

Oral Health Education Legislation Talking Points

- ✓ On February 25, 2007, a 12 year-old Maryland boy named Deamonte Driver died from untreated tooth decay.
- ✓ Ignoring oral health problems can lead to needless pain and suffering, causing devastating complications to an individual's well-being, with financial and social cost that significantly diminishes quality of life and burden American society.
- ✓ Over 108 million children and adults lack dental insurance, which is over 2.5 times the numbers who lack medical insurance.
- ✓ Oral diseases and tooth decay are progressive and cumulative and become more complex over time.
- ✓ Dental caries (tooth decay) is the single most common chronic childhood disease – five (5) times more common than asthma and seven (7) times more common than hay fever.
- ✓ Over 50% of five to nine year-olds children have at least one cavity or filling, and that proportion increases to 78% among 17 year-olds.
- ✓ Tobacco-related oral lesions are prevalent in adolescents who currently use smokeless (spit) tobacco.
- ✓ 51 million school hours are lost each year to dental-related illness.
- ✓ Pain and suffering due to untreated diseases can lead to problems eating, speaking and attending to learning.
- ✓ Employed adults lose more than 164 million hours of work each year due to dental disease or dental visits.
- ✓ Oral-facial pain, as a symptom of untreated dental and oral problems and as a condition in and of itself, is a major source of diminished quality of life. It is associated with sleep deprivation, depression, and multiple adverse psychosocial outcomes.
- ✓ Safe and effective measures exist to prevent the most common dental diseases-dental caries and periodontal diseases.

