

2024 ASTDD New Member Services/Peer Support Program Annual Report

Coordinators: Lori Cofano- State/Territorial Dental Director and Program Manager
Orientation and Peer Support Program
Kimberlie Payne – Associate Member Coordinator

Purpose:

Developing, implementing and evaluating a state/territorial oral health program (S/TOHP) is an enormous undertaking that requires a great deal of knowledge, skill, flexibility and diplomacy. S/TOHP directors/managers bring a variety of backgrounds to their position and often occupy the sole oral health position within their health agency. ASTDD wants to assist in whatever way possible to help new directors/managers become effective in administering their programs.

Upon joining ASTDD, each new member and associate member is welcomed by Chris Wood, Executive Director and either Lori Cofano, state/territorial directors/managers or Kimberlie Payne, associate members.

Lori holds orientation calls with all new directors/managers to acquaint them with the ASTDD website. She offers them the opportunity to engage with a peer mentor from another state for a year through the ASTDD Peer Support Program (PSP). Those interested in participating in the PSP complete an online application via Survey Monkey. Based on their identified needs, interests and location, a peer mentor is selected and together they complete a technical assistance plan.

Kimberlie sends a personal email with a follow-up phone call to each associate member. She first welcomes and thanks them for joining ASTDD and describes ASTDD's mission and goals. She finds out more about their professional responsibilities and focuses the conversation on what would be more beneficial to them. Kimberlie walks through the website, resources, committees and makes sure the new member is aware that if they have any questions, Kimberlie is their contact. The program has been a great success, and the new members are very appreciative of the personalized contact.

New Member Services/Peer Support Program supports the ASTDD Strategic Plan by supporting professional development and mentoring for S/TOHP leadership and staff, promoting and enhancing peer connections and communication among S/TOHPs and promoting and facilitating internal and external S/TOHP collaborations.

Accomplishments and Current Activities:

As of December 31, ASTDD had 62 primary members (S/TOHP) and 28 life members (state and territorial director for at least 10 years). In 2024, ASTDD added 131 new associate members for a total of 576 associate members, of which 66 were individuals who belong as part of 14 organizational memberships.

Peer Support Program (PSP): In 2024 states participating in the mentoring program included, Georgia, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Nebraska, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Vermont

Thank you to Charles Craft, Chris Farrell, Angela Filzen, Robin Miller and Frances Wise for your mentoring expertise.

New director/manager orientations = 11

Peer Support Applications = 2

Six-month evaluations = 4

One-year evaluations = 0

PSP certificates = 0

Orientation for new state oral health program leads included, California, Georgia, Louisiana (2), Maine, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina Oregon, Tennessee, Virgin Islands. Two states had two new leads in 2024.

- The Peer Support Discussion Group met in January, August, and November for 1.5 hours via Zoom. The May meeting was canceled as the presenters' schedules changed.
- In January, Debonny Hughes, Maryland's state dental director, presented to the Peer Support Discussion Group on diversified funding for state oral health programs.
- In August, Bev Isman and Kimberlie Payne presented the new State Oral Health Improvement Plan (SOHIP) document and the Seven Step Model.
- 2024 was unusual in that two people in the Peer Support Program left their positions before the six-month mentor evaluation period.
- In November, Barb Park presented resources on the relationship between oral health and chronic disease.
- Lori reviewed, edited and formatted the Policy Consensus Tool and created a technical assistance request form for the Tool. Both were posted to the ASTDD website.
- In October, Lori, Bev and Kimberlie presented the SOHIP, Seven Step Model and the Policy Consensus Tool during the Oral Health Progress and Equity Network (OPEN) meeting.
- In February 2025, Lori is scheduled to do an ASTDD Spotlight on the Policy Consensus Tool.
- The next Peer Support Discussion Group meeting will be in March 2025.
- The New Member Services 2024-2025 logic model and workplan were updated, approved and posted.

Future Activities:

- Continue to contact new S/TOHP directors/managers to provide orientation to ASTDD and introduce them to the PSP.
- Ongoing tracking of PSP activities, including orientations, PSP applications, and evaluations.
- The PSP collaborates with experienced state oral health program directors/managers to provide mentoring to new directors/managers.
- New directors/managers are shown how to find information pertaining to ASTDD's committees. If they express interest in a committee, they are introduced to the committee Chair and Consultant via email to obtain more information.

- Subject matter experts are invited to the Peer Support Discussion Group quarterly meeting based on topics of interest to the new state oral health program leads.

Subcommittees: N/A

Unmet needs of your committee (e.g., members, funding, etc.):

SOHP leadership turnover makes it a challenge to find new mentors. A number of the people listed as the SOHP lead are not only overseeing the SOHP but other programs and are not interested in mentoring. Some of the recent new oral health program leads have expressed interest in the PSP but do not complete the application due to their other obligations.

Quotes:

Oklahoma and Nebraska are similar states with urban/rural populations. We have common issues. We talked about how oral health fits into state priorities and how to promote and defend your program.

~ Charles "Fritz" Craft (NE)

My program area has benefitted from me having the opportunity to learn from Fritz. He was always accessible to me if I reached out with a question. He has also been instrumental in connecting me with other regional directors via the Midwest Dental Director quarterly Zoom calls.

~Nicole Reynolds (OK)

I REALLY appreciate ASTDD!!! I have never received such a welcome from any organization. ASTDD is amazing and thank you for all you do!

Caleb