

Tooth Talk: Magazine cites 'Grim implications for oral health in Indian Country'

By Mary Ellen Volansky, MS, EPDH

That title, as grim as it sounds, was borrowed from an article in *American Indian Report*, the Falmouth Institute's online magazine. This magazine was reporting on research titled *An Assessment of Oral Health on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation*. This research was conducted by the center for Native Oral Health Research. You can find the press release at wkkf.org/news/Articles/2011/11/Study-of-Oral-Health-on-the-Pine-Ridge-Reservation.aspx.

According to this article, the 28,797 people who live on the Pine Ridge Reservation have only nine dentists to serve them. At one visit per patient per year, those nine dentists would have 12-13 appointments each weekday without a single day off.

One appointment doesn't even begin to serve the needs of dental patients. That first appointment would be for an exam, a process utilized by the dental profession

to assess and determine the dental treatment needs of a patient. That said, how would those 28,797 people get the treatment deemed necessary during that exam?

The Siletz Dental Clinic has two dentists and one hygienist to serve you five days a week during the year. One thing that keeps us from meeting your oral health needs are the patients who make an appointment – we set aside a chair and time to provide care – and that person doesn't show up and doesn't call to let us know of their decision to not come to the clinic. We call that a "broken appointment."

Cancelling an appointment is when a patient calls us ahead of time and reschedules their existing appointment for a day and time that is more convenient for them. This is convenient for us too. Sara Bell-Tellez, patient coordinator, can call another patient, maybe a person waiting to come in to get that crown placed, a tooth filled or have their teeth cleaned.

Broken appointments waste money and time. The money wasted is your Tribe's money, spent on staff and preparations to treat the patient who broke their appointment. The dental chair sits empty when there could be a patient sitting comfortably. The time wasted belongs to your fellow Tribal members who would gladly be sitting in that empty chair having their dental treatment completed.

In addition, we get complaints from people about not being able to schedule appointments close enough. Or we are asked why appointments have to be scheduled so far out, six weeks or more down the calendar road.

You can help. Please call us if you are unable to keep your scheduled appointment for dental work. We will happily change your appointment to a more convenient time for you. Also, if you are able to come into the clinic on short notice, let us know when you schedule your dental appointment.

Back to the study at Pine Ridge – the decay rate for those 28,797 people was found to be 90 percent, three times the national U.S. average. The national average isn't that great when you consider the following: "Fifty million people in the United States live in areas experiencing dental health shortages."

This next comment in the article surprised and warmed my professional heart: "Some success with increasing access to care in these areas has been found through programs that extend duties of dental therapists and allows them the authority to provide routine care."

The authors offered in support the work that has been done in Alaska, where 35,000 people who previously went without care are now receiving dental care. They suggested adopting this model in more areas, specifically in Native communities.

Your suggestions are welcome; e-mail me at maryellenv@ctsi.nsn.us.

Sealant Clinic returns to help protect kids' teeth, save money for families

This annual event for students in all grades at Siletz Valley Schools (SVS) will be held Feb 21-23. All students will be transported to the clinic and back to school.

Are you wondering if a student who had sealants last year will need them this year? The answer is, yes they will.

The teeth of grade school children are changing. Baby teeth are leaving – 20 in all. Adult (permanent) teeth grow in place

of all those baby teeth. As many as 32 teeth will arrive between the ages of 5 and 18.

These new adult teeth need to be protected. Sealant and fluoride varnish are the means to do that for people of all ages.

This service provided by the Siletz Community Health Clinic is free. What does that mean to the family of an SVS student? One sealant would cost about \$42 per tooth. One application of fluoride varnish costs about the same. The exam/

screening would be an additional cost.

Generally, we apply two to 16 sealants and one fluoride varnish. The cost savings for the student's family could be from \$176 to \$764 per student. Plus, home care supplies are provided.

If we see that something needs to be treated, we will let you know. If you are not eligible to be seen at the Siletz Clinic, contact me and I'll help you locate services in the community.

Any SVS student is welcome to participate in this clinic. Prior to the clinic, a parent or guardian must complete a permission form, usually included in the SVS registration packet.

If you want your SVS student to register, contact the school office at 541-444-1100 for the application and consent to treatment form.

If you have questions, contact the school or call me at 541-444-1030.

Siletz Diabetes Talking Circle 2012

Third Thursday of every month, 12:00-1:30
At Tillicum Fitness Center, 1016 West Buford, Siletz

Come if you have diabetes or want to help control
or prevent diabetes in your family!

Free lunch is followed by roundtable and special speakers:

- January 19, 2012—Warren Sparks, MD
Vasculopathy
- February 16—George Nagel, LCSW, Mental Health Specialist
Mental Health and Diabetes
- March 15—Sky Schroeder, Optometrist
Diabetic Retinopathy
- April 19—Nadine Grzeskowiak, RN CEN
Gluten Intolerance and Celiac Disease
- May 17—Leatha Lynch, PharmD, RPH
Medication Use and Questions

SAVE FOR YOUR CALENDAR. NO NEED TO REGISTER.

In memory of our Tribal members who walked on in 2011

(Listed by DOD)

| | DOB | DOD |
|-----------------------------------|----------|----------|
| Virgil Eugene (Martin) Spratt | 01/23/67 | 01/07/11 |
| Velma Edith (Collins) Redmer | 05/29/12 | 02/06/11 |
| Sally Margaret (Hughes) Engstrom | 05/19/13 | 03/01/11 |
| Kitti Kay Kavanaugh | 11/19/58 | 03/19/11 |
| Martin Dugan | 06/04/49 | 03/30/11 |
| Wanda Mae Sanders | 09/22/64 | 04/04/11 |
| Monte Wayne Kentta | 05/19/53 | 04/08/11 |
| Timothy Patrick Viles | 10/11/58 | 04/15/11 |
| William Clark John | 07/01/33 | 04/17/11 |
| Aurelia Darlene (Picard) Williams | 05/19/36 | 05/20/11 |
| Geraldine Rose (Girard) Jordan | 07/11/33 | 05/25/11 |
| Grace Mae Olson | 05/29/57 | 06/24/11 |
| Cynthia Louise (Keene) Gentle | 12/19/58 | 07/06/11 |
| Claudine Dorinda Holmes | 02/22/65 | 07/17/11 |
| Joseph Clayton Martin | 06/12/53 | 09/11/11 |
| Edell Arness (Collins) Richards | 07/13/49 | 09/12/11 |
| Nadine Helen (Cooley) McDonald | 11/24/30 | 09/23/11 |
| Calvin Leroy VanPelt | 09/04/24 | 09/25/11 |
| Robert Lee John | 09/29/38 | 09/30/11 |
| Debra Sue Riding In | 07/08/63 | 10/01/11 |
| Barbara Joan (Flanary) Bennett | 05/05/48 | 10/29/11 |
| Patricia Marie (Flagg) Anderson | 03/18/55 | 11/03/11 |
| Tim Duane Mason | 01/13/51 | 11/04/11 |
| Roberta Suzanne (DePoe) Zob | 02/20/46 | 12/06/11 |
| Robert Dodd | 11/23/30 | 12/16/11 |
| Roy A. Downey | 05/04/30 | 12/31/11 |