

# Dental Education

## SOUTH FLORIDA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The Annual Newsletter of SFCC's Dental Education Department

MAY 2008

### SFCC Dental Clinic Receives Cancer Screening Tool

Through a donation from the Highlands County Dental Association, South Florida Community College's Dental Education program has purchased a new oral cancer screening tool for its Dental Clinic.

Slightly larger than a laptop computer, the VELscope's hand-held light piece emits a blue fluorescent light into a patient's mouth, which makes abnormal tissue easier to detect during routine screenings for oral cancer. Normal tissue appears as a nearly solid bright green, but suspicious and possibly cancerous tissue is patchy and black in color. The examination is painless and completely safe, although patients wear protective glasses for their comfort.

**Dr. Deborah Milliken**, professor, Dental Hygiene, emphasized that all dental hygienists and dentists learn to recognize the types of lesions, discolored tissue, and ulcerations that can be signs of oral cancer. The VELscope is not meant to replace traditional visual examinations, but it can help dental hygienists and dentists detect possible oral cancer, particularly in cases where abnormalities appear to be minor when viewed with the naked eye alone.

Whenever suspicious tissue is observed, Dr. Milliken said, patients are referred to other doctors for biopsies, which determine whether the tissue is actually cancerous.

"Nothing is simpler for a dental hygienist or dentist to learn and use," Dr. Milliken said of the VELscope. "You just plug it in and point the light where you want it."

Although the VELscope is not considered a standard tool in most dentist offices, more dentists are beginning to use it, Dr. Milliken said, which means SFCC's dental hygiene students gain an edge by learning this equipment as they prepare for their careers. Additionally, SFCC's dental assisting students are learning how to set it up, assist a dentist who is using it, clean it, and maintain it, said **Bob Sconyers**, SFCC dental assisting instructor.

The SFCC Dental Education program purchased



**Dr. Deborah Milliken shows the new VELscope oral cancer screening equipment that were acquired this year by the SFCC Dental Education program through a donation from the Highlands County Dental Association.**

the VELscope after receiving a \$2,500 donation from the Highlands County Dental Association in memory of past president Dr. Donald Transue, who spent 22 years as an oral and maxillofacial surgeon in Highlands County. "When we said the VELscope was what we wanted to buy, the members of the dental association were really happy," Dr. Milliken said.

Dr. Milliken emphasized the importance of seeing dentists regularly and being screened for oral cancer. This screening is part of the examination routine for all patients of SFCC's Dental Clinic. "With most cancers, the mortality rate has gone down over the last 10-15 years. Oral cancer is the exception," Dr. Milliken said.

# Two Instructors Join Dental Education Program

This year, South Florida Community College hired two new dynamic adjunct instructors, who have worked for many years in the fields of dental assisting and dental hygiene fields. Each one has unique experiences that are greatly enhancing the education of SFCC's Dental Education students.



**Michelle Giroux**

**Michelle Giroux** is a recent graduate of the SFCC Dental Hygiene program, where she earned both the Outstanding Student Award and Golden Scaler Clinical Award. She received her associate in arts degree from SFCC in 2002 and her associate in applied sciences degree in 2007. She and her husband, Dr. Andy Giroux, and two children, Andrew and Lauren, reside in Winter Haven.

Giroux has worked as clinical coordinator, lead certified dental assistant, and office manager with Dental Health Services in Bradenton and has over seven years of dental health experience. As an office manager, she was responsible for training all newly employed dental assistants and office personnel.

Giroux is responsible for the Dental Radiology class and labs and Dental Materials classes for SFCC's Dental Assisting and Dental Hygiene programs.

The other outstanding new adjunct instructor is **Sueellen Williams**. A lifelong resident of Lakeland, she and her husband, Daniel, have been married 14 years, and they have two daughters, ages 8 and 11.

Williams' interest in dentistry began in the fifth grade while having her teeth cleaned. She remembers wanting to be the "lady that cleaned her teeth." Her dental hygienist must have been one great role model as Williams has been practicing dental hygiene for 13 years.

Williams received her associate in arts degree from Hillsborough Community College in 1993 and her associate in applied sciences degree in dental hygiene from St. Petersburg College in 1995. In 2005, Williams earned her bachelor of applied sciences degree in dental hygiene from St. Petersburg College as a member of the first class to graduate from its online bachelor's program. For that program, she completed a teaching internship in the Dental Assisting program at Travis Technical Center. Currently, Williams is pursuing her master's degree in health science from Nova Southeastern University.

Her name may be familiar to some as she has been very active



**Sueellen Williams**

in her local chapter of the Florida Dental Hygiene Association. She represented Polk County as a delegate to the Florida Dental Hygiene Association and was the previous editor for the Polk County Dental Hygiene newsletter.

She has also been a member of the Florida Emergency Mortuary Operation Response Systems since 2004.

Currently, Williams is instructing second-year dental hygiene students in Community Dental Health and is teaching in both levels of dental hygiene clinic.

## Enrollment Information

If you are interested in being admitted to one of SFCC's allied health programs, including dental assisting or dental hygiene, contact **Jennifer Buchanan**, student advisor, at 784-7290, send e-mail to [buchananj@southflorida.edu](mailto:buchananj@southflorida.edu), or visit her in the SFCC Advising and Counseling Office, Building B, Highlands Campus, Avon Park.



Dr. Deborah Milliken (left) and Sueellen Williams (right), pose with state Representative Paige Kreegel, M.D., at Smile Day in Tallahassee. Dr. Kreegel's district includes DeSoto County.



Students from South Florida Community College's Dental Hygiene program visit Dr. Paige Kreegel in Tallahassee on Smile Day.

## SFCC Instructors and Students Attend 'Smile Day'

South Florida Community College dental hygiene students and faculty participated in a pre-spring break road trip to Tallahassee, where they proudly represented SFCC during the Florida Dental Hygiene Association's (FDHA) annual Smile Day. This was an opportunity for the students to become active participants in legislative action taking place within the professional association that will represent them as dental hygienists.

The FDHA reported this information on its Web site for the purpose of encouraging dental hygienists to petition their senators and representatives to support them in delivering oral health care to the underserved.

### 2008 Legislation Announcement

The Florida Dental Hygiene Association is supporting proposed legislation which includes allowing Dental Hygienists to practice under public health supervision in public health settings. This will allow dental hygienists to perform preventive services in numerous public

health settings without the dental supervision restrictions that are placed by current law. This year Governor Crist has placed dentistry in the forefront of issues in which he would like to focus. On February 19, 2008, the governor made a public announcement of his top 3 legislative priorities; the press release is available at <http://www.flgov.com/release/9859>. The FDHA bill, the Florida Dental Laboratory Technology proposed bill and the Governor's proposals were all combined to form a united "Access to Oral Healthcare Act." (From the Web site [www.fdha.org](http://www.fdha.org).)

Activities included asking representatives and senators to support the proposed legislation, lunch, and a tour of the old capitol building.

After considering the long drive to Tallahassee and back, the students were proud of their accomplishment of supporting legislative action of behalf of FDHA.

### Dental Assisting Students Pass Exams

All of the 2007 graduates of South Florida Community College's Dental Assisting program who chose to take the Dental Assisting National Board Exam (DANB) passed it and became Certified Dental Assistants (CDAs).

As of May 2008, 45 dental hygienists and 32 dental assistants have graduated from SFCC's Dental Education programs.

### ADA: Word Still Out On Grills

The word is still out on "grills," the trend of permanently altering teeth with gold crowns that resemble a grill. The American Dental Association (ADA) says some people have tried to attach their own grills with permanent cement, which can damage teeth and tissues. Grills made from non-precious metals may cause irritation or allergic reactions. ([www.ada.org](http://www.ada.org))

## Training for the Future



**ABOVE:** SFCC's second-year dental hygiene students appear with their instructors, Sueellen Williams (left) and Darlene Sarcuzzo (second row, right). The students have taken their National Board Exam and are preparing to take their State Board Exam. The pressure is on to maintain the perfect passing rate established by their predecessors.

**LEFT:** SFCC dental assisting students and their instructor, Bob Sconyers, show the education props they used when they gave demonstrations at various community dental health programs during the spring.



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