## Massachusetts Department of Public Health – Oral Health Equity Project

Community Event Notes and Survey Results

*June 2016*

## Question #1: When you have a question about where to go for dental care, where do you go to get the information?

* Do research online (MedClinic, other search engines)
* Go to the dentist themselves

## Question # 2: Have you experienced any problems/challenges in getting your child dental care in Worcester/Holyoke? If so, what problem or challenges?

* There is trouble getting hold of dentists at EMK; the phone line always busy
* No known language barriers for those who speak Spanish or English, but for those who speak other languages (Arabic, African languages)
* One child has difficulty maintaining their gag reflex when someone else is cleaning their mouth; because of that difficulty, the parent cleans the child’s teeth (although the child is four years old). Finding a dentist that won’t “yell after gagging” is important.

## Question # 3: Do you know of any programs or resources in Worcester/Holyoke that have been successful in addressing some of the problems/challenges you experience in getting your child dental care?

* “Yes, there’s plenty of dental programs around us: they have one right here at the center. There’s also one on Lincoln St. Residents in the complex have access to and know about dental services near here.”
* “Smiles on Park Ave does a good job”
* “They tried to have a dental program here at the center before”, but the program was unsuccessful due to the lack of coordination with parent’s schedules and those of the children that they wanted to serve; most of the children that the mobile clinic wanted to serve were in schools. They had a few program participants during the times they came to the center, because everyone else was really busy”
* “My child attends Guild of St. Agnes school in Worcester, and each child is given a toothbrush to brush teeth after meals”

## Question # 4: Suggestions for improving access for dental services?

* *No suggestions were made at this point in the event.*

## Other comments made during the meeting:

* Transportation is not an issue for those who are seeking dental care + live near the center
* Cost of dental care is relatively reasonable
* There’s lots of dentists in this area that accept MassHealth insurance

# Survey Results:

## *Survey Respondents:*

* 37 respondents responded “White”
* 63 respondents responded “Hispanic”
* 19 respondents responded “Black”
* 1 respondent responded “Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander”
* 11 respondents responded “Asian”

## *Languages Spoken at Home:*

* 90 respondents spoke English at home
* 43 respondents spoke Spanish at home
* 1 respondent spoke Portuguese at home
* 2 respondents spoke Vietnamese at home
* 7 respondents spoke another, unlisted language at home
* 1 respondent spoke English and Haitian Creole at home
* 11 respondents spoke English and Spanish at home
* 1 respondent spoke English and Arabic at home
* 1 respondent spoke English and Twi at home
* 1 respondent spoke English and Portuguese at home

## *Income:*

* 49 respondents earned less than $25K annually
* 26 respondents earned between $25K to $44,999 annually
* 11 respondents earned between $45K to $59K annually
* 21 respondents earned more than $60K annually
* 20 respondents preferred not to answer
* 4 respondents did not answer the question

## *Respondent Children’s Data:*

***0 – 5 Year Old Children***

* 52 respondents had no children between 0 and 5 years old
* 50 respondents had one child between 0 and 5 years old
* 11 respondents had two children between 0 and 5 years old
* 7 respondents had three children between 0 and 5 years old
* 5 respondents had four or more children between 0 and 5 years old

***6 – 14 Year Old Children***

* 40 respondents had no children between 6 and 14 years old
* 49 respondents had one child between 6 and 14 years old
* 19 respondents had two children between 6 and 14 years old
* 6 respondents had three children between 6 and 14 years old
* 8 respondents had four or more children between 6 and 14 years old

## *Dental visit in the past year:*

* 93/129 answered “yes” (72.1%)
* 24/129 answered “no” (18.6%)
* 12/129 did not give a response (9.3%)

## *Drink other than water in bed:*

* 12/129 parents answered that their children “always drinks more than water before bed” (9.3%)
* 39/129 parents answered that their children “never drink more than water before bed” (30.2%)
* 59/129 parents answered that their children “sometimes drinks more than water before bed” (45.7%)
* 19/129 parents did not respond to the question (14.7%)

## *Fluoride helps prevent tooth decay:*

* 111/129 parents agreed that fluoride helped to prevent tooth decay (86%)
* 2/129 parents did not agree that fluoride prevented tooth decay (1.55%)
* 15/129 parents did not know that fluoride helped to prevent tooth decay (11.6%)
* 1/129 parent did not respond to the question (.77%)

## *The risk of getting tooth decay increased with more frequent exposure to sugar in snacks:*

* 116/129 agreed that the risk of tooth decay increases with more frequent sugar exposure (89.9%)
* 5/129 disagreed that the risk of tooth decay increases with more frequent sugar exposure (3.9%)
* 4/129 did not know that the risk of tooth decay increases with more frequent sugar exposure (3.1%)
* 3/129 did not respond to the question (2.3%)

## *All children older than 6 months should receive fluoride drops or tablets every day:*

* 65/129 agreed that all children older than 6 months should receive fluoride daily (50.4%)
* 15/129 did not agree that all children older than 6 months should receive fluoride daily (16.6%)
* 46/129 did not know that all children older than 6 months should receive fluoride daily (27.7%)
* 3/129 did not respond to the question (2.3%)

## *All children should be checked by a dentist around the time the first tooth comes in:*

* 115/129 agreed that all children should be checked by a dentist around the time the first tooth comes in (91.6%)
* 4/129 did not agree that all children should be checked by a dentist around the time the first tooth comes in (2.7%)
* 7/129 did not know that all children should be checked by a dentist around the time the first tooth comes in (5.5%)
* 3/129 did not respond to the question (2.3%)

## *A child's overall health does not depend on whether he/she has cavities in baby teeth:*

* 90/129 agreed that overall health does not depend on cavities in baby teeth (69.7%)
* 15/129 did not agree that overall health does not depend on cavities in baby teeth (16.6%)
* 18/129 did not know that overall health does not depend on cavities in baby teeth (%)
* 3/129 did not answer the question (2.3%)

## *Parents should brush their child's teeth twice a day until the child can handle the toothbrush alone:*

* 54/129 agreed that parents should brush their child’s teeth twice a day until the child can handle the toothbrush alone (42%)
* 47/129 did not agree that parents should brush their child’s teeth twice a day until the child can handle the toothbrush alone (36.4%)
* 22/129 did not know that parents should brush their child’s teeth twice a day until the child can handle the toothbrush alone (17.1%)
* 6/129 did not answer the question (4.7%)

## *Enough dental info:*

* 93/129 parents agreed that parents had enough information about how to get dental care for their child (72.1%)
* 24/129 parents did not agree that parents had enough information about how to get dental care for their child (18.6%)
* 12/129 did not respond to the question (9.3%)

## *Who answers your dental questions?:*

* 46 parents said that they find answers to oral health questions from the internet
* 88 parents said that they find answers to oral health questions through a dentist
* 15 parents said that they find answers to oral health questions through a MassHealth representative
* 47 parents said that they find answers to oral health questions through a pediatrician
* 8 parents said that they did not know how they find answers to oral health questions
* 2 parents said that they find answers to oral health questions through another resource
* 2 parents did not respond to the question

## *Biggest Challenges*

* 28 parents said that transportation is the biggest challenge to their child’s dental care
* 30 parents said that getting an appointment is the biggest challenge to their child’s dental care
* 13 parents said that dental providers not fluent in my language is the is the biggest challenge to their child’s dental care
* 21 parents said that finding the time is the biggest challenge to their child’s dental care
* 22 parents said that the cost of dental care is the biggest challenge to their child’s dental care
* 14 parents said that finding a dental provider who accepts my insurance is the biggest challenge to their child’s dental care
* 39 parents said that there are no challenges to their child’s dental care
* 7 parents said that other elements are a challenge to their child’s dental care
* 4 parents did not respond to the question

## *Solutions*

* 52 parents said that more dentists that accept MassHealth would make getting dental care easier for their child
* 48 parents said that more flexible dental care operating hours would make getting dental care easier for their child
* 31 parents said that more convenient dental care locations would make getting dental care easier for their child
* 10 parents said that more non-English speaking dentists would make getting dental care easier for their child
* 4 parents said that other solutions would make getting dental care easier for their child
* 24 parents had no response to the question