

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
SPECIAL COMMISSION ON ORAL HEALTH MEETING
PREVENTION SUBCOMMITTEE

Monday, January 17, 2025
Via Microsoft Teams
11:00 PM
General (Open Session) Meeting Minutes

Board Members

Present: 5

1. Chair: Lisa LaSpina
2. Myron Allukian Jr. 11:41 AM
3. Grace Christianson
4. John Fisher
5. Manwai Ng

Board Members

Not Present: 4

1. Meredith Bailey
2. Merelyn Hong
3. Jennifer Magee
4. Lisa Wrightington

Staff Present:

1. Angela Verheyen

I. Welcome

II. Call to Order | Determination of Quorum

Time and call to order (11:08 Lisa LaSpina)

#Present: 5

1. Chair: Lisa LaSpina
2. Myron Allukian Jr
3. Grace Christianson
4. John Fisher
5. Manwai Ng

Absent: 4

1. Meredith Bailey
2. Merelyn Hong
3. Jennifer Magee
4. Lisa Wrightington

Recused: 0
Abstained:0

III. Approval of Agenda

DISCUSSION

Review the posted agenda, no changes

ACTION

Motion by Lisa LaSpina to approve the agenda, and unanimously approved by a roll call vote as follows:

Approved: 5

1. Chair: Lisa LaSpina
2. Myron Allukian Jr
3. Grace Christianson
4. John Fisher
5. Manwai Ng

Absent: 4

1. Meredith Bailey
2. Merelyn Hong
3. Jennifer Magee
4. Lisa Wrightington

#Recused: 0
#Abstained: 0

IV. Approval of the 1-6-2025 Meeting Minutes

DISCUSSION

The chair, Lisa LaSpina, inquired if any amendments were needed for the meeting minutes sent to the subcommittee appointees. No changes were made.

Affirm that the emailed minor changes were completed

ACTION

Lisa LaSpina motioned to approve meeting minutes and unanimously approved by roll call vote as follows

Present: 5

1. Chair: Lisa LaSpina
2. Myron Allukian Jr
3. Grace Christianson
4. John Fisher
5. Manwai Ng

Absent: 4

1. Meredith Bailey
2. Merelyn Hong
3. Jennifer Magee
4. Lisa Wrightington

#Recused: 0

#Abstained: 0

IV. Work on the Plan for Developing an Oral Health Needs Assessment - Prevention

DISCUSSION

- Slides were presented to review the Special Commission on Oral Health (SCOH) plan and deliverables, defining the why and the what of drafting the plan for an oral health needs assessment with a clear statement of why we think specific topics should be included in the needs assessment
- Review worksheet deliverables
 - Notes from the last meeting were reviewed
- Suggestion to change the name of the subcommittee from Prevention to Prevention of Oral Disease
 - Define the measures for dental disease and affected population needs
 - Preventive measures and how they applies to different populations
- Subtopics #1 Fluorides
 - Fluorides as different mechanisms
 - Community population-based use of fluorides
 - Individual population-based use of fluorides
 - Define the significant preventive measures for dental disease and how they apply to different populations
 - Primary prevention – preventing a disease before it occurs
 - Secondary prevention – Once it occurs, how do you prevent it from getting worse
 - Tertiary Prevention- Once the disease has destroyed the tooth, how do you rehabilitate it
 - How different populations are affected, for example:
 - Water fluoridation benefits everyone
 - School fluoride programs; only the participants benefit
 - Fluoride toothpaste only benefits the people who use it
 - Other preventive measures/programs (oral cancer, vaccine, mouthguards)
- Subtopic #2 Racial Equity and Social Justice (slide based on minute notes)
 - What percentage of the population has access to programs and treatments
 - What preventive measures affect the oral health of the population
 - Understanding where funding goes and looking at the rate of disease in funded and non-funded communities
 - How many dentists take MassHealth patients by communities

- Difference in oral hygiene status and care based on race, age, and education
 - The number of emergency room visits
 - Percentage of patients that are edentulous
- There are very few measures available based on claims data
- The difficulty is acquiring the data we need to measure these things
- MassHealth should be able to give the number of kids in the program who are getting care, sealants, and fluoride
- We can set goals without worrying about how to do it; We are a legislative commission, and we do not need to get this information on our own
- We should look at the percentage of preventive care by racial and ethnicity.
- Make a recommendation to allow Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to purchase toothbrushes, floss, toothpaste, and fluoride rinse.
- Subtopic #3 Oral Health Literacy (slide from minute notes)
 - Request licensure information and the number of languages spoken and compare to languages spoken across the Commonwealth and any language barriers
 - How is it preventing oral health care
 - Oral health literacy and how dental health professionals communicate with individuals with different levels of education and literacy levels
 - Healthy People 2030 and their goals
 - Massachusetts data on the Office of Oral Health website
 - Review of the 2000 Commission report for ideas, specifically page 35
 - The OOH website has Oral Health Basics that can be put into Infographics. Pictures are a universal way to communicate.
 - Purchase data on sugary foods and drinks and Boston's proposed tax on these products. When taxes are implemented, the purchase decreases, especially in low-income communities. Compare purchasing data to other states
- Three preventive measures to look at equity and racial justice for each
- Indicators for different categories
- Other subtopics could include sealants and oral cancer and HPV vaccine and how to prevent it
- Tobacco control was brought up as a topic; it was discussed that it is important but will not be the focus area
- Oral Health Literacy expanded and how it applies; Oral health education to be included in oral health literacy
- Oral health education does not change behavior. Repetitive education does. Oral health education itself does not change behavior, and you need parental involvement
- The chair inquired if resources should be added to the bottom of the deliverable discussed as it would be helpful when presenting to SCOH
- Does the dental board collect the languages spoken by licenses? Could we find this out? Because 25 % of kids 18 and under are Hispanic, and only 6% of dentists are Hispanic. It would be nice to know the percent
- How many dentists use interpreter services in their practice
- Delegate subtopics to members to research data to complete the deliverable worksheet questions and fill in the data table; Keep the timeframe like the example on the worksheet
 - Myron Allukian Jr – Fluoride

- Grace Christianson – Oral Health Literacy (the University of Maryland has OHL)
- Manwai Ng – Sealants and fluoride varnish
- Lisa LaSpina – Vaccine
- John Fisher – Mouthguards
- Health Promotion, reducing sugar, and education are as important as preventive care. A community-based intervention mimicking tobacco taxing sugary drinks would use the taxes to educate.
- The group requested that you send the slides, the worksheet being worked on, and a blank worksheet to the whole group.
- A request to send the Boston Globe article on fluoride to all SCOH members.
- The next meeting is on February 4, and Dr. Allukian will not be available to attend; Dr. Allukian will send his worksheet to Angela.
- The group asked if this subcommittee could meet in person. Angela will get a definitive response if an in-person meeting can take place. This group feels that this way of conducting meetings is not as productive as in-person meetings.

V. Adjourn

DISCUSSION

None.

ACTION

Motion by Lisa LaSpina to adjourn the meeting, seconded by John Fisher, and unanimously approved by roll call vote as follows:

Approved: 5

1. Chair: Lisa LaSpina
2. Myran Allukian Jr
3. Grace Christianson
4. John Fisher
5. Manwai Ng

Absent: 4

1. Meredith Bailey
2. Merelyn Hong
3. Jennifer Magee
4. Lisa Wrightington

Recused: 0

Abstained: 0

Let the record show the meeting adjourned at 12:17 PM.