

Unmet Dental Needs Study in Baker City

In addition to the Practice-based Research in Oral Health (PROH) network, OHSU also facilitates a similar medical network known as the Oregon Rural Practice-based Research Network (ORPRN). To capitalize on these two like-minded entities, they have joined forces in the research project “Understanding Unmet Dental Needs in a Rural Oregon Community: Foundations for a Model Community Based Participatory Research Intervention.”

Baker City has one dentist that accepts low income patients covered by the Oregon Health Plan and there is not an alternative venue active. Local leaders in the medical, dental, and public health field are seeking to explore collaborative approaches to address this community dental challenge.

The intent is to ultimately address three goals: 1) to determine the prevalence of unmet dental needs in a rural Oregon community, 2) to engage community partners around the topic of interventions to improve access to preventive dental care, and 3) to explore whether primary care practices may be able to provide preventive dental services which help reduce dental access barriers in rural communities.

This pilot project focuses on goal number 1. Tom Hilton, D.M.D., M.S. is leading the study with Baker City residents Sean Benson, D.D.S. (PROH member) and Jon Schott, M.D. (ORPRN member) rounding out the team.

During a regularly scheduled medical appointment, patients had their primary care clinician look into their mouths and rate four oral health conditions using standard medical codes. These include presence or lack of teeth, broken teeth, cavities, and infection. Patients also had the opportunity to complete a short anonymous survey regarding dental care availability asking if patients have health and dental insurance, whether they have a source of regular dental care, how frequently they visit a dentist, if they have any unmet dental needs, and to rate their oral health and overall health.

Primary care providers (physician assistants, nurse practitioners and medical doctors and registered nurse level nursing positions participated in a training on oral health screening conducted by Drs. Benson and Hilton. Both dentists were available for on-site feedback and guidance on the first day of the intervention and via telephone consult throughout the study period.

Approximately 1,600 oral screenings occurred over an eight week period of time in January and February of 2008. The data will be analyzed to determine the rate of dental problems and what percent of the screened patients have access to regular dental care. The results from this study will be used to develop a rationale for action and to provide the data necessary to apply for funding to develop a sustainable intervention to reduce unmet dental needs in Baker City. This intervention is intended to serve as a model for other rural communities working to reduce dental disparities.

Thomas J. Hilton, D.M.D., M.S.
 PROH Director
 503.494.8672
 hiltont@ohsu.edu

For those of you that have not completed the online HIPAA and Responsible Conduct of Research training, you can access it at: <http://www.ohsu.edu/cc/ed/bb>

- We continue to need extracted teeth for use in various laboratory studies. Please contact Cindy at 503.418.1410 for details. Thanks to all of you who have already sent us teeth and for referrals to other dentists (e.g., oral surgeons).

Jack L. Ferracane, Ph.D.
 PROH Investigator
 503.494.4327
 ferracan@ohsu.edu

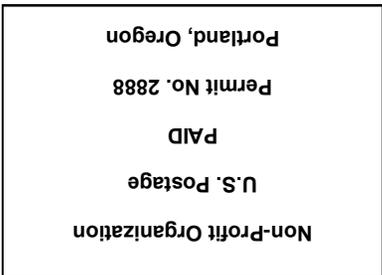
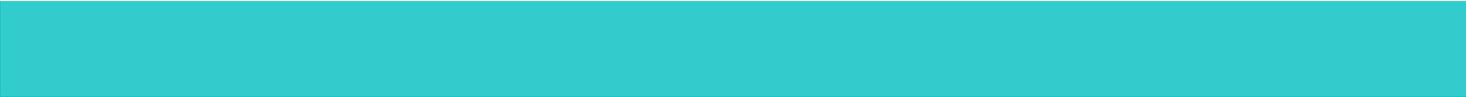
Once at the Web site, you will need to register if you haven't done so already. Use the "Non-OHSU Researcher or Collaborator" option and enter "SOD PROH Network" in the "Description of Affiliation" box. The two courses you need to take are:

- Submit your favorite seasonal photo – digital photos preferred! – to be used on the front cover of an upcoming PROH Newsletter.

Cindy G. Barnes, B.S.D.H., M.B.A.
 PROH Network Manager
 503.418.1410
 barnesc@ohsu.edu

HIPAA-Privacy and You
 RCR Involving Human Subjects

For step-by-step instructions, contact Cindy at 503.418.1410 or barnesc@ohsu.edu.



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 PROH Network
 OHSU School of Dentistry
 Mailcode SD504
 611 SW Campus Drive
 Portland, Oregon 97239
www.ohsu.edu/proh/
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