

RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT EVIDENCE-BASED ORAL HEALTH WORKFORCE SOLUTION INITIATIVES

WHEREAS, the mission of the American Public Health Association to improve health and safety of the public and achieve equity health status; and

WHEREAS, bad oral health impacts overall health and increases the risk for diabetes, heart disease, poor birth outcomes and in extreme cases deathⁱ; and

WHEREAS, an estimated 164 million hours of work and as many as 51 million hours of school are missed each year due to toothaches and other oral health issuesⁱⁱ; and

WHEREAS, more than 47 million people in the U.S. live places where it is difficult to access oral health care- including 34 of 39 counties in Washington Stateⁱⁱⁱ; and

WHEREAS, low-income adults and families are almost twice as likely as higher income persons to have gone without an oral health check up in the previous year^{iv}; and

WHEREAS, almost 60% of kids ages 5 to 17 have cavities, making tooth decay five times more common than asthma among children of this age group^v; and

WHEREAS, one-fourth of adults in the U.S. ages 65 and older have lost all of their teeth^{vi}; and

WHEREAS, a survey of two-thirds of Washington hospitals found oral health emergencies accounted for 54,000 emergency room visits and over \$35 million in expenditures between January 2008 and June 2009^{vii}; and

WHEREAS, the Washington State Hospital Association has stated these oral health emergencies often result from not having access to routine oral health care^{viii}; and

WHEREAS, the Washington State Department of Health 2014 Oral Health Strategies includes:
“Support of policies for the exploration and feasibility of new and emerging evidence based dental workforce models to increase access to and efficiency of dental treatment.”^{ix}; and

WHEREAS, one dentist in four accepts Medicaid patients while nearly 9,500 new dental providers are needed to meet the country's current oral health needs^x; and

WHEREAS, mid-level dental providers have been increasing access to oral health care in more than 50 countries for over 90 years supported by multiple bodies of research showing they provide safe, high-quality care^{xi}; and

WHEREAS, mid-level dental providers, based on best practices from around the world, are successfully providing oral health education, preventive treatments such as dental sealants and routine oral health care such as fillings, cavity preparation, extractions of primary teeth (kids) and already loose permanent teeth (adults) under the on- and off-site supervision of a dentist to increase access to limited oral health care in Alaska and Minnesota;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Washington State Public Health Association support evidence-based oral health workforce solution initiatives that would increase access to oral health care in order to improve the oral and the overall health of the people of Washington State.

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- ⁱⁱ <http://www.nidcr.nih.gov/datastatistics/surgeongeneral/report/executivesummary.htm>
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