



OFFICE OF ORAL HEALTH PROJECT DIRECTOR'S MEETING

KOHA: BEST PRACTICES TO MAXIMIZE SUCCESS



Speaker Bios

PDM Virtual Meeting, February 7, 2024

10:00AM – 12:00PM

Jayanth Kumar, DDS, MPH

State Dental Director, Office of Oral Health, California Department of Public Health

Dr. Kumar was appointed as the California State Dental Director in August 2015. He is a board-certified specialist in dental public health and a former director and president of the American Board of Dental Public Health. Before joining the California Department of Public Health, he was state dental director in New York where he held multiple positions. His role as program director and manager has been defined by a strong commitment to elevating oral health as a priority in the state's health agenda.

Fatima Clark

Director, Health & the Children's Movement Equity Fellowship, Children Now

Fatima Clark joined Children Now in 2013 to spearhead the Coveredtil26 campaign, a statewide outreach and enrollment project focused on promoting Medi-Cal coverage up to age 26 for current and former foster youth. Currently, Ms. Clark supports Children Now's health, early childhood, and oral health projects with policy analysis, research, and outreach support, and manages the Children's Movement Equity Fellowship program that engages college and graduate students in Children's Movement recruitment and engagement efforts. In addition to her work at Children Now, in 2016, Ms. Clark joined the national Oral Health for All 2020 Network's support team as the network relationships manager.

Ms. Clark's experience includes policy analysis and research, community organizing, and communications and media relations work focused on immigrant rights, economic justice, and health equity issues.

Ms. Clark holds an MSW from the University of Washington and a B.S. in psychology from the University of Southern California.

Monica Nicholas

Senior Health Educator/Project Director, Santa Cruz Local Oral Health Program

Monica joined the Santa Cruz County local oral health program in April of 2023 as Project Director. In a short time, Monica has strengthened relationships and coordination of key partners including School-Based Dental Providers and the Santa Cruz County Office of Education by implementing strategies such as convening a school-based workgroup and developing a Tracker that maps site schedules, priorities for expansion, and dental service data. As a result, Monica and her community partners have successfully led the charge on the Kindergarten Oral Health Assessments (KOHA), with a 100% increase in the number of school districts reporting KOHA data into the System for California Oral Health Reporting (SCOHR) from the 21-22 to 22-23 school year, while simultaneously expanding the school-based dental programs in her county. Monica is passionate about and committed to being a social justice advocate to improve systems and structures that impact the social determinants of health.

Her professional experience includes programs focused on sexual health and HIV/HEP C, substance prevention, positive youth development and leadership, and nutrition education. She is also an instructor at San Jose State University in the undergraduate public health program.

Monica is a first-generation college graduate who holds an associate degree in sociology from Cabrillo College, a bachelor's degree in collaborative health and human services from California State University, Monterey Bay, and a master's degree in public health from San Jose State University.



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Sepi Taghvaei, DDS

Executive Vice President of Operations, Dientes Community Dental Care

In 2014, after spending several years in a corporate dentistry environment in a leadership role, Dr. Sepi returned to her passion of community dentistry at Dientes. During her time at Dientes, Dr. Sepi has implemented many new programs including the first ever residency program in Santa Cruz County.

As the co-chair of Oral Health Access Santa Cruz County (OHA), Dr. Sepi leads a multi-partnership effort in improving the oral health of Santa Cruz County residents. Since its inception in 2016, OHA has implemented many initiatives, including first tooth first birthday campaigns, expanded mobile dental clinics in schools, and increased access for pregnant patients and seniors.

Dr. Sepi Taghvaei attended San Jose State University for her undergraduate studies and obtained her Doctor of Dental Surgery degree from New York University College of Dentistry in 2009. She completed a one-year General Practice Residency at Community Regional Medical Center in Fresno, CA, where she learned the importance of access to care and providing underserved patients with compassionate and high-quality dental care.

Jennifer Frusetta, RDH, BS

Program Manager, San Benito County Local Oral Health Program

Jennifer has been the LOHP Program Manager in San Benito County since 2018. She practiced dental hygiene in private practice for 40 years. Bringing her expertise from the private sector, she crossed over to public health and developed and created the LOHP for San Benito County. Prior positions have included school-based fluoride programs and on-site migrant fieldworker dental programs, in collaboration with UCLA in Madera County.

Jennifer also worked with Southeastern Asian Refugees in Fresno County in a preventive dental program and is currently collaborating with UCLA in San Benito County for Head Start's Preventive Dental Program. She has a passion for oral health and a commitment to achieving better oral health outcomes for everyone in San Benito County.

Gary Flores

Coordinator IV, CodeStack (SCOHR)

Gary Flores started his journey at CodeStack a decade ago, demonstrating proficiency in resolving complex issues and understanding the intricacies of the SCOHR Help Desk.

Gary assumed the role of Project Manager five years ago. By working closely with key stakeholders, such as the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), the California Department of Education (CDE), and the CodeStack team, Gary has steadily improved reporting through the SCOHR system. He remains committed to continuous improvement, ensuring that the SCOHR system evolves to meet the dynamic needs of the healthcare industry.