CHILDREN’S ORAL HEALTH AND ITS CONNECTION TO NUTRITION

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HISTORY OF AMERICA’S TOOTHFAIRY

- Founded in 2006 as a collaborative of clinicians, academicians, corporate leaders and other stakeholders
- Mission is to eliminate pediatric dental disease
- Educator, Preventer, and Protector
- Emphasis on children in vulnerable populations
- Work to address children’s overall health by focusing on oral health
  - Provide education opportunities to increase oral health literacy
  - Support efforts to increase access to oral healthcare
Tooth decay is one of the most common chronic childhood diseases. 20% of children (5-11) have at least 1 untreated decayed tooth. Untreated tooth decay affects low-wealth children twice as much of those in higher income households. Children who brush their teeth daily with fluoride toothpaste have less tooth decay.

Source: http://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/children_adults/child.htm
TOOTH DECAY IS 100% PREVENTABLE

- Tooth decay, or cavities, are NOT supposed to happen
- Cavities are NOT a “rite of passage”
- Children living in communities with fluoridated water have less tooth decay
- Children with access to fluoridated oral healthcare products (e.g., toothpaste, rinse) have less tooth decay
- Dental sealants reduce tooth decay in permanent molars by 81% for 2 years after applied with effectiveness lasting up to 4 years
- Fluoride varnish prevents tooth decay in primary teeth by 33%

Source: http://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/children_adults/child.htm
PROGRAMS OF AMERICA’S TOOTHFAIRY

- Youth Programs, which includes the #MySmileMatters Youth Movement
- Professional & Collegiate Programs
  - Network Affiliates
  - Esther Wilkins Education Program
  - Product Donation
  - Oral Health Zones
  - Students United with America’s ToothFairy
  - Practice of Distinction
  - Smile Drive
YOUTH PROGRAMS:
#MYSMILEMATTERS YOUTH MOVEMENT

- A set of programs aimed at engaging youth as the voice on children’s oral health
- Includes the #MySmileMatters National Youth Engagement Plan
- Social media driven
- Looks at the whole child/whole community
- Inclusive of oral health literacy, access to care and connection of overall health to oral health
- Everything from using the ToothFairy 101 Community Education Kit to planting a #toothfriendly garden to feed children and families in need to learning about community water fluoridation
YOUTH PROGRAMS: #MYSMILEMATTERS
NATIONAL YOUTH ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Four Steps:

Step 1: Get a ToothFairy 101 Community Education Kit

Step 2: Engage online

Step 3: Register to Lead a Smile Drive

Step 4: Engage all year on issues related to children’s oral health
YOUTH PROGRAMS: TOOTHFAIRY 101 COMMUNITY EDUCATION KIT

• Kit focuses on 5 core lessons
  • Brushing
  • Flossing
  • Hand Washing
  • Germ Transmission
  • Nutrition

• Provides a supplement for youth with special needs
Oral health is connected to systemic/overall health

Mouth is the “gateway” to the body

A child experiencing oral discomfort cannot eat, sleep and learn
Malnutrition is caused by poor oral health and poor oral health is caused by malnutrition.

- Alters homeostasis, which can lead to disease progression of the mouth.
- Reduces the ability to resist microbial biofilm.
- Reduces the capacity of tissue healing.
- Affects salivary glands.

If a child cannot bite into the healthy foods he has access to, he continues to suffer from hunger and malnutrition.

http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3576783/
A PROPOSAL TO ADDRESS ORAL HEALTH & NUTRITION

- Seeking funding to create a pilot project bringing oral health literacy learning opportunities to summer food service sites
  - Inclusive of the ToothFairy 101 Community Education Kits
  - Inclusive of Smile Gardens teaching children about “toothfriendly” foods and skills on growing their own food
  - Inclusive of access to oral healthcare products (toothbrush/toothpaste)
QUESTIONS?

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