

The American School Health Association wishes to record support for the preventive concepts which were recently proposed by the American Academy of Periodontics to the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Health during an informal conference on May 21, 1973. The American School Health Association, in its role to promote comprehensive and constructive school health programs, wishes to draw particular attention to recommendation number two and to the importance of establishing these procedures as part of the overall health curriculum: pre-school, elementary, and secondary, and college and university. The substance of the proposal as presented to the House Subcommittee on Health is as follows:

Background information:

Both tooth decay and periodontal disease have a common denominator-microbes living in a polluted dental environment. The control of this ecosystem requires daily attention to the individual and cannot be managed effectively by occasional professional treatment. The dental disease status of the nation is due not so much to a lack of professional service as it is to the widespread negligence and incompetent personal care on the part of the individual citizen. A dental care program whose primary aim is to repair or eliminate defects without a prevention base is doomed to failure as a colossal waste of money and opportunity.

All public funded dental health plans should require individual participation in personal dental care (oral hygiene, dietary control, and fluoridation) along with essential dental treatment to insure success. Recommendations:

1. Make concrete provisions and definitions for personal dental care training under the terms "preventive services (including dental health education)," such as the Children's Dental Health Act HR-2728, pp. 2, 11, 15-16.
2. Establish school dental health programs (particularly at the elementary level) designed to train youngsters in the skills and methods of personal dental care.
3. Provide support for a system to allow and encourage adults to determine their dental disease status. Such a program could be accomplished through a programmed examination in the private office or through health education and detection centers. Through this method patients could also receive information about personal dental care.
4. Make fluoridation available to all people both in water supplies (where needed) and for individual application upon recommendation by health practitioners.

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