

A portrait of Teresa Molina, a woman with long dark hair, smiling. She is wearing a blue and black patterned blouse. The background is a plain, light grey color.

My community needs a healthy future.

Teresa Molina
2010 CDHC Student
UCLA/SKC

Community Dental Health Coordinator

Empowering Communities through Education and Prevention

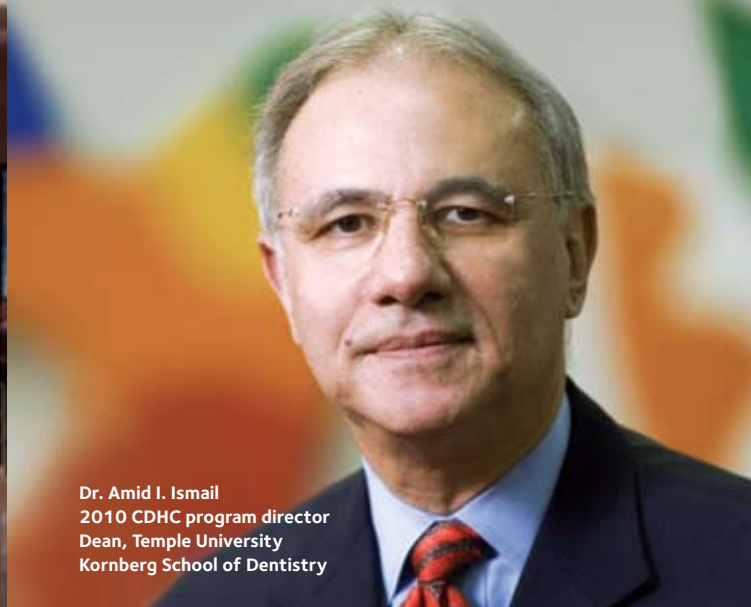
ADA American
Dental
Association®

America's leading
advocate for oral health

I am a resource to my community and local dentists.



Melissa Tyler
2009 CDHC student
University of Oklahoma



Dr. Amid I. Ismail
2010 CDHC program director
Dean, Temple University
Kornberg School of Dentistry

Expanding our ability to improve the

oral health of underserved populations

Tens of millions of Americans lack adequate access to dental care, and many more are at risk of disease, often because they lack an understanding of how to take care of their teeth and gums and/or lack access to simple preventive measures.

The American Dental Association believes that oral health education and preventive care are the ultimate keys to extending good oral health to those who don't have it. Subsequently, the ADA has created a pilot project to educate community health workers whose training focuses on oral health. These Community Dental Health Coordinators (CDHC) will work in underserved communities in rural, urban and Native American communities, bringing more people into the oral health system without compromising safety or the quality of care.

Connected to the Community

CDHCs are recruited from the same communities in which they will serve. They know the culture, language and barriers to oral health. Their connections to these communities can help establish trust and make them role models.

With its focus on oral health education and disease prevention, the CDHC can empower these communities and their residents to manage their own oral health. When disease requires treatment, the CDHC can perform the critical functions of linking patients with dentists who can provide that treatment, and help provide other services—such as arrange for child care or transportation—that patients may need in order to access care.

“The CDHC’s greatest strengths are the decrease in missed appointments; coordination of care; and management of follow-up care, prevention and education.”

— Dr. Amid I. Ismail, 2010 CDHC program director

“I expect to make a difference in the community. Even if I help one family, I know I did my job.”

— Christina Rosario



Christina Rosario
2010 CDHC student
Temple University



Misty McClain
2010 CDHC student
University of Oklahoma



Calvin Hoops
2010 CDHC student
Temple University

Curriculum developed by dentists

1,872 hours of instruction

Work under a dentist's supervision

Educate, inform and prevent

Provide dentist referrals

With 1,872 hours of instruction, CDHCs are trained to:

- Work under a dentist's supervision in health and community settings such as clinics, schools, senior citizen centers, Head Start Programs and other public health settings with residents who have similar ethnic and cultural backgrounds
- Collect information to assist dentists in triaging patients
- Address social, environmental, and health literacy issues facing communities
- Educate residents and help them develop goals to promote their oral health
- Manage treatment in accordance with a dentist's instructions
- Help patients navigate the complexities of the public health system
- Provide limited clinical services, including:
 - Screenings
 - Fluoride treatments
 - Placements of sealants
 - Placement of temporary fillings (on the instruction of a dentist)
 - Simple teeth cleanings (selective scaling for periodontal disease type I [gingivitis], and removing gross debris, stains, and calculus using hand scalers until the patient can receive definitive treatment from a dentist or hygienist)

CDHCs are community health workers with dental skills focusing on education and prevention.

CDHCs will not perform surgical procedures such as extractions or prepare teeth for restoration.

Visit ada.org/goto/cdhc for more information on Community Dental Health Coordinators.

CDHC – an extended team member

CDHCs are trained in oral health promotion, community organization and networking, cultural competency, and public health. CDHCs are a conduit between the underserved communities who are in desperate need of care and dentists who are trained and licensed to provide that care.

The CDHC is a dental team member whose primary function is the prevention of dental disease with an emphasis on Community Health Worker (CHW) skills.

CDHCs are a conduit between underserved communities that are in desperate need of care and dentists who are trained and licensed to provide that care.

Can CDHCs make a difference?

CDHCs can have an enormous impact on a community. A study to determine the effect of a dental care coordinator's intervention ("Increasing Dental Care Utilization by Medicaid-eligible Children: a Dental Care Coordinator Intervention," *Journal of Public Health Dentistry* 2009) reported an increase in dental utilization. Forty-three percent of the intervention group used preventative and/or routine dental care after intervention was implemented, compared to only 27 percent of the control group. The difference was even more pronounced at the lower income levels.

"I got involved in the program because I believe in its potential to increase dental health care access to the community."

— Calvin Hoops, 2010 CDHC student

Beyond the CDHC pilot

The ADA House of Delegates approved the development of the CDHC pilot in fall 2006. After development of comprehensive curriculum materials, teaching commenced in spring 2009 with two sites, training students to work in rural communities and Native American communities. A third site entered the program in March 2010, training students to work in urban settings. Following 12 months of online course work combined with in-person clinical training, students begin six-month internships in such sites as Indian Health Service facilities and Federally Qualified Health Centers.

Once the students complete their internships, the ADA will evaluate both the individual CDHC's effectiveness and the degree to which they are helping improve the oral health of their communities. Should the program prove effective and viable, the ADA will work to secure support of national and local foundations, federal, state and local governments, corporations and other groups with an interest in improving the nation's health.

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