



# Improving Oral Health among Vulnerable Low Income Senior Housing Residents in Central Connecticut

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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.

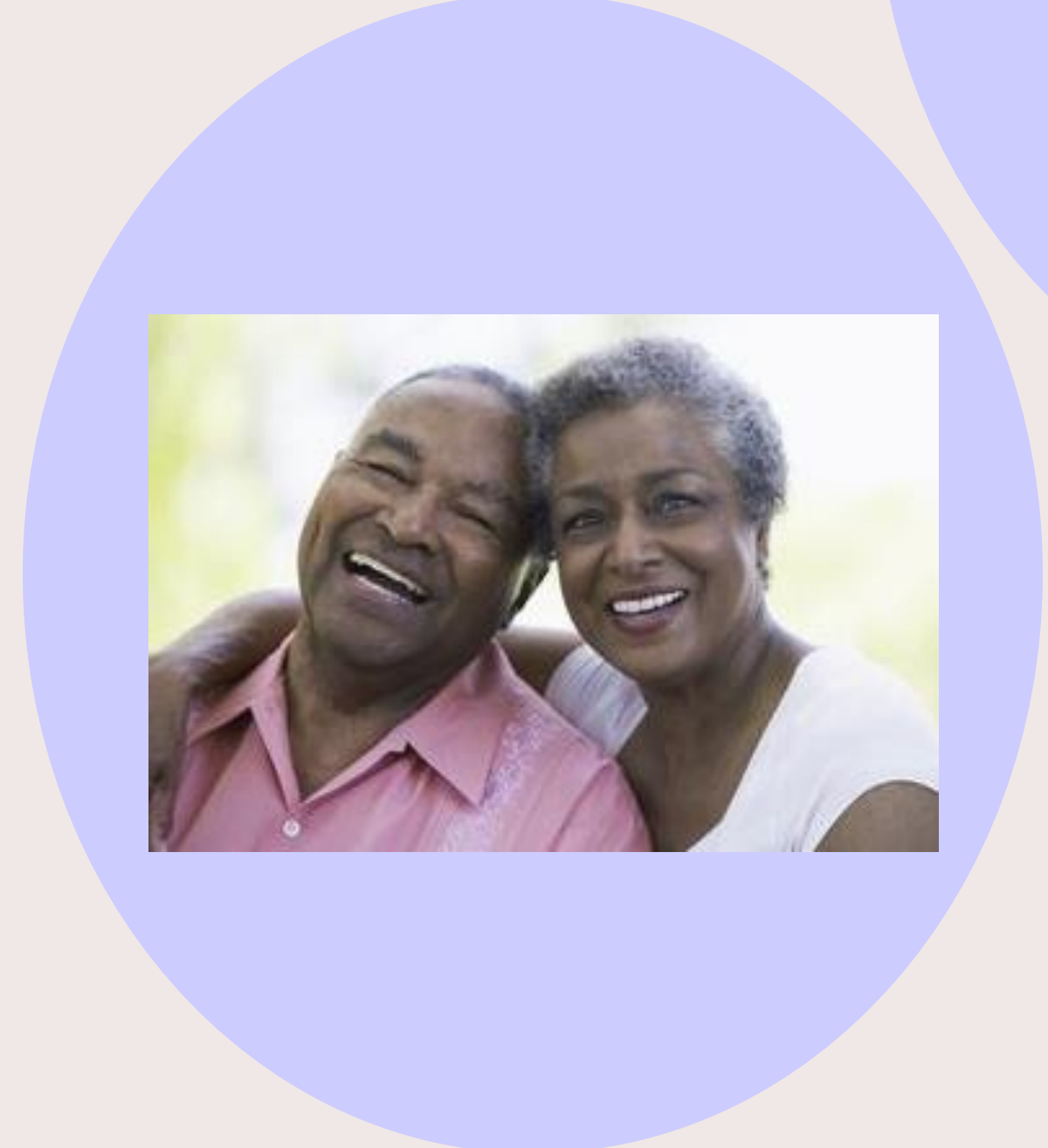
~ Lack of awareness of geriatric oral health among primary health care and dental providers.

~ 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
  - ~ Curricula
- ~ 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