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# Nevada Dental Association

## Legislative Committee on Health Care

May 9, 2006

Testimony of Maury Astley CAE, Executive Director, Nevada Dental Association

I have been asked today to discuss access issues for the uninsured patients who have oral health problems. I am here today as the Executive Director of the Nevada Dental Association but I also serve as Chair of the Community Coalition for Oral Health (CCOH) in Southern Nevada, sit on the Central and Northeast Coalitions for Oral Health and monitor the three other coalitions throughout the state.

Much is being done through volunteerism, grants and donations of time and money through associations and various agencies. The Nevada Oral Health Program has brought more attention to the problem and is working on several preventive programs and providing support for coalitions and agencies working on the problem.

Our association has had a program for Medicaid and uninsured patients for 20 years. The Northern Nevada Dental Society's Northern Nevada Dental Health Program recently merged with St. Mary's efforts, and Mike Johnson will talk about that and other programs in the North.

Five years ago a coalition was established in the south to work on oral health issues. Two years ago the 1DAY program was developed by NDA and the Southern Nevada Dental Society. With these two programs, dentists throughout the whole state have a place to volunteer their services, on a daily basis, in their office, at clinics and vans around the State.

In the last few years, Miles for Smiles and St. Mary's Take Caravan have traveled to schools providing sealants and fluoride treatment and screenings. These programs refer patients in need to community dentists. Recently Nevada Health centers have taken over Miles for Smiles and have built a fixed base clinic in Elko. Their vans also have dentists on board to do restorative work. Tobacco money has been used to fund Dental School Vans that travel to high schools and screen for oral cancer and also refer to dentists any patients without insurance.

For the last three years, the Southern Nevada Dental Society with the help of the dental school, the hygiene association and agencies like Clinic on Wheels, Huntridge Teen Center and Head Start have held four one day clinics. Our February Saturday clinics are called Give Kids a Smile day. This February, 188 uninsured children were screened,

cleaned, drilled and filled. Treatment was completed on 83 patients. 97 were referred to the community. All patients were uninsured, all work done at no charge. We had 57 dentists, 8 faculty, 26 hygienists, 122 dental students and volunteers from the assistance league and the various agencies, who were there for more than four hours.

In Las Vegas Paradise clinic opened, a joint effort of a dentist and the county. A single operatory is under construction at Reynaldo Martinez Elementary and the equipment was donated by a retiring dentist and dental suppliers and we are working to get volunteers or funding for dental work. These are uninsured, low income, and many are homeless children from around the school district. Outside of these organized programs, many dentists volunteer for the Donated Dental Services (DDS) program or just do pro bono or reduced cost work for patients in financial need without insurance coverage. DDS has over 100 volunteer dentists working on disabled patients. They have a one year backlog of patients, because they lost state funding for a coordinator two sessions ago. We have asked dentists to report the pro bono work they do, but have difficulty getting the information. We have collected information on 19 dentists who have provided over \$300,000 in work so far this year. This is in their clinics outside of the other programs mentioned. Many do not report at all for fear of being inundated with requests.

In January I reported to you that last year the Northern Nevada Dental Health Program and the 1DAY program in the south served more than 600 children, and over \$650,000 dollars in services were provided to Medicaid and uninsured children in 2005. In addition, Dentists have reported to us that more than \$450,000 in donated services was provided in 2004 and 2005.

In the South, the Community Coalition has expanded its efforts and now has subcommittees for Finance, Legislation, Public Relations, Education and Head Start activities. I am providing a brochure on the CCOH organization and the list of agencies who all work with uninsured patients through CCOH and directly in the community. It will tell you what our efforts are about and on the back is a list of member agencies.

The Education committee is now expanding our efforts for prevention efforts for seniors in conjunction with a national program. The Alliance of the ADA (a spouses program for the American Dental Association) will launch its new Senior Smiles national oral health awareness campaign at its leadership conference in Seattle April 21. We have reserved 1200 for Meals on Wheels in October for Las Vegas.

The Alliance has designated August 15 as National Senior Smiles Day, when more than 100 local Alliance components nationwide will deliver more than 10,000 oral health kits to seniors through local meal delivery programs. Sullivan-Schein Dental and GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare have partnered with the Alliance for this outreach program.

Alliance members will also conduct a special program in Las Vegas during the ADA annual session October 16-19. The expanded program will provide a segment on training the dental community and caregivers on how to care for the oral health of seniors in

nursing homes. The CCOH Education committee is modifying their program to take to Long Term care facilities to train caregivers on brushing teeth and other techniques for good oral health care for frail elderly. Then the program will further be refined so the Nevada Oral Health Program can go to senior centers. These programs will be produce in Spanish as well.

I am again providing you with our Rx for Nevada Dental Health. Items 1-4 address ways we can provide services to the uninsured. We are working with coalitions and elected officials and will modify it as we find helpful suggestions. For example WICHE has suggested loan repayment and for any WICHE student which may be a more successful idea.

Thank you for your time today. If you have any questions, I will be happy to respond.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Maury".

Maury Astley CAE