

Oral Health

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Oral Health according to the World Health Organization (WHO) is:

“a state of being free from mouth and facial pain, oral and throat cancer, oral infection and sores, periodontal disease, tooth decay, tooth loss, and other diseases and disorders that limit an individual’s capacity in biting, chewing, smiling, speaking and psychosocial wellbeing”

It is clear from the WHO definition, that oral health is intimately linked to overall health and quality of life. Despite that fact, oral health is a microcosm of what ails modern healthcare: challenges with access to care, prevention, and evidence-based safe and quality care. That being said, much good work is being done and this Delaware Journal of Public Health edition will highlight current areas of success while also pointing out areas of opportunity, for the future, to improve oral health in America and beyond.

Specifically, Dr. Omar Khan and Executive Director Tim Gibbs introduce the concept of oral health within the discipline of Dentistry; Dr. Jeff Cole talks about the future of Oral Health in America; Medical Society of Delaware President, Dr. Prayus Tailor, discusses the importance of medicine and dentistry working together; Drs. Joseph Napoli and Linda Vallino review modern day cleft lip and palate care; Dr. Lou Rafetto and Ms. Alexandra Rafetto look at office-based anesthesia delivery in the outpatient dental setting; Delaware Public Health Dental Director, Dr. Nick Conte pushes providers to think differently around pain management strategies in oral healthcare; Dr. Joseph Alpert, in a reprint, provides an editorial emphasizing the importance of the link between oral health and systemic health; Dr. Etern Park provides an update on oral cancer and the human papilloma virus (HPV) connection; Delaware State Dental Society President, Dr. Rachel Maher, stresses the need to improve education and community outreach around oral health and dental disease; and, lastly, I add a piece about oral health being essential to achieving health of a population.

I expect that that you will enjoy this edition of the journal and I hope that it will be engaging and enlightening and that, possibly, you will be emboldened to participate in the prioritization of oral health as an essential part of the redesign of American healthcare.

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