Policy Options to Improve Oral Health Status in Rural Communities

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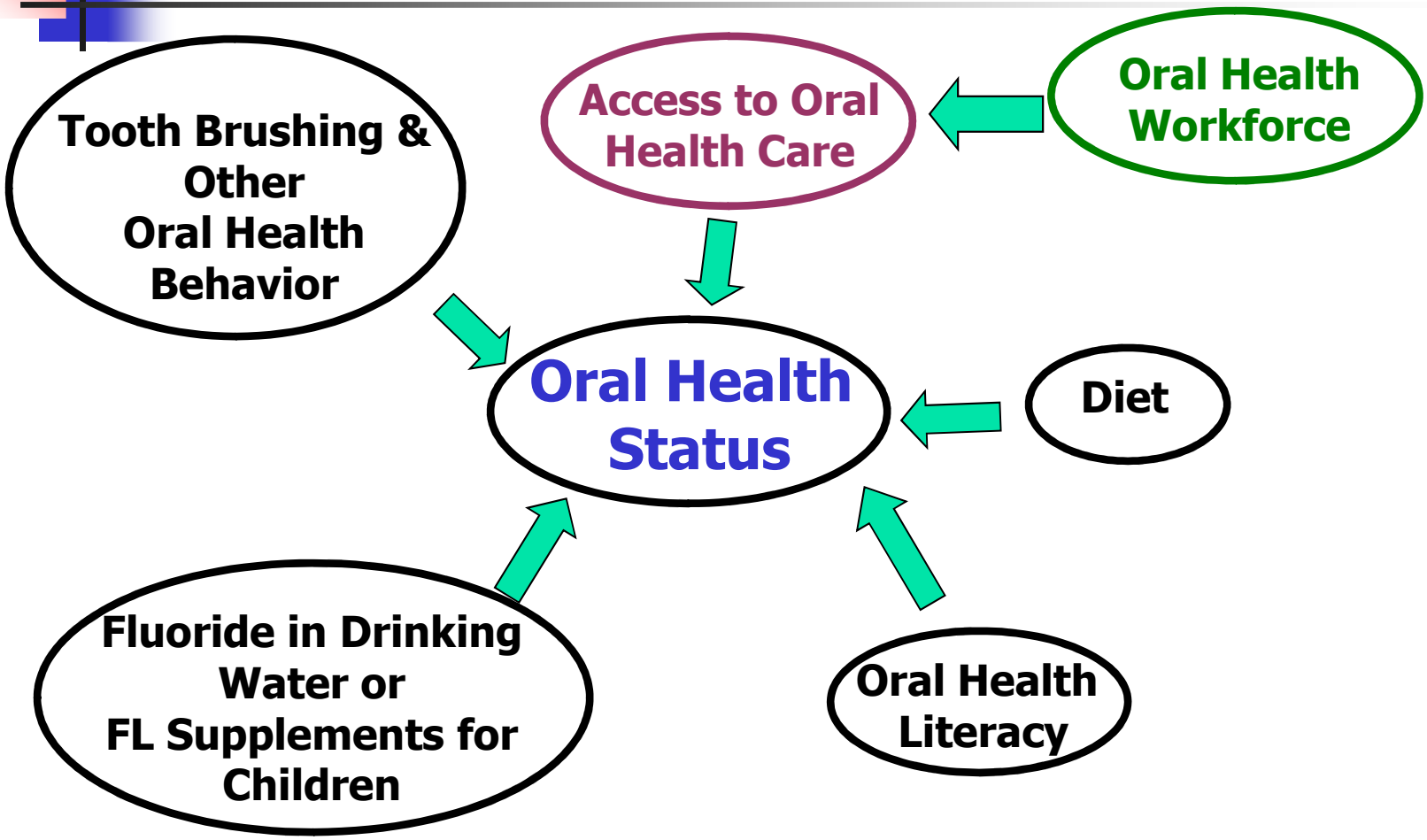
Determinants of Oral Health Status in Rural NC



The End of Cavities & Other Symptoms of Oral Disease?

- Is there anyone here over 30 who has no cavities?
  - For most of us, cavities and other oral disease were considered to be something that could be reduced by tooth brushing and avoidance of sugar, but not completely eliminated throughout our entire life-span.
  - My children who are approaching middle age have cavities.
- Application of Population-based Best Oral Health Practices has the potential to Prevent Cavities & Most Other Oral Disease in Today's Children
- **To What Extent Will We Realize this Potential?**

The Economic Impact of Oral Disease on NC and the U.S.

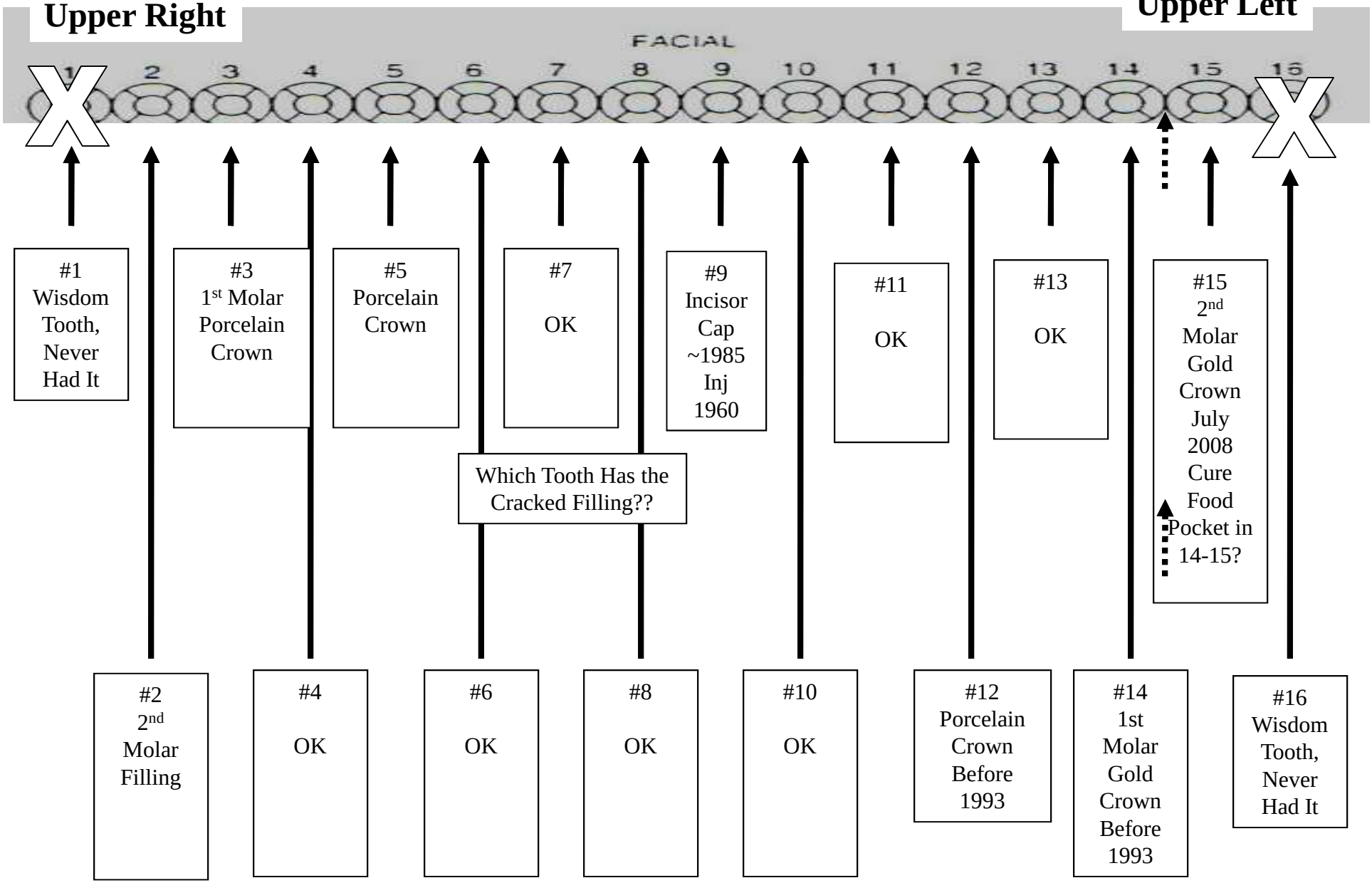
- Has this study been conducted?
  - Costs of Oral Disease Treatment
  - Costs of Missed days of Work
  - Economic Costs of School Days Missed Due to Oral Disease and Pain
  - Cost of Suboptimal Performance in Schools and Workplaces Related to Oral Disease
- Results of This Study Needed to Guide Allocation of Health $'s

Oral Health Literacy & Social Marketing of Oral Health

- Social marketing of oral health care practices and guidelines to children and their parents.
- Objectives:
  - Increase understanding that
    - Oral disease is communicable
    - Oral Disease is Preventable
- Social Media Applications
  - Most Young People Have a Cell Phone and Have Access to Facebook, etc.

Oral Health Literacy

Lyle Snider's Dental Report, Upper Teeth
July 2008



Oral Health Literacy

Lyle Snider's Dental Report, Lower Teeth
July 2008, DOB 5/18/1947

#31 2nd Molar O Amal-gam Filling

#29 OK

#27 OK

#25 Incisor Chipped, Worn Stained

#23 Incisor Chipped, Worn Stained

#21 Worn OK

#19 1st Molar DOL? Amal-gam Filling

#17 Wisdom Tooth, Never Had It

#30 1st Molar O Amal-gam Filling

#28 OK

#26 Incisor Chipped, Worn Stained

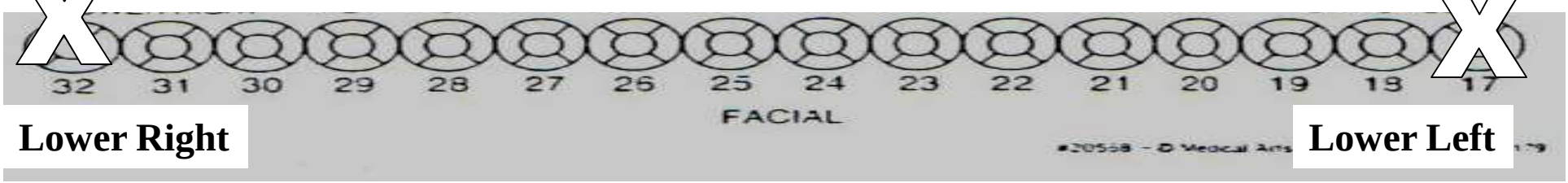
#24 Incisor Chipped, Worn Stained

#22 OK

#20 O Gold Filling

#18 2nd Molar MO Amal-gam Filling

#32 Wisdom Tooth, Never Had It



Lower Right

Lower Left

Assure Children Receive Optimal Fluoride Supplementation

- Fluoridated Drinking Water Very Important to Promote Healthy Development of Teeth Among Children.
- Do All NC Public Water Systems Contain Recommended Levels of Fluoride?
- Health Departments Provide Oral Health Drops for Children Who Drink Well Water or Who Have an **UN**fluoridated Public Water Supply

Policy Suggestions to Improve NC Oral Health Status

- Assure that school lunches do not promote cavities and other oral health diseases.
- Ban soft drink and candy sales in schools.
  - Ban sales of candy to raise funds in schools.
- Routine Brushing of Teeth After Lunch in Schools for All Age Groups
  - Promote this practice for adults in the workplace by their employers.
- Increase taxes on soft drinks, candy and other foods that promote cavities and other oral disease.

How Many NC Children Grow Up in Toxic Oral Health Environments?

- 4-5 Years of Annual School-based oral health screening in Floyd County, KY by Big Sandy Health Care (Mud Creek Clinic, Eula Hall)
- Children with Worst Oral Health Status
  - Treat oral disease one year
  - **They return the next year with oral disease as severe as previous year or even worse**

Relationship of Oral Health Status & Access to Oral Health

- Access to oral health care is necessary to achieve optimal oral health status
- **But not sufficient in & of Itself**

Primary Care Providers are an Important Component of the Oral Health Workforce

- Child Oral Health Resources for Primary Care Providers
  - http://www.chcs.org/publications3960/publications_show.htm?doc_id=1200397
  - How Primary Care Providers Can Improve Oral Health – Strategies for oral health evaluation, and encouragement of treatment and prevention
  - Oral Health Assessment Tools Have Been Published for pediatricians and other primary care providers.
- Is Compensation for these Primary Care Oral Health Services Adequate in NC?

Oral Health During Pregnancy

- The 1st Prenatal Exam Should Include a Thorough Exam of the Teeth, and Referral to a Dentist for Potential Remediation of Oral Disease
- Untreated Oral Disease Increases Adverse Birth Outcomes?
- Common Belief Among Health Care Providers That Oral Disease Treatment Must be Postponed Until the Child is Delivered

East Carolina University - Primary Care & Oral Health

- The Allopathic Medical School in the U.S. that most successfully promotes primary care is the ECU Medical School
  - A higher proportion of its graduates choose a primary care specialty than any other U.S. allopathic Medical school.
- Will ECU's new dental school graduates model best practices for serving low income and other NC populations with inadequate access to oral health care?

Osteopathic Dental Schools

- A Higher Proportion of Osteopathic Medical Schools' graduates choose a primary care specialty than the graduates of allopathic medical schools
- The Arizona School of Dentistry and Oral Health – Dean Jack Dillenburg http://www.atsu.edu/asdoh/index.htm
  - A promising source of dentists with a population-based oral health perspective?

Optimal Utilization of Dental Hygienists and Other Oral Health Workers

- Can NC Dental Hygienists Practice Independently to the Extent that Facilitates the Optimal Utilization of Their Skills and Knowledge to Treat Oral Disease and Promote Oral Health?
- Dentists throughout the U.S. Have Generally Strongly Opposed Independent Practice of Dental Auxiliary Workers

The Dental and Auxiliary Oral Health Professions' "Dialog"

- NRHA Annual Meeting Held in Anchorage, AK Several Years Ago
  - AK dentists were suing the recently-trained Expanded-Function Dental Assistants (EFDA's).
  - EFDA's are trained to pull teeth, place fillings, perform dental hygiene, etc.
  - Prior to the placement of EFDA's in rural & isolated AK communities, most Alaskans had to board a plane or boat to get oral health treatment.

American Dental Association Participation in NRHA Annual Meetings

- For the past 3-4 years, two representatives from the American Dental Association (ADA) have participated in the National Rural Health Association's Annual Meeting.
  - An FQHC dentist from a Portland, NH FQHC
  - A dentist on the ADA staff in Chicago