



Office of the Secretary

OCT 25 2005

DepED MEMORANDUM

No. 326, s. 2005

IMPROVING ORAL HEALTH FOR BETTER NUTRITION OF PRE-SCHOOLERS
AND GRADES I-III PUPILS IN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

To: Bureau Directors
Regional Directors
Schools Division/City Superintendents
Heads, Public Elementary Schools

1. Dental caries continue to be one of the unabated health problems in schools. Data from the recently conducted Universal Medical/Dental Check-Up of Grades I-III pupils in June-July this year and from studies conducted in Cagayan de Oro City showed the following conditions:

- a. Dental caries ranked 1st among the 10 common ailments found in schools and affects 87% of school children;
- b. 29% of 6th year molar of Grade I pupils are decayed;
- c. 94.2% of first graders suffer from untreated dental caries; and
- d. Among Grade I pupils, each child has an average of 8 decayed teeth.

2. Dental caries if left untreated will eventually lead to loss of teeth. Toothaches have been identified as one cause of pupils' absenteeism and chewing problems brought about by incomplete set of teeth are contributing factors to malnutrition.

3. To address the problem, daily supervised toothbrushing drill will be implemented in all public elementary schools nationwide. World Health Organization (WHO) study advocates daily toothbrushing with fluoride toothpaste as the most cost-effective measure against dental caries. Pilot studies conducted in Indonesia, United Kingdom and the Philippines, showed that daily school-based toothbrushing reduced caries incidence by 40-50%. The activity therefore, shall aim to:

- a. increase oral health awareness among the pupils and parents;
- b. develop the habit of toothbrushing;
- c. decrease absenteeism due to toothache; and
- d. increase demand for oral health care.

4. All school health personnel shall take the lead in the orientation on the guidelines for the daily drill and in the periodic assessment of the activity. They are likewise expected to encourage school administrators, teachers and parents to sustain the activity by way of providing toothbrushing paraphernalia such as toothbrush rack/holder made of bamboo, cloth or any indigenous materials, water jar/jug and plastic cups, and a mirror in every classroom as shown in the enclosure.

5. Regional directors and school administrators are encouraged to support this long overdue initiative to improve oral health among the school populace for the effective and efficient implementation of the activity.

6. For more information, please contact Dr. Juan R. Araujo, Chief, Health and Nutrition Center, Dental Services at tel. no.: (02) 632-1361 to 70 local 2336.

6. Wide and immediate dissemination of this Memorandum is desired.

FE A. HIDALGO 10/23
FE A. HIDALGO
Undersecretary
Officer-in-Charge

Encl.:

As stated

Reference:

None

Allotment: 1—(D.O. 50-97)

To be indicated in the Perpetual Index
under the following subjects:

HEALTH EDUCATION
 PROJECTS
 PUPILS

Sheila, MPPD-TS, DM Improving Oral Health
October 7, 2005
Computer Used: Mam Jo

