

Washington, DC—November 23, 2016

On November 3–4, 2016, over 125 leaders from academia, professional associations and societies, coalitions, government agencies, the dental insurance industry, the dental trade industry, philanthropic organizations, and community programs met to discuss evidence-based recommendations and strategies that oral health professionals, oral-health-related organizations, and others can employ to prevent childhood obesity.

During the Healthy Futures: Engaging the Oral Health Community in Childhood Obesity Prevention National Conference, findings from ten scientific papers were shared. Some of the findings include:

- Childhood obesity and dental caries are multifactorial diseases, and understanding common risk factors has important implications for prevention efforts.
- Consumption of sugar-containing beverages among children under age 12, especially among children under age 5, is associated with increased risk of obesity.
- Proactive engagement of oral health professionals and oral health organizations in practice and policy, collaboration with other health professionals about patient care, and dissemination of resources on healthy eating, especially as related to the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, is needed.
- It is important for oral health professionals to contribute to preventing childhood obesity by providing children and parents with nutrition information, but nutrition-related curricular content in dental and dental hygiene education appears to be scant.

The conference website, <http://www.oralhealth4healthyfutures.org>, features the scientific paper abstracts and will shortly include the presentation slides. The manuscripts will be published in spring 2017 in a special supplement to the *Journal of Public Health Dentistry*.

Use the hashtag #oralhealth4healthyfutures to tweet or post about the conference, and sign up for the e-mail list, “Preventing Dental Caries and Obesity in Children,” at <http://eepurl.com/cnz5Wr> to receive the latest updates.

The conference was spearheaded by a collaboration consisting of the National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center at Georgetown University, the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, the American Dental Association, the American Dental Hygienists’ Association, and the Santa Fe Group, with funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.



About the Collaboration Partners

The National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center responds to the needs of professionals working in states and communities in addressing current and emerging public oral health issues. The resource center support health professionals, program administrators, educators, policymakers, and others, particularly those working in state maternal and child health programs, with the goal of improving oral health services for pregnant women, infants, children, and adolescents, including those with special health care needs, and their families.

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry advocates for policies, guidelines, and programs that promote optimal oral health and oral health care for infants, children, and adolescents, including those with special health care needs.

The American Dental Association is committed to the public's oral health and to ethics, science, and professional advancement. Initiatives include those related to advocacy, education, research, and the development of standards.

The American Dental Hygienists' Association leads the transformation of the dental hygiene profession to improve the public's oral health and overall health.

The Santa Fe Group is the nation's leading independent nonprofit think tank on oral health policy and practice. The Santa Fe Group fosters policy and initiates actions to improve the health and well-being of the public by analyzing and disseminating health program and policy information, creating networks of concerned citizens, and developing advocacy programs to promote change for improved health.

About the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

For more than 40 years, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has worked to improve health and health care. The foundation is working with others to build a national Culture of Health enabling everyone in America to live longer, healthier lives. For more information, visit <http://www.rwjf.org>. Follow the foundation on Twitter at <http://www.rwjf.org/twitter> or on Facebook at <http://www.rwjf.org/facebook>.

Contact:

Sarah Kolo, Health Communication Specialist
National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center
Georgetown University
(202) 784-9553
sk22@georgetown.edu
[@OHRC_GU](https://twitter.com/OHRC_GU)
<http://www.mchoralhealth.org>