Oral health is integral to general health, and must be included in the provision of health care and the design of community programs.  

_U.S. Surgeon General_

Disparities in oral health status, treatment access and quality of life of older low income and minority adults are significant and persistent, calling for innovative and translational research.

**Factors facilitating disparities:**

~ Disconnect between those who need care and service providers, advocacy organizations and researchers.
~ Lack of centralized information site available to the public.
~ Lack of awareness of geriatric oral health among primary health care and dental providers.
~ Limited geriatric oral health curricula in medical and dental educational programs.

**PROCESS**

Create a Sustained Oral Health Research Strategic Alliance (OHRSA) Consortium

Integrate Older Adult Community Voices in Research and Curriculum Development

Identify specific oral health disparities and develop research to reduce them with residents and community partners.

Build and Institutionalize Geriatric Oral Health and clinic/community based research in Medical and Dental Curricula

**GOALS**

Reduce Disparities in Oral Health

Build Improved and Accessible Oral Health Databases

Incorporate Community-Centered Participatory Research into Geriatric Oral Health Research

Create an Active Older Adult Oral Health Research Promoters Group

Foster Geriatric Oral Health Research Partnerships across OHRSA

**PROGRESS TO DATE**

**OHRSA:**

~ 33 members from community organizations, university and state agencies
~ Four areas of special interest identified
  ~ Policy/Advocacy
  ~ Research Review
  ~ Service Improvement
  ~ Curriculum
  ~ Beginning work on community curriculum

**Resident Involvement:**

~ Management contacted at 22 low income senior housing buildings in Hartford and Meriden
~ Presentations to residents in English and Spanish at 18 buildings
~ Follow-up visits with residents at 9 buildings

**Planning Grant Funded - Changing Oral Health Norms and Hygiene Practices among Vulnerable Older Adults**

~ Multi-level intervention
~ Lay health workers to deliver an oral health campaign at the building level
~ Motivational interviewing at the individual level