

## **ORAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT WORK GROUP**

Members of the Oral Health Assessment Work Group: David Cappelli (Chair), John Brown, Noel Garza, Bruce Gilmour, Bill Gray, John Hederman. Consultants: Linda Altenhoff and Jane Steffensen.

The charge to the Oral Health Assessment Work Group is to assist the Oral Health Group, Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) by reviewing trends in oral health needs and resources. The Work Group identifies existing primary and secondary surveillance data resources and determines gaps in statewide oral health surveillance data. Finally, the group recommends actions for obtaining missing statewide data.

The Institute of Medicine Report (1988) identifies the core functions of public health as assessment, policy development and assurance. In this capacity, the Oral Health Group TDSHS documents the oral health status of the residents of the State of Texas. This information identifies the burden of oral disease in the State. This data can be used to compare Texas to national benchmarks, including Healthy People 2010 Objectives. By collecting this information, the Oral Health Group, TDSHS, can describe unmet oral health needs and can estimate the need for preventive services. Ultimately, this information can be used to allocate existing resources, petition for additional resources, and educate both stakeholders and the public about the impact of oral disease on overall health and well-being.

Members of this work group meet periodically to discuss State Oral Health Surveillance in Texas and to make recommendations. In our recent discussions, the work group identified the need to collect additional data in the following oral health areas:

1. Surveillance of Periodontal Health
2. Surveillance of Oral Health Indicators among Seniors
3. Surveillance of Workforce

The work group has recommending both traditional and novel strategies to collect this information for a State Oral Health Surveillance System. Also, the oral health indicators identified by the Work Group can be used by the TDSHS in the development of the Burden Document, which will be used by the state for planning.