

HRSA/MCHB 2007 FEDERAL/STATE PARTNERSHIP MEETING

Building Blocks for Promising Practice Models

October 14 - 17, 2007

ASTDD Best Practices Project - Improving the Oral Health of Children, Families and Communities

JULIE TANG: Good morning everyone.

AUDIENCE: Good morning.

JULIE TANG: See, I got a better response. I'm Julie Tang, and I am so delighted to have this opportunity to present the development of the Best Practices Project from ASTDD. I'm going to be talking about the nuts and bolts of our program. And to show how we incorporated a bottom-up approach that focuses on working with state and local programs to help them develop their Best Practices to improve the oral health of children, families and communities.

The ASTDD Best Practices Project began in the year 2000. At that time, several new document asked stakeholders to do more for oral health. The surgeon generals report on oral health called dental and oral diseases a silent epidemic among poor children and families. A natural call to action to promote oral health asks for more planning and collaboration to replicate effective programs and to increase workforce diversity.

Healthy People 2010 provide a 17 oral health objective that established and contributed to a national agenda, and a new ASTDD report at that time asks the State Oral Health Program to build essential infrastructure. And so these documents and their call to action supported a need for a Best Practices Project in the year 2000.

So the ASTDD Best Practices Project was established with the aim to build more effective state territorial and community oral health programs. Effective program will be better able to build infrastructure, respond to the call to action and help achieve Healthy People 2010 objectives.

The goal of our project was to promote the development of Best Practices by oral health programs to enhance the oral health of Americans and reduce disparities. A steering committee was formed with nine members representing national, state and local perspectives to guide our project and help achieve this goal.

At the start of the project, we looked at the uses of Best Practice information. Best Practice information would allow our project as well as state and local programs to use successful practices as building blocks for program enhancement, share ideas and lessons learned from the field, raise awareness of oral health, promote collaboration, and help update guidelines. We also looked at who would be the end users--I'm going backwards. Oh. Well, that doesn't work. Okay. We also looked at who would be end users of our Best Practice

information. And they are the state and local dental directors and public health program, which we hope would include programs serving the MCH and Special Needs Population. End users would also include coalitions, government officials and their staff, professional and advocacy organizations, funders and consumers.

Best Practice concepts helped shaped our project and it guided the development of our project activities. I'm going to illustrate with six concepts starting with these two. A Best Practice is a methodology that through experience and research has proven to reliably lead to a desired result. Using Best Practices is a commitment to using all knowledge and technology at one's disposal to ensure successes. These concept commit our project to use both scientific evidence and lessons from the field, and to analyze and simulate and synthesize knowledge for Best Practice development.

Best Practice does not commit people or organizations to one inflexible, unchanging practice. Best Practice do not have one template or form for everyone to follow. These concepts remind us that Best Practice development is indeed a long-term commitment and that there are different but successful methods to implement an effective strategy.

Transfer of Best Practice is an interactive, ongoing and dynamic process that cannot rest on a static body of knowledge. Best Practice is a philosophical approach based around continuous learning and improvement. These concepts

guided us to partner with state and local programs, to work together and raise the bar over time, and to use current successes to build future practices.

Now, state input was also a very critical part in shaping out Best Practices Project. We went to the state dental directors and asked them to help us determine the criteria for a Best Practice. We also asked them to tell us what type of Best Practice information do state need and tell us the dental public health strategies that they are investing their resources. In addition, we also asked them to describe their top successes and the first set of self-report as successful practices helped us design on how to transfer lessons from the field.

Let's look a little closer to what Best Practice means for our ASTDD project. We wanted to know what best means to the states and also involve the states in establishing Best Practice criteria. This was a very critical step in that initial buy in. State dental directors from 45 states developed and ranked a set of Best Practice criteria for us. Based on their top criteria, our project define Best Practice as a program, service or function that shows impact or effectiveness, shows efficiency or cost effectiveness, demonstrates sustainability, shows collaboration with partners and integration into systems, and have objectives that rationally promotes oral health.

Now, our project's primary role is to serve as the information broker. In this role, we have three key activities: we developed a series of Best Practice approach

reports that we used to bring knowledge of effective dental public health strategies to programs; we collect descriptions of successful practices from states and communities to show implementation methods; and we set up Web-based resources to provide access to Best Practice information.

Now, what's in a Best Practice approach report? Well, a report captures information that describes the public health strategy, cites guidelines and recommendations, summarize research evidence and the strength of that evidence. A report also discuss Best Practice criteria for the strategy, and it illustrates successful implementation methods through a group of current practice examples and offers tools.

So far, we have developed nine Best Practice approach reports as listed here. As you can see, we have a report on state oral health surveillance system, state coalition, state plan; we have community water fluoridation, school-based sealant program, dental workforce development; and with our new report you will hear more of this on oral health for children with--children and adults with special healthcare need in our next presentation from Dr. Jay Balzer. These reports are dynamic and they are periodically updated as information becomes available through research, through expert opinion, or from the field.

In collecting descriptions of successful practices, our project use a standard form to capture information that we believe will be helpful to the end users, and they

are listed here. In particular, we asked for details about inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes of the practice, so that end users have the how-to type of information. We also asked them to tell us how well the practice met our project's five Best Practice criteria. And so far 49 states have provide us submissions to our project's database. More than 200 practices--successful practices have been described, and our collection continues to expand.

Now, in setting up Web-based resources, we put Best Practice resource information on the ASTDD website. There's a handout in your conference book in Section 12, I believe, that gives you information in navigating through the website. On the front page there's a Best Practices' link that opens up to a Best Practices front page. The front page offers access to view the Best Practice approach reports as well as other resource information. When you open the report, there's a table of contents provided that helps you navigate through the report. And for each report we always include a collection of successful practices, and links are provided to open up a descriptive report of each successful practice.

Now, as our ASTDD Best Practices Project matures, we are also developing another role. And this role is to build a more supportive environment for Best Practices. And in so doing, we are starting several activities. We want to build a stronger support network to connect the states. We want to enlist more partner support. We want to stimulate evidence building, help states keep up with the

state of the science, identify more capacity, building tools and share that with the states, and we are also looking into program and policy evaluation in order to fill knowledge gaps.

Now, we have looked at the influence of our project and have observed outcomes. They include increased access to Best Practice information as our state oral health programs are bringing Best Practice information to share with the state and local partners. We have seen states implementing more Best Practice approaches, and states are building infrastructure and developing oral health systems. And you'll hear more of this in our last presentation from Dr. Lynn Mouden.

We also have tracked how some end users are using Best Practice information. New state dental directors are learning from the Best Practice approach reports. State oral health programs are bringing Best Practice information to their coalitions for planning and action, Best Practice ideas are being incorporated in community grant programs, and indeed, we are seeing programs adapting, replicating or building on the successful practices that are being reported by states and community.

The ASTDD Best Practices Project continue its support on the ongoing and dynamic development of Best Practices. We are seeking collaboration and integration to improve activities related to identifying, promoting and cultivating

Best Practices to expand on the knowledge of bringing the science and the art of successful implementation and to have a supportive environment. We want to hone our projects effort to make sure that it measures up to the criteria we set for our Best Practice.

So, in closing, I just want to say that our journey continues. The ASTDD Best Practices Project has started its seventh year. We expect our project to evolve and continue to serve a better role in supporting state and local programs to improve oral health. Thank you very, very much for your kind attention.