



Connecticut State Dental Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 6, 2011

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CONNECTICUT DENTISTS IMPROVE ACCESS TO CARE

*The Connecticut State Dental Association Responds to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Survey
Results about Mid-Level Dental Providers*

HARTFORD, CT - The [Connecticut State Dental Association](http://www.CSDA.com) (CSDA) applauds the W.K. Kellogg Foundation for their efforts in educating Americans about the importance of improving the oral health of the nation's most vulnerable populations. However, the results of the survey are not applicable to Connecticut.

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation survey states that “four-in-ten Americans or their family members put off dental care due to cost.” “The CSDA has worked hard over the years to help improve Connecticut’s access to care,” said Dr. Tatiana Barton, CSDA President. “Connecticut dentists have made great strides in the area of providing access to care by increasing the number of participating dentists in the Connecticut Oral Health Partnership (HUSKY) from 120 to more than 1,300 providers. This is a step in the right direction as patient wait times, for non-emergency appointments, have been significantly shortened to two to four weeks. This closely mirrors the times for privately paying patients. Furthermore, a study conducted in 2008 by the Centers for Disease Control, which studied the percentage of adults aged 18+ who have visited a dentist or dental clinic in the past year shows that Connecticut leads the nation at 78.6%.”

The CSDA strives to raise awareness and develop solutions so more people can receive dental care throughout the state. “As stated on many occasions by the Connecticut Department of Social Services we no longer have an access to care issue, but a problem of utilization for the services available,” said Dr. Barton.

Ninety-five percent of Connecticut Oral Health Partnership clients are able to access dental care within 10 miles of their residence. Connecticut dentists are also working together to increase utilization by the implementation of school-based dental programs. By implementing such programs, patients are able to receive dental care on a regular basis.

“Maintaining good oral health is an important step in leading a healthy and productive life,” said Dr. Barton. “The CSDA continues to work towards providing citizens with dental care and Connecticut dentists have done a good job thus far.”

Until we have the data to prove that an alternative provider can accomplish the intended goal of increasing access to care, utilization and serving the intended population, Connecticut should not revise how access to care within the state is provided. The CSDA continues to maintain that there is still enough capacity within the current delivery system, the private practice and public health settings, to treat anyone who desires dental care through the Connecticut Dental Health Partnership. It is important to understand that dental care has a direct link to overall health and there are plenty of opportunities available for Connecticut residents without dental insurance to receive care.

To view W.K. Kellogg Foundation report, visit <http://www.wkkf.org/what-we-support/healthy-kids/dental-therapy.aspx>.

About Connecticut State Dental Association

The Connecticut State Dental Association (CSDA) has approximately 2,670 members including dentists, dental hygienists and dental assistants. As the trusted leader and voice for oral health care in Connecticut, the CSDA has advocated for the public's health and promoted the art and science of dentistry since 1864. For more information about the CSDA, visit the Association's Web site at www.csda.com.

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