



# WASHINGTON STATE Board of Health

ALWAYS WORKING FOR A SAFER AND HEALTHIER WASHINGTON

**DATE:** June 13, 2011

**TO:** Washington State Board of Health Members

**FROM:** Dr. James Sledge

**SUBJECT:** BRIEFING – ORAL HEALTH RISK FACTORS AND SYSTEMIC CONNECTIONS

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## **Background and Summary:**

Over the last few years the Board has received a lot of public comment about fluoride but has not heard much about the bigger oral health picture. Today, Board members will learn about the factors that affect oral health aside from fluoridated water, including nutrition, dental hygiene, access to care and other factors. This presentation will also identify some of the systemic effects of poor oral health (such as bacterial pneumonia, diabetes mellitus, low birth weight and others).

The Health Promotion Committee is also planning a future presentation that will focus on Washingtonians' oral health status, and efforts to improve access to care. During that presentation, Board members will learn about some policy frameworks that help address oral health issues. The Board has had a long-standing interest in oral health as evidenced by its inclusion in the 2001 report on *Access to Critical Health Services*.

Dr. Bea Gandara, a faculty member at the University of Washington's Department of Oral Medicine, is here today to make the first of the presentations the Health Promotion Committee has planned for the Board.

## **Recommended Board Action**

No Board action is recommended at this time.

**Staff Contact:** Tara Wolff