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## Member Newsletter



January 12, 2012



## Coalition News

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### 2012 Legislative Action Day Mark Your Calendar for March 6



Being a good advocate starts with active participation. Join us March 6 (9 a.m. to 3 p.m.) in downtown Lansing for the Coalition's 2012 Legislative Action Day. Discuss the critical issues facing oral health in Michigan, and most importantly, discover how you can make a difference in Lansing. [Register now](#). For more information, contact Karlene Ketola, executive director at 517.827.0466.

### Resolve To Have Great Oral Health Tips For New Year's Resolutions

We hope that you had a wonderful holiday season and New Year. Now, with the new year already upon us, we at the Coalition hope that your resolutions include your oral health. While people generally focus on quitting smoking or exercising more, most people do not realize that better oral health has overall health benefits as well. Encourage yourself and those around you to begin good oral health habits such as brushing twice daily, flossing daily, and getting regular dental cleanings and checkups. Read more on dental health resolutions [here](#).

## State News

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### Healthy Kids Dental Expands to Four New Counties Mason, Muskegon, Newaygo and Oceana Counties

Effective Feb. 1, 2012, the Michigan Department of Community Health will expand the Healthy Kids Dental contract with Delta Dental Plan of Michigan to administer the Healthy Kids Dental benefit in Mason, Muskegon, Newaygo, and Oceana counties. This will increase the number of Healthy Kids Dental counties from 61 to 65. For additional info, click [here](#).

### New Count Your Smiles Report Department Issues Update on Dental Needs of Third Graders

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Did you know that 25% of Michigan 3rd grade children have untreated dental disease? Michigan Department of Community Health has released its 2011-12 *Count Your Smiles Report*. The report is intended to highlight important findings on dental disease and dental access for 3rd grade children in Michigan. This summary also addresses important regional concerns for oral health. To access the complete report, click [here](#).

## U-M Dental Residents Win Award For Research **Cobalt-Chrome Alloy As Alternative to Gold**

Two third-year residents of the U-M School of Dentistry's graduate prosthodontics program recently won first place for their poster presentation during the American College of Prosthodontics annual meeting. Drs. Dimitrios Chronaios and Lisa Kane's work focuses on making porcelain fused to metal crowns more economical. The rise in the cost of gold in recent years has increased the price of gold alloys, but the process proposed by Chronaios and Kane would use a cobalt-chrome alloy and a CAD/CAM milling process. Their research with this process could lead to a lowered cost for dental patients and practitioners. For full article, click [here](#).

### **National News**

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## Nature's Antibiotic Could Cure Periodontal Disease **Researchers Isolate Oral Bacterium**

By studying an agent isolated from common oral bacteria, researchers from Case Western University believe they are on the way to stopping the bacteria that cause periodontal disease. This research may also help to inhibit or prevent HIV from entering the body and help wounds heal faster by preventing infection. Dr. Aaron Weinberg, leader of the research team, became intrigued by the topic when he noticed how quickly wounds in the mouth heal despite the abundance of bacteria. The ultimate goal of the research is to protect the linings of the body from harm by using an agent from oral bacterium that promotes the expression of antimicrobial defensin molecules, which Weinberg considers to be nature's own antibiotics. For full article, click [here](#).

## Dentists Can Screen Patients For Systemic Diseases **Could Detect Risk in Patients**

According to an NYU study, nearly 20 million Americans annually visit a dentist but not a general healthcare provider. These results suggest that dentists can be crucial in identifying health problems that would otherwise go undetected and in referring patients for follow-up care. Dentists and dental hygienists have the ability to detect risk for systemic conditions, such as diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease, which can be particularly important for patients not visiting a general healthcare provider. For full article, click [here](#).

## Enhancing Fluoride Through Research **Scientists May Be Able to Exploit Antimicrobial Properties**

Recent research by Howard Hughes Medical Institute scientists found that in addition to strengthening the enamel on teeth, fluoride has a dramatic effect on bacteria inside the mouth. By discovering the cellular chain of events that occurs when a bacterium encounters fluoride, Ronald Breaker's (Yale University) research indicates that fluoride itself has antimicrobial properties. This information eventually may help scientists to enhance the

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antimicrobial properties of fluoride and make fluoride even more toxic to bacteria. For more information on Breaker and HHMI's research, click [here](#).

## Oral Bacteria Linked to Pneumonia

### Good Oral Health Can Be Preventative

A study led by Dr. Samit Joshi of Yale University's School of Medicine found that changes in bacteria in the mouth preceded the development of pneumonia. Although further research is needed to determine the exact relationship, poor oral health has been associated with respiratory diseases for a number of years. During the winter months we are all more susceptible to colds and infections, and the study specifically points to elderly people and children as being at an increased risk. Results suggest that good dental habits, such as brushing and flossing, may reduce the risk for pneumonia and other respiratory related problems. For full article, click [here](#).

## Essential Health Benefits Memo For Advocates

### Raises Concerns, Provides Information and Talking Points

In response to a bulletin released earlier this month by the Department of Health and Human Services, the Children's Dental Health Project has created a [memo](#) raising some concerns about the pediatric oral services portion of the Essential Health Benefits (EHB) in the Affordable Care Act. This memo provides information for State advocates by providing background information and talking points, as well as guidance on how their State may implement the pediatric oral services portion of the EHB.

## The Future of Dental Hygiene

### ADHA Commissions Environmental Scan

In order to help develop their new 2012-15 strategic plan, the American Dental Hygienists' Association commissioned an Environmental Scan to explore the future of oral health and the dental hygiene profession. Key issues included in the report are future opportunities for Dental Hygienists, expanding access & ensuring equity in oral health care, and technology advances. To read the ADHA Environmental Scan, click [here](#).

## New Dental Resource for School Nurses

### ADA and NASN Launch Website

A recently launched website now provides easily accessible oral health information to school nurses. To create this new resource, the American Dental Association teamed up with the National Association of School Nurses in a project funded by the DentaQuest Foundation. Among other things, this [Oral Health Connections website](#) provides school nurses with oral health curricula, classroom teaching tools, and resources to help schoolchildren find access to dental care. It also allows school personnel to participate in an oral health forum and Facebook group that addresses oral health issues. For full article, click [here](#).

## Dentists Fight Against Poor Economy

### Help Patients Through Hard Times

According to the ADA's third quarter Survey of Economic Confidence, despite negative effects from a poor economy, dental practices continue responding to their patients' needs. Because the tough economy is a shared experience, many dentists understand their patients' hardships and are trying to help. According to the survey, 54% of respondents offered their

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patients third-party financing to pay for their care and almost 50% offered discounts. For full article and further results from the survey, click [here](#).

## Infant Oral Health

### Beginning Dental Visits At An Early Age

According to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, infants 6 to 12 months old should be going for dental visits. Good dental health is established early on and by bringing their child to a dentist, parents gain preventative information and can introduce their children to the act of brushing their teeth. In addition to early dental visits, recommendations for toddler oral health care include moving the child off the bottle as soon as possible and confining sugar intake to mealtimes. For more on infant oral health, click [here](#).

The Michigan Oral Health Coalition's mission is to improve oral health in Michigan by focusing on prevention, health promotion, oral health data, access and the link between oral health and overall health.

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