



Montgomery County Government

MEMORANDUM

February 7, 1984

TO: County Council

FROM: Andrew Mansinne, Jr., Director, Office of Legislative Oversight

SUBJECT: Office of Legislative Oversight Memorandum Report: The Dental Services Program of the Department of Health

PURPOSE. To provide the County Council with a report on the Department of Health's program of dental services.

AUTHORITY. Council Resolution 9-2040, subject: FY 83 Work Program of the Office of Legislative Oversight, adopted November 16, 1983.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DENTAL SERVICES PROGRAM.

1. Overview. The Montgomery County Health Department provides a variety of essential health services to County residents, one of which is dental services. Although representing only 2% of the Health Department's FY 84 Operating Budget, the dental program provides a variety of services for children under 21, elderly citizens and maternity patients. (Adults 21 and over are provided emergency dental services.) Dental services are not mandated by the State. However, for those counties which provide dental services, the State Department of Health and Mental Hygiene has published a set of minimum dental standards. The County meets these standards.

2. Program objectives and types of services provided. The overall goal of the Dental Services program is to insure optimum dental health for the residents of Montgomery County and to meet the needs of the eligible population of the County for high quality and timely care. The primary objectives of the dental program are to provide and promote dental educational programs which prevent dental problems and provide essential dental treatment for persons who cannot obtain treatment from any other source. Treatment is provided at five health centers located in Gaithersburg, Wheaton, Rockville, Northeast (New Hampshire Avenue) and Silver Spring; and at the Dennis Avenue Specialty Clinic (off Georgia Avenue in Wheaton). The most frequent treatments performed are examinations, x-rays, cleaning, restoration and extractions. Limited oral surgery and prosthetic services are also provided. At TABLE I is a complete list of dental treatment services provided.

DENTAL PROGRAM PARTICIPATION WITH PRIVATE SECTOR DENTISTS.

The Southern Maryland Dental Society has, since late 1979, provided dental services for senior citizens of low income status. This program, which is officially called the Southern Maryland Dental Society Low Cost Dental Program for Senior Citizens (SENIOR-DENT), involves private practitioners who volunteer to provide services for senior citizens who have been qualified by the County Dental Services as financially eligible to receive dental services at a reduced fee. The cost of the treatment is shared three ways: the participating private dentist who accepts a predetermined fee based on the latest fee schedule for Medicaid or a multiple thereof; the dental lab which agrees to provide a level of service at a set fee; and the senior citizen who pays the predetermined fee to the participating dentist after a financial evaluation by Dental Services.

In the four years since the program was initiated, approximately 540 seniors have been certified by the Dental Services as financially qualified to participate in the program. Currently, over 50 Montgomery County dentists are participating in the SENIOR-DENT program.

EVALUATION OF THE DENTAL SERVICES PROGRAM.

1. General. While Dental Services accounts for only 2% of the Montgomery County Health Department's total budget, the program provides essential dental treatment and services to a large cross section of our County citizens who might otherwise not receive such treatment.

In the absence of a needs assessment, it is not possible to opine as to whether an appropriate portion of the Health Department's budget is being dedicated to the Dental Services program. But it is very apparent that those responsible for the Dental Services program are serving a large proportion of the low-income citizenry with a variety of needed dental services.

2. Comparison with another County dental program. Applying general evaluation criteria in a comparison of the dental services provided by Montgomery County with those provided by the health department of a nearby county with similar characteristics (demographic and socio-economic) and with comparable dental services guidelines, one is clearly impressed with Montgomery County's Dental Services program. Some highlights of Montgomery County's Dental Services program as compared with the other county include:

.Although the total Health Department budgets of the two counties are almost the same, the Dental Services program budget in Montgomery County is almost 25% higher.

.The total professional dental staff (merit and contract dentists) in Montgomery County is twice that of the other county.

.More types of treatments are offered by the Montgomery County Dental Services (for example: oral surgery, prosthetics and orthodontia).

Services is seldom mentioned by the media or highlighted in budget deliberations. Fortunately, the Dental Services staff does not let this lack of attention adversely affect its dedication and productivity.

Two positions in Dental Services deserve comment: the Chief, Dental Health Services, Grade 34 and Administrative Aide III, Grade 11.

.The position of Chief, Dental Health Services has been vacant for over two years. One of the Public Health Dentists, Grade 31, has been serving as acting chief during that period while carrying a full load of patients at the Gaithersburg Health Center. It would appear that the position of Chief should have been filled or otherwise resolved in that period of time.

.While conducting this evaluation and observing dental employees perform their duties it became readily apparent that the merit employee presently assigned to the position of Administrative Aide III routinely performs duties which are more complex, demanding and responsible than those enumerated in the Administrative Aide III class specification. A desk audit is clearly called for to determine the appropriate and fair class specification for this position.

CONCLUSIONS.

1. The Dental Services program of the Health Department is an effective program which is efficiently managed.
2. Specialized dental treatment for senior citizens is an especially important and innovative component of the services provided by the Health Department to the elderly.
3. The position of Chief, Dental Health Services, has been vacant for over two years with a Public Health Dentist acting as chief during that period.
4. The merit employee presently occupying the position of Administrative Aide III routinely performs duties which are more complex, demanding and responsible than those in the Administrative Aide III class specification.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A decision should be made either to fill the long vacant position of Chief, Dental Health Services or abolish the class in accordance with Section 7.4(e) of the Personnel Regulations.
2. The Classifications Division, Department of Personnel should perform a desk audit of the merit employee currently occupying the position of Administrative Aide III.

TABLE I

Health Department Dental Services
Dental Treatment Services Provided in
the Five Area Health Centers*
and the Dennis Avenue Specialty Clinic

FIVE AREA HEALTH CENTERS

Consultations	Extractions/local anesthesia
Oral examinations and diagnosis	Periodontal therapy
Diagnostic radiographs	Chairside education
Cleanings and fluoride treatments	Nutrition counselling
Fillings/local anesthesia	Prescribe for pain and infection
Pulp therapy	Parent counselling

DENNIS AVENUE SPECIALTY CLINIC

Prosthetics Program for Seniors

Consultations and examinations
Diagnostic radiographs
Partial denture construction
Full denture construction
Denture repairs
Denture relines
Denture rebases
Denture adjustments

Orthodontic Clinic

Consultations and examinations
Diagnostic radiographs
Orthodontic appliances
Braces (limited)
Study models
Therapeutic exercises

Oral Surgery Clinic

Consultations and examinations
Diagnostic radiographs
Surgical extractions
Alveoplasty
Biopsy
Frenectomy
Suture and suture removal
Post operative instructions & care
Prescribe medications
Local anesthesia
Blood pressure monitoring
Oral cancer screening

Prophylaxis Clinic

Cleaning and fluoride treatment
Cavitron
Scaling
Dental health education
Nutrition counselling

*Note: Located in Gaithersburg, Wheaton, Rockville, Northeast (New Hampshire Avenue) and Silver Spring.

TABLE II

Health Department Dental Services
Actual Patient Load by Age Groups
For Five Area Health Centers and
Specialty Clinic for FYs 1981-83
 (with FY 84 Projection)

Patients By Age Group		FY 81	FY 82	FY 83*	FY 84 (projected)
Pre-school 1-4	New Pts.	2,348	2,033	2,327	2,340
	Pt Visits	2,996	2,864	3,831	3,840
School age 5-20	New Pts	2,261	2,622	2,347	2,350
	Pt Visits	4,512	5,023	4,620	4,620
Adults 21-59**	New Pts	198	298	484	490
	Pt Visits	460	532	803	810
Senior Citizens 60+ (Prosthetics)	New Pts	202	211	235	250
	Pt Visits	1,267	1,245	1,217	1,250
Senior Citizens 60+ (Oral Surgery)	New Pts	N/A	92	66*	70
	Pt Visits		187	161	170
TOTAL All Ages	New Pts	5,009	5,256	5,459	5,500
	Pt Visits	9,235	9,851	10,632	10,690

Note: *The Specialty Clinic at Dennis Avenue was closed for the five months in FY 82 for renovation. Impact was mainly on senior citizens.

**Maternity patients and emergencies.

Additional Note: The above figures for FY 83 do not include the following:

- .Almost 900 Head Start children who were seen without charge in the schools;
- .A full time dental hygienist who provided 225 Dental Health Education Programs to schools, day care centers, and senior citizen sites; and
- .Over 13,500 telephone and walk-in contacts by Montgomery County citizens seeking resource information on County dental services or other dental resource information, or needing urgent dental consultations for individual problems.

TABLE III

Health Department Dental Services
Authorized Full Time Positions and
Work Years FY 81-84

<u>Position</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>FY 81</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>FY 82</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>FY 83</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>FY 84</u> <u>Bud</u>	<u>FY 84</u> <u>Actua</u>
Chief, Dental Health Serv.	34	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	0
Public Health Dentist II	31	3.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	3.0
Dental Hygientist	12	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Administrative Aide III	11	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Dental Assistant	8	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
TOTAL		<u>10.0</u>	<u>10.0</u>	<u>9.0</u>	<u>9.0</u>	<u>9.0</u>

*One Public Health Dentist II is serving as Acting Chief

TABLE IV
Health Department Dental Services
FY 84 Assignment of Merit and
Contract Staff by Health Facility

I. AREA HEALTH CENTERS (total of 5)

<u>Full Time Merit Staff</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Health Center</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
1 - Public Health Dentist II	31	Gaithersburg--4 days/week Northeast--1 day/week	Currently Acting Chief, Dental Health Services. Devotes approximately 4 hrs/week at Dennis Avenue on administrative matters.
1 - Public Health Dentist II	31	Wheaton--3 days/week Rockville--2 days/week	
1 - Public Health Dentist II	31	Silver Spring--5 days/week	
3 - Dental Assistants	8	One for each of the three Public Health Dentists	
<u>Part Time Merit Staff</u>			
1 - Dental Hygienist	12	Visits schools. 30 hrs/week for 10 months	Paid with Head Start Funds.
<u>Contract Staff</u>			
1 - General Dentist	--	Northeast--1 day/week (8) hrs	Approximately \$17.50/hr., paid with Head Start Funds providing general dental services.

II. DENNIS AVENUE SPECIALTY CLINIC

<u>Full Time Merit Staff</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Health Center</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
1 - Dental Hygienist	12	5 days/week	
1 - Dental Assistant	8	5 days/week	
1 - Administrative Aide III	11	5 days/week	
<u>Contract Staff</u>			
2 - Oral Surgeons	--	Total of 7 hrs/week	Approximately \$26.00/hr. In a typical month in FY 83 provided emergency or pre-prosthetic oral surgery for approximately 40 eligible patients. Of the 40 patients, 15 were senior citizens
1 - Orthodontist	--	7 hrs/week	Approximately \$22.50/hr. In a typical month in FY 83, provided 48 school age children with orthodontic consultations and treatments.
2 - Dentists for Prosthetics	--	Total of 20 hrs/week	Approximately \$17.50/hr. In a typical month in FY 83, fabricated six partial dentures, sixteen dentures and other miscellaneous denture services for 20 senior citizens.

TABLE V

Health Department Dental Services
Actual Expenditures FY 81-83
(Budget Authorization for FY 84)

<u>Category</u>	<u>FY 81</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>FY 82</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>FY 83</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>FY 84</u> <u>Budget</u>
General Fund	\$392,442	\$378,585	\$382,910	\$410,630
Headstart Grant				
Clinician	7,490	8,360	7,200	9,180
Dental Hygienist	10,088	11,260	12,220	12,835
TOTAL Program Costs	\$410,020	\$398,205	\$402,330	\$432,645