

MISSION STATEMENT

To increase access to health care for low income uninsured members of our community by using a volunteer network of providers working in a coordinated fashion to create a compassionate, respectful, equitable, accountable, and efficient program of necessary services for those in need.

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- Treasurer**
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- Secretary**
Barbara Simpson Kraft
- Medical Director**
Bradley Cruz MD
- Dental Director**
David Nielson DDS
- Past President**
Bradley Cruz MD

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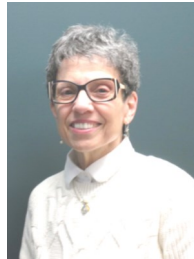
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- Mo Hillstrand DNP
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- Patient Care Coordinator**
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ANCHORAGE PROJECT ACCESS
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 AnchorageProjectAccess.org

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Greetings Everyone,

I hope this finds all of you doing well and enjoying our summer – for as long as it might last.

As I’m sure you know Anchorage Project Access (APA) has become a three-tiered operation that includes:

- Traditional Project Access (donated medical care)
- Project Access Dental (donated dental care)
- Enrollment and assistance with Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act Insurance

Dr. David Nielson, DDS is an APA board member who spearheaded this new dental program based on a successful “pay it forward” program in Battle Creek, Michigan.

This Colleague will consist of a brief account of Dr. Nielson’s history and how this dental program started – entirely in his own words.

If you or your staff has any questions, please don’t hesitate to call me at 743-6651.

A Brief History of How Project Access Acquired a Dental Program

When my wife, Dr. Julie Robinson, and I began our dental careers here in Anchorage during the early 1980’s, it was at the beginning of one of the worst recessions Alaska had ever seen. The state was suffering from a pipeline boom hangover, and programs were being cut right and left. At the time, we were employed by the Anchorage Neighborhood Dental Clinic in Fairview where we provided comprehensive dental care on a sliding fee basis. The clinic worked extremely well, until it was cut to only a shadow of its former self and we were “let go.” So, we decided to concentrate more on growing our own private practice.

During those days and until the late 1990’s, Medicaid covered dental emergencies along with many other procedures; however, very few dentists accepted it. It wasn’t until Julie and I volunteered at a Mission of Mercy (MOM) in Portland where hundreds of people camped out all night in line to have a tooth pulled that we realized just how crucial the situation was.

In 2014 we decided to bring a MOM event to Anchorage. Massive community support and hundreds of dental volunteers from all over the state allowed us to treat over a thousand patients in two days and brought awareness to the unmet need. Regrettably, while the MOM events are amazing and provide millions of dollars in care, they are not a sustainable model. We needed an option that was more ongoing to help people who fell through the cracks. I had heard about a “pay-it-forward” community service program in Michigan that sounded interesting, so I decided to see if we could develop something like it in Anchorage. Luckily, Anchorage Project Access (APA) and I found each other.

Working with Charlene Vassar and Jane Dial of APA, Anchorage Neighborhood Health Clinic dental director Dr. Ghazal Ringler and Randy Sweet of United Way the APA dental program began to take shape. I knew proper vetting, tracking of community service hours and smooth navigation of patients through the program were probably the most vital aspects to have in place before dental providers could be recruited.

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DENTAL PROGRAM HISTORY CONT'D

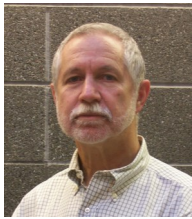
As we work to smooth out some of the small kinks in the referral process to volunteer offices, patients are being enrolled and some have now been seen by providers—although at a slower rate than anticipated. One of the main reasons is likely for the very same reason medical referrals have slowed, expansion of Medicaid. Currently, APA has access to 28 dental providers and three labs that have committed to over 1,500 procedures per year. These oral health providers have already donated over \$36,000 in care since the program started a year ago. I am optimistic the process will continually smooth out. In some ways, the slow start gives us more time to perfect the process before, as many anticipate, Alaska Medicaid money begins to dry up and more people once again begin to fall through the cracks. Cracks we hope to fill with help from a wonderful dental partnership with Anchorage Project Access.

LOVE A NURSE



APA was the recent recipient of \$5,132 from the first annual Love a Nurse 5K Run sponsored by the Alaska Nurses Association. While we were asked to participate in the run by having an APA booth displaying our organization, we were completely surprised when they honored us with this amazing check. **APA certainly does “Love a Nurse”!**

BOARD MEMBER PROFILE: JEROME LIST MD



Jerome List, MD was one of the physicians involved from the onset with APA and served on its first Board of Directors. He currently returned to serve as the Board President. He was and continues to be a very generous volunteer provider. Jerome moved to Costa Rica at age four from Missouri and returned to the U.S. for his senior year in High School after which he finished two years of college at Oklahoma State University. He then returned to Costa Rica where he finished Dental School at the University of Costa Rica in 1974. During training he was involved with volunteer work and traveled to remote corners to provide dental care, mostly extractions. His mentor was a pediatric dentist who was a true inspiration. That same year Jerome was granted a scholarship to study Oral Surgery at the Pavlovsk Medical Institute in Leningrad, USSR. On completing his specialty training he returned to Costa Rica only to find there were no jobs available forcing him to take a teaching job at Oregon Health Sciences University Dental School.

He subsequently enrolled at the University of Oklahoma and received a medical degree in 1984 and relocated to Oregon to complete his residency in ENT in 1989. At that time, he worked for Kaiser Permanente for three years and relocated to Anchorage where he has been ever since. His mentor in Dental School taught him that we have the obligation to return to our society. Our education is not covered by the tuition we pay. There are many dedicated people along our professional development path who without selfishness have contributed to our development. Jerome has been involved in other volunteer activities throughout the years. Perhaps his most notable is through Faces Foundation (www.facesfoundation.org). This organization has provided cleft lip and palate services to a large area in northern Peru.

Jerome encourages everyone to return to our society. He says “Different people do it in different ways; however, I think it is our obligation to give in some way.”



MT. HUNTINGTON AWARD RECIPIENT



Anchorage Radiation Therapy Center

The Mt. Huntington Award is an element of our recognition program to thank providers and their staff for their exceptional services. To view all previous recipients visit:

AnchorageProjectAccess.org

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And—to the many others too numerous to list

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APA is a Designated Recipient