

# Developing Routine Oral Health Surveillance: Lessons Learned

National Oral Health Conference 2007  
Denver, Colorado

Lori Kepler Cofano, R.D.H., B.S.D.H.  
Oral Health Screening Coordinator

Nevada State Health Division  
Bureau of Family Health Services  
Oral Health Program



# Nevada's Oral Health Landmarks: A Brief Overview

- 1979** - Community College of Southern Nevada (CCSN) graduated first dental hygiene class.
- 1994** - Saint Mary's established Take Care-A-Van dental sealant program to serve Washoe County and surrounding rural counties.
- 1998** - Governor's Maternal and Child Health Advisory Board released *An Oral Health Action Plan for Nevada*.
- 1999** - Legislature appropriated one-time funding for a Nevada State Health Division Oral Health Initiative.
- 2000** - Clark County implemented community water fluoridation.
- 2001** - Oral Health Program funded by CDC cooperative agreement.
- 2001** - Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC) graduated first dental hygiene class.
- 2002** - State Oral Health Advisory Committee established.
- 2002** - Community Coalition for Oral Health (CCOH) established in Clark County.
- 2006** - University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV) School of Dental Medicine (SODM) graduated first class.

# Nevada

## From Nothing to Something

- 2003 Nevada's first Basic Screening Survey (BSS).
- BSS "history" in Nevada:
  - ❖ *2003 Third Grade* Volunteer dentists statewide.
  - ❖ *2004 Head Start* Oral Health Screening Coordinator (OHSC) screened statewide.
  - ❖ *2005 Senior* OHSC screened statewide.
  - ❖ *2006 Third Grade* University of Nevada Las Vegas, School of Dental Medicine in Las Vegas area; OHSC remaining areas of state.
  - ❖ *2007 Head Start* Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC) dental hygiene program in northern part of the state; Community College of Southern Nevada (CCSN) dental hygiene Program in Las Vegas area; OHSC remaining programs statewide.

# Overview of Nevada's Surveillance

- ❖ Three year cycle.
- ❖ May replace senior BSS cycle with special needs population.
- ❖ BSS funded through CDC grant.
- ❖ No state funding for Oral Health Program.
- ❖ Collaborate with partners to assist for the BSS.
- ❖ No BSS FY 2008.

# Who Was that Masked Woman?

❖ Nevada has an Oral Health Screening Coordinator (OHSC) who is a licensed dental hygienist.

❖ **Duties include:**

1. Delegation.
2. Contacts and approvals.
3. Development of forms and letters.
4. Screening statewide.
5. Collaborative efforts.
6. Annual BSS evaluation; includes forms and recommended improvements.



# Nevada's BSS Team

## ➤ The OHSC

## ➤ The Oral Health Biostatistician

- ❖ Travels with the OHSC to enter real-time data.
- ❖ Analyzes data.
- ❖ Compiles final report based on data collected.

## ■ Part-Time Oral Health team member

- ❖ Oversees inventory of BSS supplies.
- ❖ Reorders supplies.
- ❖ Packs supplies.
- ❖ Ships supplies.
- ❖ Assists with “crowd control.”



# Don't Be the Lone Ranger



- ❖ **Successful BSS requires:**
  - ❖ Multiple staff for “in-house” data collection.
  - ❖ Delegation of duties.
  - ❖ Collaborative partners.

# The Call to Organize

- ❖ Begin planning process early.
- ❖ Determine population.
- ❖ Determine size of population.
- ❖ Determine locations.
- ❖ Begin contact process.
- ❖ Maintain contact.





# “Buy In” is Essential



- “Buy in” = Success.
- Obtain “upper management” support prior to starting a BSS.
  - ✓ State Superintendent.
  - ✓ Head Start grantee director.
  - ✓ person with influence.
- Support from next “management level.”
  - ✓ District Superintendents.
  - ✓ individual Head Start site directors.
  - ✓ person with influence at screening site.

# Contacts

➤ Direct contact at each site is preferable.

➤ Contact:

- Maintains contact with OHSC.
- Schedules screening date & time with OHSC.
- Oversees consent forms.
- Prepares site for BSS.

➤ OHSC:

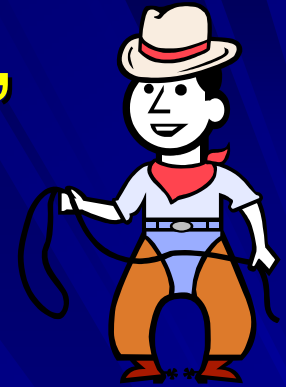
- ✓ Creates working relationship with contact.
- ✓ Gets contacts information; phone/fax number, email address.
- ✓ Keeps in touch with contact.
- ✓ Confirms date(s) & time(s).
- ✓ Verifies that consent forms are sent out and returned.

# The Paper “Trail”

- We require positive consent to screen a child.
- Letter of explanation.
- Consent form.
- Treatment urgency form.
- Forms in English and Spanish.
- Inventory tracking, supplies sent, travel information, contact information.

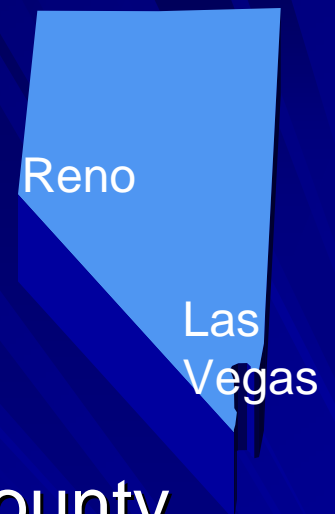


# Round Up Your “Pardners”



- ❖ Partnering allows BSS team “office time.”
- ❖ Possible collaborative partners.
  - Dentist(s), dental hygienist(s), dental or dental hygiene students.
- ❖ Required attendance at calibration session.
- ❖ Calibration done using sample of chosen population.
- ❖ Problem with over recording.

# Mapping Out Territories



- Divide state into “territories.”
- Territory with largest population is Clark County (Las Vegas area).
- Population size created need for partners.
- OHSC typically screens in Washoe County (Reno) and rural areas.

# The “Nevada Trail”

- Schedule based on:
  - Location
  - Weather
  - Site’s schedule
    - ✓ Holidays, testing schedules, parent conferences, teacher in-service days, first and last day of school, etc.
    - ✓ Doctor appointments, shopping trips, bingo, etc.
  
- Information = Easier to “map out schedule.”



# Evaluation



- Reevaluate what worked and what didn't.

Ask the following questions:

- ✓ Is there a more cost effective way to complete the BSS?
  - ✓ Are there other entities to collaborate with?
  - ✓ Did we collect the data we set out to collect?
  - ✓ Is there anything we can do to make things run more smoothly?
- Annual BSS report to reassess our “lessons learned.”
  - Collaborator evaluations for feedback.

# Are We On the Right “Trail”?

- ❖ Asked various collaborators statewide if data is useful.

## Sample responses:

“I use it at the School of Dental Medicine when instructing my students on children’s caries experience in the State of Nevada.”

“We use the data for grant-related purposes and to project need.”

“The Head Start data, along with other data generated by the state, have been incredibly important as we apply for funding to continue to provide services for those who cannot afford them.”

“I think it may also play a role in the Washoe County fluoridation issue as those discussions evolve.”



# Lessons Learned

- Expect the unexpected.
- Flexibility.
- Not everyone thinks your data collection project is as important as you do.
- Enjoy what you do. Enthusiasm is contagious!
- Flexibility is a mental and physical phenomena.

# Eureka!

- ❖ We “hit pay dirt” with our data.

Nevada State Health Division website:

[www.health.nv.gov](http://www.health.nv.gov)

Contact:

Lori Cofano, RDH

Oral Health Screening Coordinator

[lcofano@health.nv.gov](mailto:lcofano@health.nv.gov)

(775)684-4268

