New platform for better oral health in Europe

BRUSSELS, Belgium: The Platform for Better Oral Health in Europe has put forth targets for improved oral health and the launch of a Europe-wide consultation on priorities for achieving better oral health by 2020. At a recent roundtable discussion during a meeting of the European Parliament, the targets were presented to EU policymakers and to a representative panel of public health stakeholders and professional associations.

The platform was established in response to the call to action submitted by members of the European Parliament to the then European health commissioner John Dalli in 2010. It promotes a common European approach towards education, prevention and access to better oral health care in the continent.

Part of a European-wide call for input, the proposed targets focus on three key priorities: data-collection systems, preventive policies, and education and awareness. According to the platform, the targets will serve as a basis for benchmarking EU member states’ progress towards increased prevention of oral diseases and improved oral health in Europe by 2020. In addition, the targets are expected to inform the joint action on chronic diseases, which will be launched in 2015 by the European Commission and EU member states. Platform members will actively coordinate with European institutions to ensure the collection, validation and dissemination of good practices to address common risk factors, prevent oral diseases, promote oral health and facilitate data collection.

The targets build on the platform’s “State of Oral Health in Europe” report published in September 2012 (reported by Dental Tribune), which indicated that despite significant achievements in the prevention of caries in Europe, much remains to be done, particularly in key areas, such as promoting oral health awareness, tackling oral health inequalities and addressing common risk factors. The report reinforced the need for measurable targets and high-quality oral health data in order to better assess the impact of prevention initiatives, and to guide oral health policies and strategies at all levels of government.

Agreed-upon targets will be announced in 2014.

The consultation, which runs until December 2013, will seek to involve public health stakeholders and professional associations across EU member states in helping to further refine and focus the proposed targets. Following the conclusion of the consultation, the agreed-upon targets will be announced on World Oral Health Day 2014, along with key benchmarks and scorecards against which to better measure the state of oral health in all EU member states.

Presenting the 2020 targets, Prof. Kenneth Eaton, chair of the platform, said: “The burden of oral health disease continues to challenge Europe, particularly in Southern and Eastern European countries where significant disparities already exist and where access to affordable treatment grows more and more difficult. Meaningful actions to increase disease prevention and improve the state of oral health across Europe are needed now. We are calling on stakeholders across Europe to help us make our proposed 2020 targets a reality, and to ensure that more Europeans take advantage of the simple, effective tools that can help them improve their oral health today.”

Untapped policy areas expected to be scrutinised as part of the consultation process include the need to improve care for the elderly, earlier diagnosis of oral cancer, integration of oral hygiene education in school programmes, and strengthened public awareness campaigns that make European citizens more aware of daily oral hygiene practices, including proper brushing and brushing of the fluoride-containing toothpaste, interdental cleaning, taking care of teeth when away from home, and the use of sugar-free chewing gum and regular dental check-ups.

Oral health-related costs still on the rise

Less than a year ago, the “State of Oral Health in Europe” report, commissioned by the Platform for Better Oral Health in Europe, revealed that oral health-related costs are still on the rise even though caries and its complications are highly preventable through a healthy, balanced diet and routine oral hygiene practices. The report estimated spending on dental treatment in the EU 27 to be close to €67 billion in 2012, a figure set to reach €87 billion by 2020 if adequate action is not taken immediately. The consultation is open to all interested individuals and organisations: www.oralhealthplatform.eu
Market in Europe increases with more sales achieved online

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OEMUS MEDIA AG
COLOGNE, Germany: Overall sales of dental equipment in Europe increased last year, according to a market study presented by the Association of European Dental Dealers (ADDE) and Federation of the European Dental Industry (FIDE) at IDS in Cologne. Sales of consumables remained at the same level in 2012, it also found. In contrast to the steadily declining number of direct sales, email and web sales increased continuously in nearly all the countries examined. Among these, Denmark was ahead of France and Great Britain as the fastest growing dental market in Europe.

With respect to 2012, it was found that despite a slight increase in the number of practicing dentists in Europe, the number of dental technicians has not grown. The number of dental practices and labs has actually decreased, signaling a nearly uniform trend toward consolidation across the continent.

While the number of graduates in dental medicine in Europe declined significantly in comparison to 2011, the same was considerably higher in the US. Nevertheless, the ratio of practicing dentists to patients remained unchanged.

FIDE and ADDE have been collaborating since 1998 and together publish an annual market study of the European dental industry. Along with figures on customers and end-consumers, the report also covers sales values for the main product categories such as dental equipment, consumables, implants and CAD/CAM, as well as data on distribution channels, information about current European VAT rates and their influence on the dental market.

(IDS 2013 surpasses expectations)

COLOGNE, Germany: According to the latest statistics, an estimated 125,000 visitors from 149 countries and 2,058 exhibitors from 56 countries attended the world's largest dental show in Germany in March. The organisers noted growth in the number of international participants in particular. About 68 per cent of exhibitors and 48 per cent of visitors came from outside Germany. Overall, they reported a 6 per cent increase compared with the event two years ago.

“Owing to the high internationality of the event and the distinct discretionary buying power of the visitors, we expect positive effects for the current business year and sustainable development on the national and international dental markets,” said Dr Martin Rickert, Chairman of the Association of German Dental Manufacturers (VDDI).

Despite the apparent return of winter last week, the show was very well attended from the first day onwards by dental professionals, dental technicians, and representatives of the dental industry and academics. In particular, exhibitors noted an increase in the number of visitors from emerging dental markets, such as China, Russia and Brazil. In addition, more people from Japan, Turkey and Ukraine attended the show than before.

The organisers observed that visitors and exhibitors showed particular interest in CAD/CAM systems and digital workflow technologies. Innovations in prophylaxis and implantology attracted great interest too.

According to an IDS survey, 74 per cent of the participants were satisfied or very satisfied with the event. Owing to the comprehensive range of products and the numerous product innovations, almost 80 per cent rated the exhibition as good or very good. Overall, about 95 per cent of the visitors said that they would recommend the event to their business partners.

The next IDS will be held from 10 to 14 March 2015.