

# Spotlight on Oral Health

Dental Health Promotion Working Group of  
Saskatchewan Newsletter

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## Dental Screening Wrap Up

Dental Health Educators (DHEs) have been very busy across the province with the 2008-2009 Dental Screening. The provincial wide screening is conducted every five years. Grade one and grade seven students were screened using a flash light and dental mirror and/or tongue depressor. A detailed letter was sent home with each student screened outlining their oral health status, reminding families that the dental screening does not replace routine visits to their family dentist. Once the data is gathered and compiled, it is used to plan future dental health programs in schools across the 13 Saskatchewan Health Regions.

Fortunately for the Saskatoon Health Region (SHR) a very talented and driven Masters of Public Health student Vinay Kumar joined their team to learn and practice his skills in oral epidemiology for his MPH practicum. As part of his practicum with the SHR, Vinay or Minnu+ (as his family calls him) completed the Executive Summary and Recommendations for the 2003-2004 Provincial Dental Screening Report and analyzed several health regions' data and compiled written reports for the 2008-2009 Dental Screening Report, in addition to various other oral health projects.

Vinay was born and raised in the southern Indian city of Hyderabad. Going to medical school was always a childhood dream of his, and he rightfully earned the right to have the magical letters of Dr. in front of his name after he completed the rigorous medical and dental curriculum. He completed his Baccalaureate of Dental Surgery (B.D.S.) from Kamineni Institute of Dental Science in Narketpally, India in July 2008.

Vinay came to Canada in the fall of 2008 to complete a Master's in Public Health (M.P.H.) at the University of Saskatchewan. Once he completes his M.P.H. Vinay is looking forward to pursuing a Ph.D. in Public Health Dentistry.

When Vinay is not busy studying, in his spare time he enjoys various hobbies such as travelling, photography, riding his motor bike, playing cricket, and a special interest in playing strategy video games.

On behalf of all the DHEs across Saskatchewan, we would like to thank Vinay for the tremendous amount of work he completed during his internship, especially in regard to the 2003-2004 and 2008-2009 Dental Screening Reports. We wish him all the best in his future studies and career aspirations.

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**Cheers for  
Dr. Vinay Kumar!  
M.P.H. Student at U of S**

**Thank you for all your  
hard work and dedication  
during your internship at  
Saskatoon Health Region**





# Spotlight on Oral Health



## Gruen Von Behrens' powerful anti-tobacco message for Saskatchewan students

Traveling from his home in rural Illinois, Gruen Von Behrens spent a week in late October 2008 touring Saskatchewan high schools. He delivered an inspiring and powerful message for students fortunate enough to hear his story. Speaking to audiences of grade 9 students, a notable quiet came over the room in city after city as Gruen introduced himself with a Midwest accent and a slight slur to his speech, the result of over 30 life saving surgeries to his jaw and face.

Diagnosed with oral cancer at the young age of 17, Gruen first began using spit tobacco at the age of 13. What began as a white spot on his tongue in time grew to become oral cancer. Now at 31, Gruen encourages students to think for themselves and to consider his disfigured face and traumatic experience before they decide to use any tobacco product.

Gruen's tour was the result of a partnership between the Canadian Cancer Society, The College of Dental Surgeons of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Dental Therapists Association, Saskatchewan Dental Hygienists Association, Saskatchewan Dental Assistants Association, Ministry of Health and Education, Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region, Health Canada and the Dental Health Educators of Saskatchewan.

His visit came at a time when Saskatchewan's 24% smoking rate is one of the highest in Canada, compared to the national average of 18%. An equally alarming trend was noted in a 2005 Spit Tobacco Survey conducted by the Dental Health Educators Group of Saskatchewan. The survey showed that 15% of grade 9 students throughout the province identified themselves as users of chew+or spit tobacco with 14% reporting addiction.

The Canadian Cancer Society was instrumental in the creation of the educational DVD based on Gruen's story. The DVD will be provided to all Saskatchewan high schools in the fall of 2009 with the assistance of Dental Health Educators of Saskatchewan.



**Dental Resource for Teachers - Print your own copy!**

<http://www.publications.gov.sk.ca/details.cfm?p=12079>



Gruen Von Behrens will be returning to Saskatchewan to speak at the Saskatchewan Dental Professionals Annual 2009 Scientific Session hosted in Regina. He calls himself the real face of tobacco+and will be telling his story of surviving cancer on Saturday, September 18th at 8:30 am and 10:30 am. For more information on the Scientific Session and other presenters, please check out their website!



<http://www.saskdentists.com/UserFiles/CDSS%20brochure.pdf>



# Swish away tooth decay!

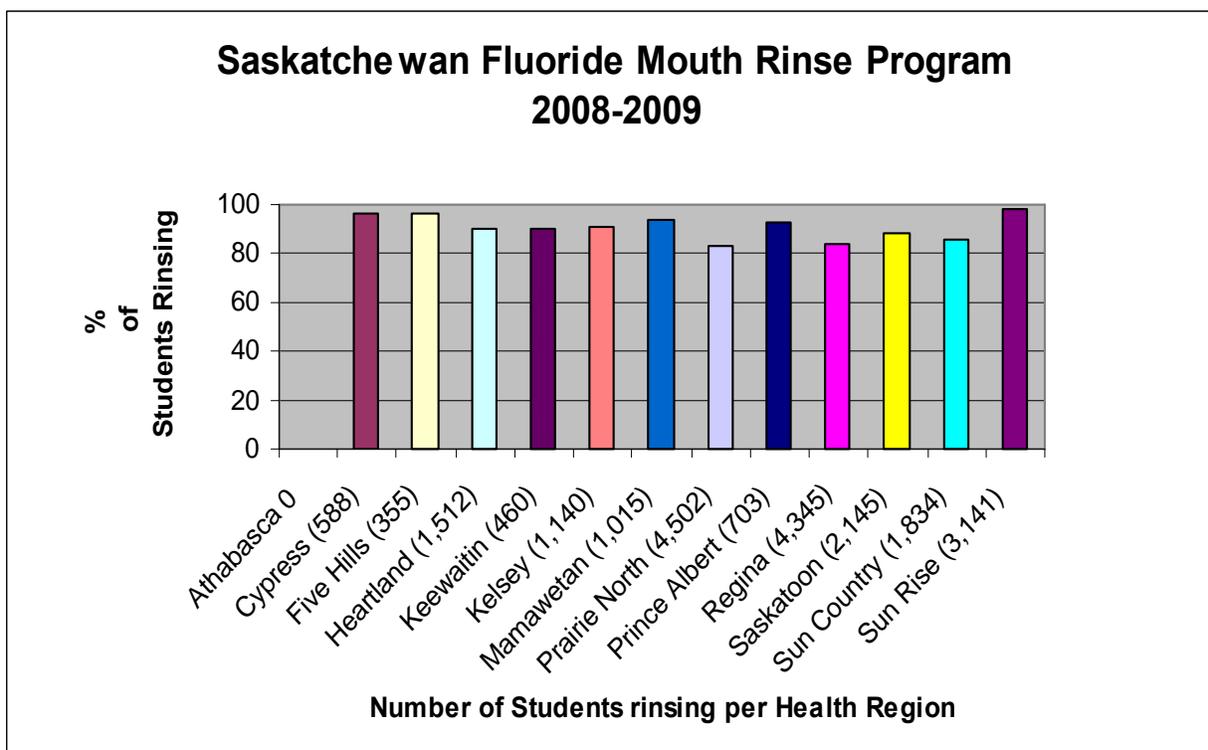
Fluoride mouth rinse programs are offered in many schools throughout Saskatchewan. They are a safe and effective way of preventing tooth decay. Students rinse once a week under the supervision of trained volunteers and/or school staff. Studies have shown that rinsing with fluoride reduces tooth decay by **30%**.

The rinse program is a safe and cost effective method of reducing tooth decay. The program is important to the oral health of your child. Participation is entirely voluntary and without cost to you.

This program, however, should not take the place of daily oral health care routines such as brushing, flossing, using fluoridated toothpaste and regular dental visits.

As a school or community, if all preventive measures are utilized, unnecessary dental treatment and dental costs can be avoided.

For more information or if you are wondering if you or your child's school is eligible for a mouth rinse program please contact the **Dental Health Educator** in your health region.



-The total number of Fluoride Mouth Rinse Programs currently running in Saskatchewan is **229**

-**21,7140** students and **60** adults participating for a total of **21,800** rinsing provincially

*Statistics taken from Fluoride Mouth Rinse Program 2008/2009 compiled by the Dental Health Promotion Fluoride Task Group March 2009*



# Something to Smile About!



## National Oral Health Month Contest Winner 2009

Clara Ellert, DHE from Five Hills Health Region presents an Oral B Professional Electric Toothbrush to winner Arlene Krusky from Assiniboia - she entered her name at Ross Payant Nursing Home.

*The toothbrush was purchased through a generous donation from the Saskatchewan Dental Therapists Association. Thank you!*



*Thank you to everyone who participated in National Oral Health Month activities across the province*

## Something to Chew on!



-**Xylitol** gum is a dental dream. It reverses the harmful effects of sugar in the mouth and helps to restore the natural balance.

-The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry has endorsed the use of **xylitol**-containing products for tooth decay prevention.

-Chewing **xylitol**-sweetened gum three to five times per day for a minimum of five minutes after meals has been found to slow down plaque build up and prevent the progress of tooth decay .

-**Xylitol**-sweetened gum should not take the place of your regular dental routine. It is recommended to be used in addition to daily brushing with fluoride toothpaste, flossing and routine visits to your dental professional

For more information about **Xylitol** and oral health, please visit the following websites or contact your **Dental Health Educator** for more information.

<http://www.xylitolcanada.com/media.htm>

<http://jada.ada.org/cgi/reprint/137/2/190.pdf>

<http://www.xylitol.org/>

# Continuing Education and Employment Opportunities

- Dental Therapist Career Opportunities

<http://www.sdta.ca/newsite/Career.htm>

- Post - Diploma Degree Completion Program B.Sc. In Dental Hygiene

<http://www.med.ualberta.ca/Home/Education/DDH/postdiploma.cfm>

- Continuing Education for Health Care Professionals at SIAST

[http://www.siastr.sk.ca/distance/health\\_care.shtml/](http://www.siastr.sk.ca/distance/health_care.shtml/)

- Advanced Education Opportunities for Dental Hygienists

<http://www.dentistry.ubc.ca/Education/Hygiene/AdvancedOptions.asp>

- Continuing Education Opportunities through the CDHA

[http://www.cdha.ca/content/continuing\\_education/ce\\_home.asp](http://www.cdha.ca/content/continuing_education/ce_home.asp)



Questions? Comments?

Concerns? Suggestions?

We would like to hear

from you!

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Welcome back to school teachers, students and volunteers! Have a wonderful year!

Happy brushing and flossing from your Dental Health Educator

