



VaOHC Celebrates Five Years with A Successful Virginia Oral Health Summit!

Today, nearly 200 individuals gathered at the fifth-annual Virginia Oral Health Summit to celebrate the tremendous accomplishments of Virginia's oral health network and explore new ways to improve health through community partnerships and integrated care.

The day began with a bold vision: Virginia will be the healthiest state in the country. Virginia's Health Commissioner, Dr. Marissa Levine, shared a roadmap to get there with a strong focus on collective impact and population health indicators, and she emphasized the importance of oral health as part of this vision.

Keynote speaker Dr. Julius Wilder encouraged the audience to connect with clients and patients on a personal level, and he offered insight on the social determinants or "invisible forces" that affect health.



Happy 5th Birthday, VaOHC!

Dr. Donovan Caves and Dr. Pauline Reed, a dentist and a physician team from Southeastern Virginia Health System, walked us through patient case studies to illustrate how dental providers and physicians can work together for optimal patient health and wellness.

Cheryl Roberts from the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services delivered an update on Medicaid pregnancy dental benefit utilization and other state programs that support dental care. Over 3,000 pregnant women have received dental care since the benefit began on March 1!

Our panel presenters, Nancy Stern, Susan Pharr, Dr. Jernice Giles and Lisa Thomas, presented obstacles and successes of oral health integration in myriad settings, and fielded questions from moderator Dr. Vanessa Walker Harris about their experiences leveraging community partnerships.

Kami Piscitelli, the Special Needs Oral Health Coordinator from the Virginia Department of Health, underscored the message

that we have to consider individuals with disabilities in conversations about healthcare disparities. Kami was joined by Freda, a woman living with a developmental disability, and Freda's caregiver Keith for an inspirational final reminder of why we all work so hard to increase access to care. As Freda said, good oral health means she can taste her favorite foods, feel more confident and "smile at her best friend."



Freda & Keith

Presentations from today's event will be available on our website (www.vaoralhealth.org) in the coming weeks.

Thank you to all of our speakers, sponsors, partners and attendees for making this another successful Summit!

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah".

Sarah Bedard Holland
Executive Director

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