

Smart Bites

Summer 2007

We are resuming our one page of "take home" messages following coalition meetings. It is hoped that this will condense the volume of information provided at the meetings into useable "Bites" (or bytes as in sound) for you to use while informing your organizations about OHAC!

Please make suggestions for this newsletter at coalition meetings so that the information you would find most helpful will be included in this page.

A **joint meeting of OHAC! and COHN** was held on July 27th. The purpose of the meeting was to share each organization's current efforts and to develop ideas for collaboration to enhance work in the field of oral health and to avoid duplication. A follow up meeting will be held on September 4th to specifically map out joint efforts.

A **Joint Statement of Oral Health Awareness Colorado! (OHAC!) and Colorado Oral Health Network (COHN) Regarding the Place of Oral Health in Health Care Reform** is being developed for submission to the *Blue Ribbon Commission for Health Care Reform*. The submission of the statement is hoped to bring awareness to the committee that meeting oral health needs are integral to a well-designed health care system.

An *Oral Health Improvement proposal* has been submitted jointly with COHN to the **Caring for Colorado Foundation**. The project seeks to implement strategies to strengthen the oral health safety net, prevent oral health disease, and develop public policies and funding mechanisms to increase access to care. A site visit is planned for August 23rd with award notification later this fall.

A proposal to the **Colorado Health Foundation** was recently put forward requesting funding to advance a health policy agenda for oral health. The project would educate key decision-makers on oral health policy issues, develop oral health leaders in organizations, communities and government, create coalitions that will increase the likelihood that health policy will lead to real change, and inform the public about health policy and promote its involvement. A site visit is scheduled for August 21st with award notification later this fall.

Work has begun on drafting legislation for an **oral health benefit** within the Adult Medicaid program.

Our new Managing Director, Deborah Colburn, will be holding a series of SPIT action team meetings and regional meetings with OHAC! members, oral health providers and advocates in the coming months. These meetings are critical in moving forward an oral health agenda. Email invitations will be forthcoming and you are encouraged to attend.

Please send information or suggestions for this newsletter to Deborah Colburn at md@beasmartmouth.com