

JACKLYN L. VENTURA, RDH

A long career dedicated to improving oral health

Jacklyn Ventura is a Registered Dental Hygienist and a certified Public Health Dental Hygienist (PHDH) in the state of Massachusetts. With over 26 years of experience in dentistry, Jacklyn has worked for most of those years in private dental practice and is accustomed to caring for a diverse range of patients in all stages of life. Jacklyn began her professional training while serving in the U.S. Navy and later acquired a degree in Dental Hygiene. Currently, Jacklyn is pursuing a degree in Early Childhood Education to better serve that population.

While the majority of oral and dental diseases are preventable, for many residents of the Commonwealth obtaining dental care has been difficult. As an active member of the Southeastern Massachusetts Dental Hygiene Association (SMDHA), Jacklyn strongly supported lobbying for new legislation to improve access to dental care for underserved populations. The change in state law provides for more access to dental care through the utilization of Public Health Dental Hygienists that can work independently in the community. This new law was finally passed in 2009. That year, Jacklyn became one of the first independently practicing PHDHs' in Massachusetts. At that time, she was also honored as a recipient of a PHDH grant offered by UMASS Medical School. All of the grant commitments were met on schedule.

Always an advocate for the promotion of good oral health, Jacklyn is currently a co-chairperson of the SMDHA. Throughout her career, she has devoted her time and efforts to serving in many capacities within the SMDHA organization. In 2005, her peers acknowledged Jacklyn's commitment to her profession by designating her, "Outstanding Dental Hygienist of the Year in Southeastern Massachusetts." Currently, Jacklyn continues to make contributions within the dental and broader community. Jacklyn is a trustee on the Massachusetts Dental Hygienist Association (MDHA) Board of Trustees. Jacklyn is also currently a member of the Bristol Community College Advisory Board.

In 2010, Jacklyn founded MASS Children Healthy Smiles with a PHDH partner. Within a year, the company was offering services to 22,000 children and delivering services to over 1,500 children. Procedures provided included dental screenings, oral hygiene instructions, prophylaxis, fluoride treatments, sealant placements, and a dental referral service. Primarily, these services have been available to children in schools, daycare centers, and homeless shelters. With effective management, dedication, and hard work, the company grew to serve over 110 locations across 19 cities and towns in a little less than two years' time. The unmet needs for dental care for at-risk populations within the Commonwealth became quite evident.

To better meet those needs, in 2012, Jacklyn established a new company, MASS Healthy Smiles, LLC. With Jacklyn's experience across many communities came a greater awareness: not only are many children's dental needs underserved, but many of their

families also lack sufficient dental treatment. Offering the same beneficial services, Mass Healthy Smiles serves children first and foremost. However, in addition they expanded dental screenings and preventive care to an even larger population including adults. While the new company, MASS Healthy Smiles, continues to provide care to several school systems and many daycare centers, it has extended its efforts into more homeless shelters, group homes, and other at-risk populations. Working with a team of experienced and qualified, professional associates and staff, Jacklyn has watched MASS Healthy Smiles continued to grow, currently serving over 76 locations in Massachusetts.

Some personal comments from Jacklyn:

"I absolutely love being a hygienist. Educating children and families to improve their oral health, helps to heal their whole body and improves their quality of life. It gives me great pleasure and satisfaction to work hard at helping patients overcome their fears of dentistry through positive experiences no matter what age. I look forward to any opportunity to help more people in need and make a difference in our communities." -Jackie