

**"Is oral health care getting enough attention in the current health-care reform discussion?"**

The fast answer is no, and the door is closing," said Yolanda Bonta, a New Jersey dentist who is active in the national Hispanic Dental Association.

**"We're always left out a little,"** said Michael Battle, a Charlotte dentist and president of the National Dental Association, which represents 6,000 black dentists.

Oral-health professionals fear that dental issues have a tenuous place at best in the national debate. **"If we could be at the table instead of on the menu it would be great,"** said Kathleen T. O'Loughlin, a Massachusetts dentist, educator and executive director of the American Dental Association, which has more than 157,000 members. Dental care, said O'Loughlin, "is an essential part of overall health, and it shouldn't be overlooked." <sup>1</sup>

~~~~~

Dr. Jonathan Shenkin, a local dentist who is president of the Maine Dental Association, said dental care is a vital but often overlooked part of the health system. **"Oral health is not on the radar,"**

He said that while 47 million people nationally don't have health insurance, 130 million Americans don't have dental coverage. Also, he said there's concern that, if benefits are taxed, companies would drop dental coverage for employees as a way to save money. <sup>2</sup>

~~~~~

Mary Otto, of The Washington Post did a nice job writing the article, "Putting Teeth in Health-Care Reform". She quoted a number of dental professionals including American Dental Association's executive director Kathleen T. O'Loughlin, quoting the dental healthcare needs of the American people. No doubt, we need a national healthcare emphasis on the connection of good oral health and its relationship to a healthy body, mind and spirit. It will take a team effort and this includes all professions involved with oral healthcare. The American Dental Association, due to it's greed, wastes so much time and money pushing other professions away from the table and preventing our professions from serving those that we have been trained and educated to serve.

The American Dental Association uses money to fight Dental Hygienists from having independent practices, the American Dental Association fights and prevents Denturists from having independent practices and in most cases funnels money to state dental associations to prosecute Denturists so they can't provide affordable denture care to people with disparities. The American Dental Associations waste money fighting Alaska to prevent Dental Health Aide Therapists from providing dental services to the Natives of Alaska living in remote areas.

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/06/22/AR2009062201658.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://kennebecjournal.maintoday.com/news/local/6556041.html>

Is the American Dental Association really concerned about the American people's dental needs? Yes, I think they are, as long as they can charge what they do and as long as they can keep people waiting for a month or two while the American Dental Association keeps the competition suppressed. I'm licensed and educated to provide affordable denture care as a Denturist. The American Dental Association's money closed me down and keeps the Wyoming Legislature from regulating my profession. They used to call that a monopoly but the Federal Trade Commission turns their head as long as the American Dental Association claims I'm practicing dentistry without a license.

The money that the American Dental Association is spending on a campaign to polish up its public image; wouldn't all this wasted time and money I've mentioned be better spent providing educational programs to the professions the ADA spends so much time and money fighting? Healthcare reform can not be about greed. Greed is what got us into this mess in the first place. I'm in agreement with ADA's, President O'Loughlins statement on "bolstering the public health system" for those with disparities. It could be a team effort and I'm here to serve.

Gary W. Vollan L.D.  
State Coordinator, Wyoming State Denturist Association  
[www.wysda.org](http://www.wysda.org)

Ref: <http://www.reason.com/news/show/127434.html>

[http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/24/us/24kentucky.html?\\_r=3&pagewanted=2](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/24/us/24kentucky.html?_r=3&pagewanted=2)

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/06/22/AR2009062201658.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://kennebecjournal.maintoday.com/news/local/6556041.html>