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Marianne O'Hare: Welcome to Conversations on Health Care with Mark Masselli and Margaret Flinter a show where we speak to the top thought leaders in health innovation, health policy, care delivery and the great minds who are shaping the health care of the future. This week Mark and Margaret speak with Dr. Chad Gehani, President of the American Dental Association, the largest organization dedicated to advancing the practice of dentistry and improving oral health for all Americans. February is National Children's Dental Health Month and Give Kids a Smile month too. Dr. Gehani will talk about that and innovations that are advancing dental care.

Lori Robertson also checks in the Managing Editor of FactCheck.org looks at misstatements spoken about health policy in the public domain, separating the fake from the facts. We end with a bright idea that's improving health and well being in everyday lives. If you have comments, please email us at chcradio@chc1.com or find us on Facebook, Twitter or wherever you listen to podcasts. You can also hear is by asking Alexa to play the program Conversations on Health Care. Now, stay tuned for our interview with American Dental Association President Dr. Chad Gehani here on Conversations on Health Care.

Mark Masselli: Welcome to Conversations on Health Care, I'm Mark Masselli.

Margaret Flinter: And I am Margaret Flinter.

Mark Masselli: We're speaking today with Dr. Chad Gehani President of the American Dental Association, and former president of the New York State Dental Association, an endodontist he's a fellow of the American College of dentist fellow of the International College of Dentist and honorary life member of the Indian Dental Association. He served on the faculty at NYU College of Dentistry for more than 35 years. Dr. Gehani welcome to Conversations on Health Care.

Dr. Chad Gehani: Thank you.

Mark Masselli: You know, February is upon us and it's National Children's Dental Health Month and it's still remarkable in the time that we live that dental cavities remain the most significant preventable disease among young children. I wonder if you could help our listeners understand the full scope of this unmet health need in America then how the ADA is focusing on filling that need?

Dr. Chad Gehani: Tooth decay is the most chronic infectious disease that the human race suffers specially the children. One out of five children under the age of 11 does have untreated tooth decay. One out of seven teenage children, again have cavities in their mouth. What we are trying to do is to raise awareness amongst all of us that it is important for us to

prevent the tooth decay and to treat it at the much earlier stage. Through Give Kids a Smile Program we have reached hundreds of thousands of people who could not afford dental care in general, as well as we are trying to create awareness amongst the public that it is important for all of us to prevent oral disease and specially tooth decay, because prevention is lot better than treatment. Prevention is much more cost effective, it cost much less if the public is getting the support from the public funding. We are just trying to increase the awareness. We also have programs such as a Community Dental Health Coordinators that really go out and increase the dental literacy amongst the public.

Margaret Flinter: Dr. Gehani just mentioned something that I love about February and have for gosh it seems like 20 years now, and that's Give Kids A Smile what we call GKAS because I think it's such an exceptional that we have the missions of mercy, we have free clinics. But this is really all about the kids and giving the dentist, the dental hygienists and other dental health professionals a chance to really give back to their community. Maybe just share with our listeners, how did Give Kids a Smile get started and what is so special about that event?

Dr. Chad Gehani: Well, Give Kids a Smile started as a small program back in the year 2003. One dentist thought of doing some charitable work, and it just started like that. Now we have expanded and we have treated, I would say, close to 6 million underserved children's across the country, that's huge amount so we are very proud of this program. We are also very thankful that it's more of a community work, just one Dental Association. We do have partners and we have Henry Schein and Colgate assisting us reaching out to needy people.

As I mentioned earlier, there are children out there who suffer from untreated tooth decay. The untreated tooth decay not only causes pain in the child's mouth, it also makes the children stay away from the school. As a result of that they will lose interest in studying further. If they lose the front tooth, for example, they start developing some psychological problems and that affects an overall growth in general. I'm not just mentioning the dental and the medical treatment here. I'm talking about the growth of our future, so investing in our own future at a relatively low cost or no cost. Here, the American Dental Association is doing it as a community service to the entire nation, and we are very proud to do that year after year.

Mark Masselli: Well, and we want to give a shout out to the dentist who we work with here all across the nation who participated in, what a great service. You were talking about preventing tooth decay. I really want to talk a little bit about prevention, because this year marks the 75th anniversary of the decision to fluoridate America's drinking water. Really is a public health intervention to prevent tooth decay. I'm

wondering if you could help us understand the impact of fluoridation on the nation's drinking water and how that's led to better oral health and dental health over the decades.

Margaret Flinter: Didn't that start in Connecticut, Mark?

Mark Masselli: I think it did.

Margaret Flinter: Or Connecticut lays credit to that, we have to tell you.

Dr. Chad Gehani: When I was a dental student, somebody asked me, they give me a very small budget, and they asked me a question if we gave you only \$1 million, and we asked you to improve the overall health of the entire population in United States, where will you spend the money on? Guess what my answer was?

Margaret Flinter: Fluoride.

Dr. Chad Gehani: Water fluoridation?

Mark Masselli: Absolutely.

Dr. Chad Gehani: It is the cheapest and most effective safest way of preventing tooth decay. I drink tap water in New York City myself. I make my children drink the tap water when they were young, and I have six grandchildren and they all drink the city water because that is fluoridated. It is the most effective and proven that we should be using the water fluoridation within the controls that the science provides us to do so.

Mark Masselli: That's great.

Margaret Flinter: Well, Dr. Gehani we often talk about how there's no wrong door when it comes to health care, and you can never start early enough. Go upstream start counseling moms right from the very first moment. We also know that primary care, primary medical care can be a great entree point for our all health, and we've really tried to bring the service to where the kids are and where do the kids spend most of their time? They spend it in school, and so building these networks from head start right up through high school, and that's allowed us to reach tens of thousands of children a year. What are you thinking about how we change our paradigm a little bit of waiting for the children always come into our dental practices that are fully equipped with all the technology you need to being able to move those services more out into the community settings where the children spend so much of their time?

Dr. Chad Gehani: You know, I like to go to the mountain rather than expecting the mountain to walk to me. Children are in the school it's lot easier for me to go to the children there and give them some preventive care, how to prevent the dental disease. It is more effective for us to go to

the school especially with this children who are vulnerable. The children where both the parents work, they have limited pay or they are below the poverty level. These are the children who cannot afford to miss a day, stay home and then mom says, oh I got to work now. This way they are not missing any school days.

We are also solving another purpose here. We are educating their teachers, as well as we are creating an awareness amongst the entire community in general that by treating oral problems you are actually solving the general health. Good general health begins with good oral health. We are also very excited that apart from the Give Kids a Smile being one of our programs, which is a part of action for dental health. We have other programs like dental health coordinators who can go out in communities and raise the health literacy as well as encourage the patients out there to make the appointment with a dentist, so the people who will generally not think of seeking good oral health will now seek the oral health.

Mark Masselli: We're speaking today with Dr. Chad Gehani, President of the American Dental Association and former president of the New York State Dental Association. Dr. Gehani let's take a look at the broader demographics, and I know you have been personally involved in efforts to break down ethnic, racial and economic barriers to make sure that everyone has access to good dental health. I think, see this promise of increasing access to dental care through Medicaid and by deploying community health workers. I think we're excited about the whole proposition of what community health workers can do. I'm wondering if you could talk about disparity and the lack of access to dental care. Tell us a little bit about what the ADA under your leadership is doing to help address some of these important issues?

Dr. Chad Gehani: Well, the Health Policy Institute found that the utilization of the dental care amongst the underserved population is lot less than the population that has private insurance. We do advocate for public funding for the underserved population. We should have one care for every single American and they are entitled to the best dental care. We do advocate a lot about expansion of the Medicaid for children as well as for the adults. We do assist our states and also promoting dental health at the state level. Again, water fluoridation is one of the safest, cheapest and most effective way of preventing dental decay. We strongly believe in that, so we advocate of fluoridation.

Margaret Flinter: You know, Dr. Gehani one of the things that we're always very focused on is are there enough providers in a given area? We are a vast country in the United States. Certainly, the needs of our rural areas in particular are really quite pressing. Lots of ways to approach that, we've seen some states take the position of expanded roles for dental hygienists. The pediatric well child visit can be used for some of

the topical fluoride. You've been in education. You've been in training policy. You've been a professor at NYU. What are we doing about this issue of the next generation of workforce of training enough dentist and also what's your vision of how we maximize the incredible specialized education and training that dentist have to be able to get that service to people wherever they are?

Dr. Chad Gehani: First off all, in my opinion, looking for different types of providers may not be of great help. We did have some smaller experiment where they brought in other types of trained people other than dentals thinking that they will serve the underserved population that experiment have seemed to not produce the desired results. Overall, I would not say it is a major manpower issue, it's more of fixing the system, providing enough funding for the public health programs. That's what we advocate for, many times educating the public specially when we are discussing the children, educating their parents or caregivers is much more important.

That's why the ADA is very proud that they have introduced community dental health coordinators, which has worked in about 40 states. Again, water fluoridation and good oral habits, brushing after every major meal, a lot of people forget to brush their teeth before they go to bed. They can just go to bed and that's where they forget that the bacteria don't know you provide some sweet, some candy to the bacteria. They will multiply by seconds, so educating the public that good brushing, flossing is absolutely necessary.

Mark Masselli: You know I'm excited about the work that you're doing at the National Dental Practice Research Network. I want you to tell a little bit about improving practice of dentistry and oral health. It's coming out of your research network. What's the horizon look like in terms of some of the discoveries that you hope to see come out of this institute?

Dr. Chad Gehani: First of all, let me tell you what is happening in dentistry. When I went to dental school, it used to take us about two to three weeks to make a crown for our patients. Nowadays, a patient can walk in my office, and by 2:00 p.m. the patient will walk out with the crown fitted in the patient's mouth due to 3D printing, so it's much more easier. We have also used our lasers in gum treatment. We have used lasers nowadays for tooth decay or small cavities, I'm an endodontist, for root canals, we used to make the patients come back three or four times. There was no such thing as root canal in one hour, so we have done that.

At one time we prescribe antibiotics on every root canal. Nowadays, the last time I might have prescribed antibiotics maybe four or five months ago. We've pretty much do not prescribe antibiotics because we have learned it is not necessary. Those are some of the recent advancements. At one time we took an x-ray and send the patient

home because the x-rays were not ready. Now we take the x-rays and digitally we have the x-rays. We can even transmit it to my colleague or as a dentist I can have my dental hygienist take the x-rays and transmitted to me and I can tell them by telephones what is the next process to be done. The life has become a lot easier for our patients.

We believe the innovations in dentistry are great as long as the quality of care is the same or improved. I'm very proud that we have the ADA Science and Research Institute that is focused on new innovations. Our science is ever involving and I'm very proud of our ADA Science and Research Institute.

Margaret Flinter: Well, that is very exciting. I think behalf of everyone who's ever had a root canal we thank you for the research and the progress. We've been speaking today with Dr. Chad Gehani. He's the president of the American Dental Association, and you can learn more about their work and events related to National Children's Dental Health month by going to ada.org. Dr. Gehani we want to thank you so much for your leadership in this vital part of America's health and for improving access to dental health services for all people and for joining us today on Conversations on Health Care.

Dr. Chad Gehani: Thank you for giving me this opportunity to have a dialogue with you and to explain to you what the American Dental Association believes in, we believe in. We believes in service and we are celebrating Martin Luther King Junior's birthday. Martin Luther King once said that not everybody can be famous, but everybody can be great, so always try to be great. The greatness comes from service, so serve your community and serve them well.

Mark Masselli: You're a great leader thank you so much.

Margaret Flinter: Thank you much.

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Mark Masselli: At Conversations on Health Care we want our audience to be truly in the know when it comes to the facts about health care reform and policy. Lori Robertson is an award winning journalist and Managing Editor of FactCheck.org, a nonpartisan, nonprofit consumer advocate for voters that aim to reduce the level of deception in US politics. Lori, what have you got for us this week?

Lori Robertson: President Donald Trump once again dominated our year end wrap up of the whoppers of the year. But two democratic claims about the public health issue of guns also made the list, one on bump stocks and the other on background checks. Three months after the Trump Administration's ban on bump stocks went into effect, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand gave a town hall audience in June, the false impression that he had broken his promise to ban the devices that can make semi

automatic rifles fire more rapidly “Remember after the shooting in Las Vegas, he said, yeah, yeah, we're going to ban the bump stocks. Did he ban the bump stocks? No.” She continued citing the NRAs opposition, but the NRA’s opposition ultimately didn't stop Trump who consistently spoke about banning bump stocks after the 2017 Las Vegas mass shooting and another in February 2018 at a Florida High School. It took more than a year. But the Trump Administration's bump stock ban went into effect in March 2019.

After a mass shooting at a Colorado School in May, then Democratic presidential candidate Beto O'Rourke pushed a popular democratic position universal background checks for gun purchases. But he incorrectly claimed that state laws mandating universal checks, “have been shown to reduce gun violence by 50%.” That turned out to be a wildly inflated estimate. O'Rourke’s campaign said the statistic came from every town for gun safety, but the gun control group told us it had updated its website in light of rigorous new research.

A study published in the Journal of general internal medicine in March found that universal background checks are associated with about a 15% reduction in firearm homicides. But the study stopped short of concluding that the decline was caused by those laws. For more on the biggest falsehoods of the year, see our website. I'm Lori Robertson, Managing Editor of FactCheck.org.

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Margaret Flinter: FactCheck.org is committed to factual accuracy from the country's major political players and is a project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania. If you have a fact that you'd like checked, e-mail us at www.chcradio.com, we'll have FactCheck.org's Lori Robertson check it out for you here on Conversations on Health Care.

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Mark Masselli: Each week Conversations highlights a bright idea about how to make wellness a part of our communities and everyday lives. Anxiety disorders are on the rise among the nation's youth and experts in the field of child psychology feel the condition starts much earlier in childhood. It's far more common than previously thought, with an estimated one in five children being affected, but too often these so called internalizing disorders go undiagnosed. Unlike children with more expressive conditions such as ADHD or Autism Spectrum Disorder, young kids struggling with anxiety or depression often internalize their symptoms, and may just seem like an introvert to the casual observer. University of Vermont Child Psychologist Ellen McGinnis says the process of diagnosis for younger children is often painstaking and can take months to confirm.

- Ellen McGinnis: I was actually doing my dissertation during my PhD at University of Michigan and to find an objective assessment battery for children with internalizing disorders because they have similar things for children with externalizing disorders and for autism, but not anxiety, depression, which I think are the most overlooked disorders in that age group.
- Mark Masselli: Dr. McGinnis says the traditional method of diagnosis involves creating scenarios that induce anxiety, and the results can be inexact. She teamed up with her husband and fellow researcher, biomedical engineer Ryan McGinnis to create a wearable sensor that can pick up on physical cues that suggest the presence of anxiety, using accelerometers and simple algorithms to compare normal stress responses.
- Ellen McGinnis: The device is called an inertial Measurement Unit, and it's about the size of a business card. We strapped that belts on each child when they did a mood induction task and it has an accelerometer in it, and so we're able to pick up how much the child is bending forward and backward, and turning side to side, things like that. It actually picks up 100 samples per second. We were able to see if kids with anxiety and depression move differently in response to a potential threatening information, and they do.
- Mark Masselli: Dr. McGinnis says that it can pick up anxiety and depression disorder symptoms in a matter of minutes instead of months. Their research paper published in the plus one shows the device was nearly 85% accurate in making a correct diagnosis. The University of Vermont based husband and wife team are expanding their research to test the device in a much broader pediatric population.
- Ellen McGinnis: What's really great about it is that we increase the sensitivity compared to subjective parent reports. We're picking up more kids who might have gone previously undetected.
- Mark Masselli: A simple wearable tool that can assist parents and clinicians in determining if a child is suffering from anxiety disorder, leading to less guesswork and more rapid diagnosis and treatment. Now that's a bright idea.
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- Mark Masselli: You've been listening to Conversations on Health Care. I'm Mark Masselli.
- Margaret Flinter: And I'm Margaret Flinter.
- Mark Masselli: Peace and Health.
- Marianne O'Hare: Conversations on Health Care is recorded at WESU at Wesleyan

Dr. Chad Gehani - President of the American Dental Association

University, streaming live at www.chcradio.com, iTunes, or wherever you listen to podcasts. If you have comments, please e-mail us at chcradio@chc1.com, or find us on Facebook or Twitter. We love hearing from you. The show is brought to you by the Community Health Center.

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