

TOPIC: IN SUPPORT OF INCREASED AWARENESS OF ORAL ASSESSMENT AND HYGIENE AND THE NEED FOR APPROPRIATE DENTAL REFERRALS BY NURSES

SUBMITTED BY: Salisbury University Student Nurses' Association, Salisbury, MD

WHEREAS, the United States Surgeon General has declared the status of oral health in our nation a “silent epidemic” and that “no one should suffer from oral diseases or conditions that can be effectively prevented and treated”; and

WHEREAS, Healthy People 2010 states “no one can be truly healthy unless he or she is free from the burden of oral and craniofacial diseases and conditions”; and

WHEREAS, a “healthy oral status” is a core element for the health and ability to thrive of the patient/client in order to maintain the utmost quality of life; and

WHEREAS, “Conditions such as oral candidiasis, denture stomatitis, denture irritation, hyperplasia and traumatic ulceration may occur as a result of oral neglect”; and

WHEREAS, “Poor oral hygiene has also been shown to be a predisposing factor to chest infections and coronary heart disease”; and

WHEREAS, ventilator-acquired pneumonia, one of the predominant nosocomial infections in the health care industry, can be prevented in part by interventions among nursing staff such as appropriate oral hygiene and suctioning of the oral cavity; and

WHEREAS, the patient/client undergoing treatment for a medical disease may not be receiving care from a dentist for various reasons, such as lack of insurance coverage; and

WHEREAS, “The number of dentally uninsured Americans totals more than 100 million”; and

WHEREAS, and the opportunity to assess, educate and refer to a dentist’s care belongs to nurses administering patient care in an office assisting a physician or nurse practitioner or in a hospital; and

WHEREAS, nurses should frequently make oral assessments and implement oral hygiene, including “detection of signs and symptoms and difficulties [in performing] oral hygiene procedures” on patients to maintain overall health; and

WHEREAS, oral health of the patient/client will “benefit from treatment administered by a multidisciplinary team of nurses, dental hygienists, physicians and dentists”; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the National Student Nurses’ Association (NSNA) promote increased awareness among nurses and nursing students about oral assessment and hygiene as well as appropriate referrals as recommended by the United States Surgeon General and *Healthy People 2010*; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the NSNA support further research and development regarding the impact of poor oral health on individuals’ physiological standing as well as psychosocial development and quality of life; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the NSNA encourage its constituents to advocate for emphasis of evidenced-based practice to be used by nurses, nurse educators and nursing students through colleague and peer modeling in both classroom and clinical locations; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the NSNA publish information about this issue in *Imprint* and on the NSNA website, if feasible; and be it further