

Date: August 4, 2010

To: Area Dental Officers, Dental Support Centers, and Participants of the Basic Screening Survey

Thank you for your participation with the Basic Screening Survey (BSS). Developed by the Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors (ASTDD), this survey can be done in the medical/pediatric clinic, at Early Start, Head Start, and at other tribal preschool programs.

Before we start the screening survey, it is important to understand its limitations. A dental screening is not a thorough clinical examination and does not involve making a clinical diagnosis resulting in a treatment plan. A screening is intended to identify gross dental or oral lesions, and is conducted by dentists, dental hygienists, or other appropriate health care workers. The information gathered through a screening survey is at a level consistent with monitoring the national health objectives found in the United States Public Health Service's Healthy People document.

This survey will help you collect baseline data for the population you serve. With respect to the IHS Early Childhood Caries Initiative, most of the data we have now on the prevalence of ECC is either old or unreliable: (1) the last IHS Oral Health Survey was done in 1999, so that data is over 10 years old now; (2) RPMS data, in most situations, is not very reliable in assessing population oral health status because it only includes patients presenting to the dental clinic and most dental clinics were not consistent in using the IH tracking codes in the past and these codes were removed in early 2009 from the DDS package.

The survey is also important such that it will allow the IHS Division of Oral Health (DOH) to measure the extent of ECC in your community as compared to your state and the survey can be used to track the effectiveness of your ECC prevention activities over time.

The sites participating in the BSS will be identified as participants only. Their data will only be reported as an Area aggregate level. If a tribal site does not want their name included in the report, this is an option as well. If a site refused or cannot participate for any reason, please notify Dr. Kathy Phipps immediately to allow Dr. Phipps adequate time to select another site.

Tribal sites are eligible, and strongly encouraged, to participate in the BSS and IHS DOH encourages participation from I/T/U sites. If a site does not have an examiner (dentist or hygienist) or not able to participate then ask if the site is receptive to the Area Dental Officer or Area Dental Support Center conducting the survey at the site.

If you have any questions concerning the BSS, please contact Dr. Tim Ricks at (615) 467-1508 or Tim.ricks@ihs.gov.

Thank you for your participation with the Basic Screening Survey.

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