

Advancing the Oral Health of Pregnant Women in WA

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Program Manager

 **DELTA DENTAL®**
Washington Dental Service
Foundation

Community Advocates for Oral Health

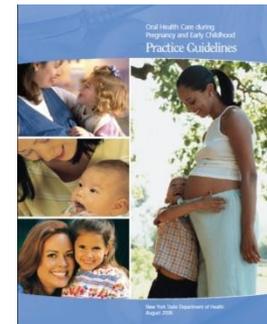
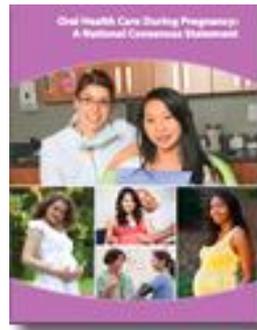
Washington Dental Service Foundation

- **Mission:** prevent oral disease and improve overall health
- Focus on **young children** and **seniors**

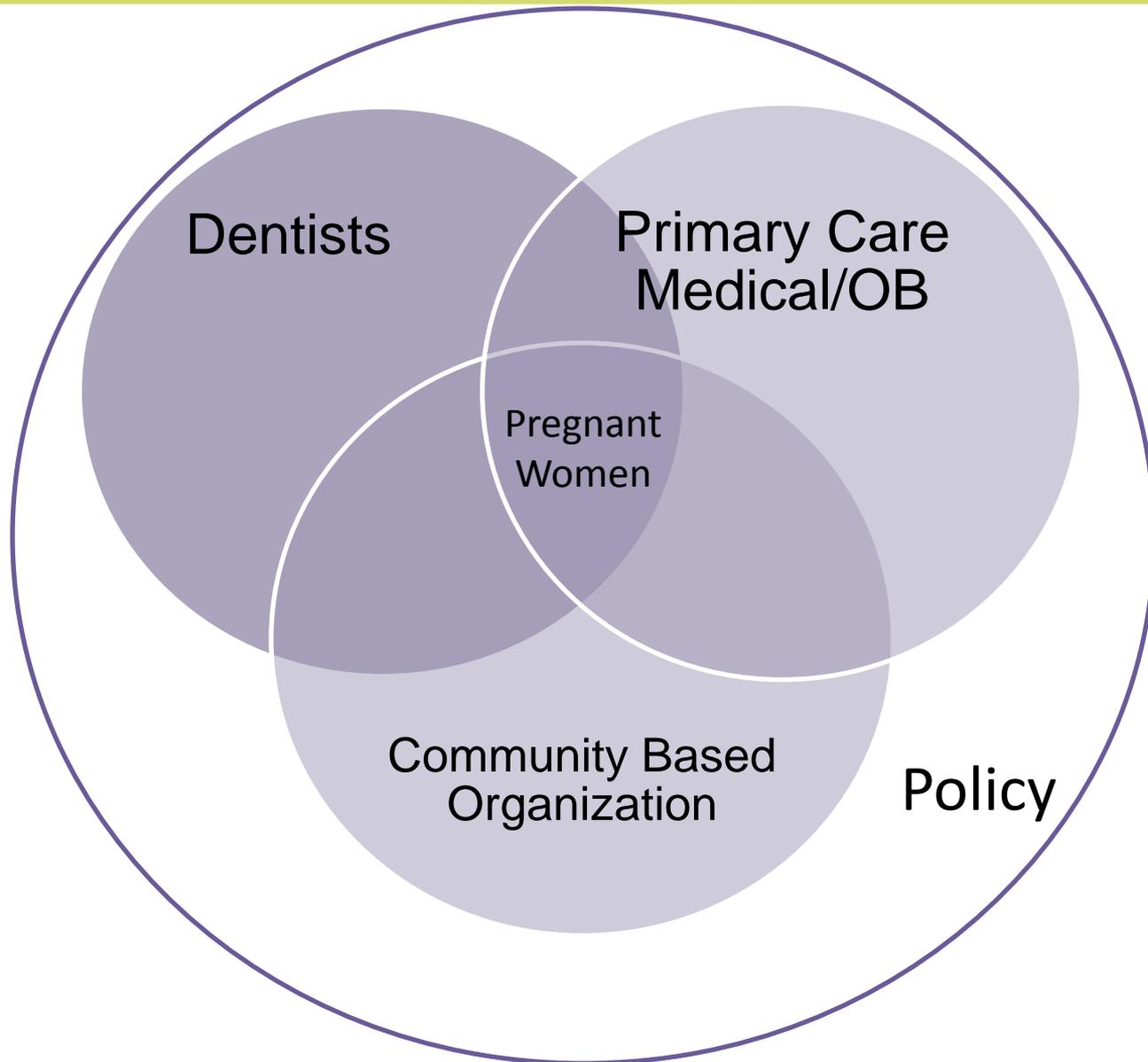


Why Prenatal Oral Health?

- **Supports the Foundation's focus on young children**
 - Improving pregnant women's oral health helps prevent their babies from getting cavities
 - Prevent the spread of bacteria from mother to child
 - Engage with mothers at a time they are especially receptive about caring for their babies
- **State and national efforts garnering attention, momentum**



The Approach



Key Activities

- **Engage, motivate and train dentists to provide care**
- **Engage community based organizations and equip them to motivate their pregnant clients to seek care; provide referrals**
- **Engage, motivate and train prenatal medical providers to address the oral health of their pregnant patients and refer**
- **Motivate pregnant women to seek care and practice daily oral care**
- **Secure policies that support dental services for pregnant women**

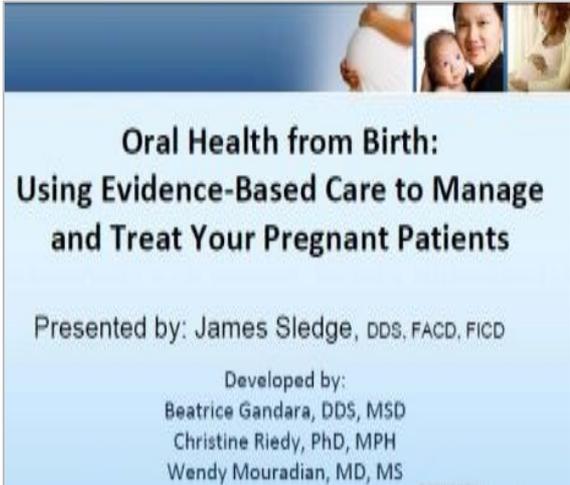
Dentists: Research

- **Focus groups**
- **Conversations with influentials**
- **Dentists recommended a continuing dental education that:**
 - Reinforces that dental care (including treatment) is safe for mother and baby
 - Addresses their liability concerns
 - Provides guidance about using/prescribing medications, timing of treatment



Dentists: Training

- **Prepare and motivate dentists to treat pregnant patients**
 - **University of Washington Dental School Courses**
 - **Deliver community based trainings to dentists**
 - Private practice
 - Public health settings
 - **To date, 800+ trained**



**Oral Health from Birth:
Using Evidence-Based Care to Manage
and Treat Your Pregnant Patients**

Presented by: James Sledge, DDS, FACD, FICD

Developed by:
Beatrice Gandara, DDS, MSD
Christine Riedy, PhD, MPH
Wendy Mouradian, MD, MS

The slide features a header image with three small photos: a pregnant woman, a baby, and a woman holding a child. The background is light blue with white text.

Pregnant Women: Research

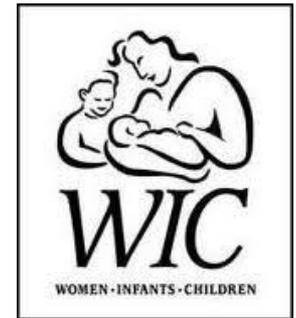
Focus groups

- **Learned that pregnant women:**
 - Did not know importance of dental care during pregnancy
 - Did not understand that mothers could pass tooth-decay causing bacteria to their babies
 - Were afraid of x-rays, medications, treatment harming their babies
 - Wanted their prenatal providers to assure them dental care was safe and important and refer them to care

Pregnant Women: Partnerships

- **Partner with agencies serving pregnant women to motivate their clients to seek care; provide referrals**

- WIC
- Head Start/Early Head Start, Home Visiting Programs
- Community Based Organizations
 - TANF's Pregnancy to Employment
 - Open Arms – Pregnancy and Childbirth Services for Immigrant/Refugee Women



Prenatal Providers: Research

- **Engage, motivate and train prenatal providers to conduct oral health assessments, educate and refer to dental care**

Focus groups to learn:

- Providers' knowledge and attitudes about oral health during pregnancy
- What type of education and training will be helpful
- What will motivate/incentivize them to address the oral health of their pregnant patients



Policy

Identify opportunities to influence policy

- In 2012, successfully advocated with partners (WACOG, Children's Alliance, Visiting Nurses Assn) to retain Medicaid dental coverage for pregnant women
- **Future:**
 - Enhanced reimbursement for dentists
 - Extend Medicaid coverage to 6 -12 months postpartum



Recommendations

- **Develop a leadership group with broad representation – dental, medical, maternal/child organizations, CBOs**
- **Engage dentists early, often – provide training, support, financial incentives (if possible)**



Questions?

