. (2) Reduction in waiting times for needed services. (3) Decreased travel time for patients. (4)

Impact on emergency room usage for dental care. (5) Costs to the public health system. Besides meeting the five outcomes the clinics reported additional impacts of dental therapists: Including personnel cost savings, increased dental team productivity, and improved patient satisfaction.

If you are interested in a 1-2 hour CE course, let me know and I would be happy to provide a course for no charge and possibly have Ann Nabor join me so she can also provide information on her travels to Alaska to view the DHAT training programs and clinics.

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