



Washington State Oral Health Coalition

—founded 1993—

promoting and advocating for optimal oral health for all Washington State residents.

July 7, 2014

Governor Jay Inslee
Office of the Governor
PO Box 40002.
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Inslee,

Thank you for recognizing the important relationship between oral health and overall health with your appointment of Dr. Mark Koday, DDS, to the Prevention Measures Technical Workgroup. His appointment marks an important step forward in establishing this relationship as vital to developing the state's health care service delivery model.

Given the understanding that the mouth offers a snapshot of a person's physical health, including dental expertise is crucial in the search for strategies to improve our health care delivery system, contain costs, assure value, and foster a healthier Washington. Leading Health Indicators for Healthy People 2020, Oral Health, states, "A growing body of evidence has linked oral health, particularly periodontal (gum) disease, to several chronic diseases, including diabetes, heart disease, and stroke." (<http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/LHI/oralHealth.aspx>) Hours lost to unsolved dental issues affect the overall health of individuals, their education, and their employment. Dental caries ranks first among frequently occurring childhood diseases (Surgeon General's Report on Oral Health 2000). It is more frequent than asthma. In addition, existing data show that untreated dental crises are one of the most frequent reasons for child and adult Emergency Room visits statewide.

For these reasons, we are especially grateful for Dr. Koday's inclusion on the Prevention Measures Technical Workgroup and the promise his appointment holds for making oral health care a part of the big picture for effective health care reform in Washington State.

Best regards,

Washington State Oral Health Coalition

Pat Brown, Acting Secretary, 425-967-7992

cc: Dorothy Teeter, Director, Washington State Health Care Authority
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