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NEWSLETTER OF SPECIAL CARE DENTISTRY ASSOCIATION

TASK FORCE PLANS EDUCATION DAY AT STATE CAPITOL

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Recognizing the need for more information about the oral health of older adults in the state of Connecticut the Department of Public Health established the Task Force on Oral Health for Older Adults. In November of 2006 the Task Force met for the first time. Convened at the table were groups and organizations whose common goal was to learn about what the current and future needs for oral health are for older adults in the state of Connecticut. As a member of this Task Force I was able to see first hand people and organizations come together for a common good. Each member was able to bring their perspective to the table. We met monthly from November 2006 until December 2007. I am including the list of members (see Fig. 1) as a reference in the event as it may helpful to others.

Members Connecticut Task Force Oral Health of Older Adults

- AARP Connecticut
- Connecticut Association of Agencies on Aging
- Connecticut Association for Not-for-

Profit Providers for the Aging (CANPFA)

- Connecticut Association of Health Care Facilities
- Connecticut Alzheimer's Association
- Connecticut Dental Hygienists' Association, Inc.
- Connecticut Department of Developmental Services
- Connecticut Department of Public Health
- Connecticut Department of Social Services
- Connecticut Health Foundation
- Connecticut Office of Long Term Care Ombudsman
- Connecticut Oral Health Initiative (COHI)
- Connecticut State Dental Association
- University of Connecticut School of Dental Medicine

The Official Task Force Report, JUST THE "F.A.C.T.S." is slated to be released in late January or early February 2008. As a group we felt it important to come up with actionable strategies that can be

accomplished. The Task Force developed five focus areas to improve oral health for older adults in Connecticut: Financing, Advocacy, Communication, Training, and Services.

The Task Force is planning an educational day at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford, Connecticut on March 5, 2008. The Task Force feels it important and crucial to share what we have learned with our legislators in order to raise awareness around this very important issue. This day will be an opportunity to share the Task Force Findings and to educate and advocate. We are planning to present information regarding oral health in the context of whole health. More than 10 tables are planned including presentation of materials on hypertension, diabetes, xerostomia, oral cancer, polypharmacy, oral hygiene, access to care, and the list goes on. The common thread of course is oral health. The day will bring together task force members and organizations as well as the Urban Health Scholars from the University of Connecticut's Schools of Dental Medicine, Medicine, Nursing, and Pharmacy. Local Schools of Dental Hygiene are also participating as we continue to build bridges to better care for all.