

# healthyfamilies healthysmiles

Issue No.5 July 2014

## Bigger Better Smiles at Mallee District Aboriginal Services

Mallee District Aboriginal Health Services is committed to improving the oral health of locals, hosting 'Bigger Better Smiles' workshops to support staff to strengthen their role in providing oral health advice, screening and referral through their programs and services.

Bigger Better Smiles is a new oral health education program developed in partnership with Mallee District Aboriginal Service (MDAS) through the Healthy Families, Healthy Smiles initiative. The program aims to build knowledge, skills and confidence to integrate oral health promotion across the service, focussing on workers who see pregnant women and families with young children.

'Aboriginal children generally have twice the level of decay and greater levels of untreated decay than non-Aboriginal children, so it is really important that we partner with services that know their local community to improve oral health,' said Rebecca Crawford, DHSV Aboriginal Community Development Worker.



Photo: from left Gillian Lang (DHSV), Jenny Sonnemans (Clinic Nurse), Rudolph Kirby (MDAS CEO) and Michelle Gray (Diabetes Educator) from MDAS, Allison Ridge and Rebecca Crawford (DHSV).

Members of the DHSV Health Promotion team- Allison Ridge, Gillian Lang and Rebecca Crawford- delivered Bigger Better Smiles workshops in Mildura during May. The workshops were also supported by the local public dental service at Sunraysia Community Health Services with Public Health Manager, Shelley Faulks and staff welcoming MDAS participants on a

site visit and showing them the dental clinics as part of the workshops. Toula Legassick, a dental assistant undertaking a Certificate IV in Oral Health Promotion, participated in the workshop, supported the site visit and also led a 'Lift the Lip' session for MDAS staff in clinical roles to build skills to do mouth checks to identify early signs of decay.

Special thanks to Dr Wendy Bissinger, Public Health Medical Officer, and Dana Pyne, Policy Officer (VACCHO), who observed the pilot program.

Overall, twenty staff members from MDAS's Mildura site attended a Bigger Better Smiles workshop, five also participated in the 'Lift the Lip' session. There was a great sense of enthusiasm and we heard plenty of creative suggestions to incorporate oral health into MDAS's work.



Photo: MDAS staff, from left Natasha Colbourne, Paul Roberts, James Peterson and Sarah Mitchem, preparing for a 'How to brush' demonstration for their colleagues as part of the workshop.

The DHSV Health Promotion team will continue to support MDAS to promote Bigger Better Smiles in their community and the team are currently exploring future directions for the program with VACCHO.

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# Tooth Packs live on thanks to Colgate funding

Studies show that providing fluoride toothpaste and toothbrushes in high needs communities can reduce tooth decay. A grant from Colgate will continue provision of family tooth packs in targeted areas that started as part of the Tooth Packs research project.

DHSV will continue to distribute family toothbrush and toothpaste packs (Tooth Packs) through its partnership with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and the Maternal and Child Health Services in the four local government areas that participated in the Tooth Packs research.

This new three year supply has been made possible by the Colgate Mrs Marsh grant which honours the legacy of the late Barbara Callcott- known as television icon 'Mrs Marsh' in toothpaste advertisements during the 70s and early 80s.

The boost to Tooth Packs distribution was officially launched by DHSV CEO, Dr Deborah Cole, and Parliamentary Secretary for Health, Georgie Crozier, on 3 June at Springvale Service for Children.

"The 'Mrs Marsh grant' will support maternal and child health nurses' discussions with families about oral health and provide them with the tools to act on the messages," Ms Crozier said.

According to the Maternal and Child Health Key Ages and Stages evaluation, 49% of children in Victoria were only brushing once a day and 8% were not brushing at all.

"This is a trend we are looking to change by giving Victorians the information and tools they need to look after their family's oral health," Dr Cole said.

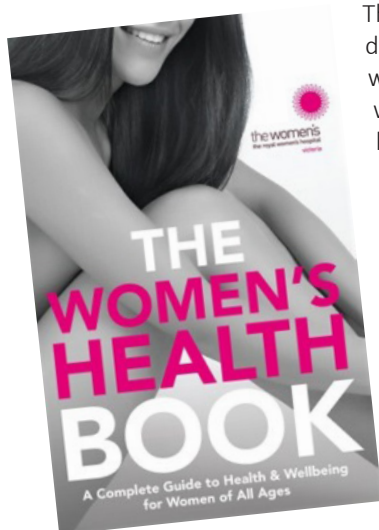
Families will receive a one off supply of toothbrushes and toothpaste from their maternal and child health nurse in East Gippsland (Bairnsdale and Orbost), Brimbank, Greater Dandenong and Swan Hill (Swan Hill and Robinvale) local government areas.



Photo: Springvale MCH nurse Hannah talks to Eva and her father about tooth brushing.

# Launch of the Women's Health Book

The Royal Women's Hospital has launched The Women's Health Book, a new comprehensive guide to women's health.



The Women's Health Book is the definitive guide to health and wellbeing for every Australian woman in each stage of her life. With over 800 pages of information covering a wide range of topics it is a must-have for all women. The book includes a contribution relating to oral health during pregnancy by the DHSV Healthy Families, Healthy Smiles team.

DHSV is proud to be involved in the making of this book and pleased to be given the chance

to contribute information about oral health during pregnancy for this publication. Oral health is often overlooked in general health literature so this was a prime opportunity to provide important information that every pregnant woman (or woman planning a pregnancy) should know about the changes during pregnancy that impact on oral health.

The Women's Health Book is published by Random House and is the first complete guide to health and wellbeing for Australian women of all ages. It is available Australia-wide at all leading booksellers (RRP \$35) and also at the Women's hospital. All royalties from The Women's Health Book will benefit the Women's Foundation.

# Strengthening referral pathways with Peninsula Health

A partnership with Peninsula Health to strengthen referral pathways to dental services for pregnant women has resulted in the development of an e-referral process and a clear pathway to dental services.

Peninsula Health's Women's Services team embraced the opportunity to take part in the online oral health education program offered through Healthy Families, Healthy Smiles. All eleven midwives involved in the first antenatal visit will participate in the education program which equips them to include oral health in the first antenatal care appointment, in line with the National Clinical Practice Guidelines for antenatal care in the first trimester.

It was recognised that referral pathways would be critical to support these midwives to incorporate oral health promotion into their role.

Without a clear referral pathways non-dental health professionals may be reluctant to bring up oral health with clients. To address this barrier a partnership between DHSV and Peninsula Health's Women's Services, Dental Services and Health Promotion team was established.

The working group has resulted in the establishment of an e-referral system into Peninsula Health's Community Dental Services targeting partnerships with not only midwives but a broad spectrum of health and early childhood professionals. These include maternal and child health, Peninsula Health Aboriginal Services, GPs, schools and early childhood services.

The e-referral system is about to be launched and piloted with targeted service providers. The working group is developing a plan to support the roll out of the referral tool.

Involving partners from both sides of the referral in the development process has had great results. The referral process supports midwives to put their newfound knowledge and skills into practice and is already being used by midwives who have completed the oral health training.



Photo: Some of the members of the referral pathways working group, from back row left, Gillian Lang from DHSV with the Peninsula Health team including Courtney Zohs, Anne Holst, Della Attwood, and (front row from left) Kristen Young, Rachael Danckert and Sue McKinlay.

## Good news to support oral health during pregnancy

Midwives who have completed the Midwifery Initiated Oral Health Education Program will be pleased to hear that two oral health related questions have been agreed to by the Birthing Outcomes System Super Users Group:

- Oral Health Check: Yes- No- Declined
- Dental Referral: Yes- No- Declined

This is just one small step in the process to include oral health assessment as part of the first antenatal booking visit. When the questions are included, midwives will be able to record oral health screening and referral in this clinical information management system.

## New look pregnancy oral health fact sheet

After much input from professionals and consumers (young mothers and mothers from culturally diverse backgrounds), a new look fact sheet on oral health and pregnancy is now available. It includes information for pregnant women about looking after their oral health during this special time. It also covers who is eligible to use the public dental service and receive priority access to dental treatment during pregnancy.

This fact sheet replaces two older brochures and is available to download and print from [www.dhsv.org.au](http://www.dhsv.org.au) - click on the 'dental health' tab and follow the link to advice for pregnant woman or visit our new 'professionals' page. Please feel free to share this resource with your clients.



## Baby Teeth Count Too!

The complete oral health education program *Baby Teeth Count Too!* went to air for the first time with the staff of Queen Elizabeth Centre.

During 2012 – 2013 clinical educators from Victoria's three early parenting centres and Healthy Families, Healthy Smiles have worked hard to produce an oral health education package suitable for staff. In 2013 the first two modules were piloted with staff from Tweddle Child and Family Health, while Mercy O'Connell Family Centre adapted the package to suit its approach to staff capacity building.

In May and June this year, staff from the residential and outreach programs of Queen Elizabeth Centre were the first to experience the complete package in a four hour workshop. To support the integration of oral health into their activities the team of clinical educators from Queen Elizabeth Centre hope to set up a small team of oral health champions from amongst their staff.



Queen Elizabeth Centre Community Programs staff at the *Baby Teeth Count Too!* workshop, June 2014.

## Goodbye and good luck Jo

In late May, Jo Payne, Health Promotion Project Officer- Healthy Families, Healthy Smiles finished up at DHSV to move back to South Australia.

Jo made a significant contribution to the Healthy Families, Healthy Smiles initiative over the past 2 years and will be greatly missed.

Any queries relating to the work Jo was involved with can be directed to Allison Ridge.

## Spotlight on:

### A one stop 'oral health' shop for professionals

Many professionals have the opportunity to promote better oral health and general health as part of their role. To support this DHSV is pleased to announce a new look professionals page on our website which will make it easy for workers to find information and resources relating to oral health that is relevant to their role.

Visit [www.dhsv.org.au/professionals](http://www.dhsv.org.au/professionals) to browse the available information and resources.



## get in touch

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