

## **UNITING STAKEHOLDERS FOR ACTION ON ORAL HEALTH**

*Two existing groups come together to plan and act more effectively*

### **Public Health Problem**

- One of the hardest tasks in public health is bringing all stakeholders to the same table, identifying common goals and maintaining forward progress to achieve objectives.
- Two existing oral health stakeholder groups, the South Carolina Oral Health Advisory Council and the South Carolina Oral Health Coalition, were working in South Carolina with support from the Division of Oral Health of the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control.
- Focus group results with members of these two groups revealed a lack of effective communication and coordination which affected their ability to achieve oral health objectives.

### **Program**

- The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control Division of Oral Health used funding received through a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to bring these groups together.
- An evaluation consultant conducted a series of focus groups with Council and Coalition members whose practice locations differ widely and include private practice, public health, health care, academia, and community organizations. The Council is comprised of mainly executive level individuals who influence policy while the Coalition is comprised of individuals more familiar with practice issues.
- The focus groups revealed a need to explicitly define the roles of each as well as improve communication and coordination between the two groups.
- As a result of the assessment, a unified structure was introduced that maintains the strengths of each group while enabling them to work toward a common goal.

### **Impact**

- Unifying two groups into one oral health coalition, the South Carolina Oral Health Advisory Council and Coalition has resolved many turf-related issues and created a single vision and strong lines of communication that are contributing to successful revision and implementation of the South Carolina State Oral Health Plan.
- Advocacy training offered to stakeholders keeps coalition members interested and active in coalition activities and moving toward achievement of better oral health outcomes for South Carolina citizens.

### **Contact**

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