

## PA COALITION FOR MERCURY-FREE DENTISTRY PROTESTS USE OF MERCURY FILLINGS

AT

### “NATION OF SMILES, ONE SMILE AT A TIME” FREE DENTAL CLINIC

Sponsored by University of Pennsylvania Dental School and Academy of General Dentistry

Philadelphia, PA - June 23, 2012

#### MEMO by Freya Koss

On June 23 members of the PA Coalition for Mercury-Free Dentistry protested the use of mercury fillings at a free dental clinic for underserved Pennsylvanians co-sponsored by the University of Pennsylvania Dental School (UPENN) and the Academy of General Dentistry (AGD).

I called AGD's Chicago office to inquire if they were aware of the [2009 Philadelphia City Council Ordinance](#) requiring dentists who remove or place amalgams to give their patients an [informed consent fact sheet](#) advising of the health risks of amalgam. Srin Varaderan, AGD's legislative director of advocacy and events knew nothing of the Philadelphia law and requested that I forward the documents. I then spoke with the PA AGD director who knew of the bill, but had misconceptions relative to its distribution requirements.



Consumer advocate, Sharon Moore, shares her recovery from Sarcoidosis after safe removal of her amalgam fillings in 2008 by IAOMT member Dr. Blanche Grube. She was given no hope of recovery by her doctors, and had been taking steroids for 15 years.

As a result of my communication with AGD, the Academy assured that they would uphold the Philadelphia bill requiring signed informed consent. I received the following e-mail from AGD's Chicago office confirming their promise:

Freya,

“You will be pleased to know that we have consulted with Dr. Kotch, Assistant Dean of Clinical Operations, UPenn School of Dental Medicine, and I assure you and confirm that UPenn always has and will continue to adhere to City Council's ordinance that requires that every patient be given the information sheet designed by the City Council before the start of treatment and before deciding on the filling material to be used for that patient. Only after the information on the form has been discussed between the licensed dentist and the patient, understood by the patient, and signed by the patient will the patient make any decision regarding what material he or she wishes to be used. Our doctors and staff are volunteering for the event because they genuinely care about these patients and will always act in the best interest of the patients.” Srin

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I also wanted to be certain that composites would be available at no additional charge. I received the following from AGD: “Freya, [It will be free of charge as well. All services will be free of charge.](#)” Thanks, Srin

AGD member, Dr Vincent "Vinny" Mayher, Haddonfield, NJ was the AGD outreach representative for the event. You may recall, Dr. Mayher testified at the 2010 FDA amalgam hearing on behalf of the AGD, wherein he stated that that the majority of U.S. dentists prefer composite fillings, as he does in his private practice. Dr. Mayher failed to take into account the thousands of patients who are treated at dental clinics where the standard of care is mercury amalgam fillings, including treatment for pregnant women and children.

I invited IAOMT member [Steve Markus DDS](#) of Haddon Heights, NJ to participate in the June 23 event, but he was unavailable. Dr. Markus called Dr. Mayher who convinced him that the free clinic was not an appropriate venue for our protest. In turn Dr. Mayher sent me an e-mail suggesting that we were on the page, and we should speak if I cancel the protest. As I explained to the doctors, the protest was against the use of mercury fillings not the free dental clinic. If we had not intervened and educated those needing dental care at the clinic they wouldn't have known that silver fillings were 50% mercury, that mercury fillings are a health risk or that they had a choice of a non-mercury composite at no extra charge. Please take the time to read [Dr. Mayher's e-mail](#) to me (attached).

In Dr. Mayher's FDA testimony has stated that "...the vast majority of dentists in private practice, myself included, place tooth colored composites as their restorative material of choice" and "... most dentists in private practice prefer composites or glass ionomers for restorations in children's teeth. Based on his statement and his letter to me, I suggest a collaborative effort between IAOMT and AGD to educate it's members about the benefits of adopting IAOMT's safe protocol for amalgam removal.



Sharon Moore advising a dental patient about the mercury content in silver fillings and the risks:  
**"THEY PUT WHAT IN MY MOUTH?"**



Irate consumer is shocked to learn that mercury fillings are still being used. She had hers removed years ago, but admits not safely.

In speaking with those participating in the clinic as patients, we learned that a small minority knew of the dangers of mercury fillings, but the vast majority were horrified. One such father was outraged that his under 6 year old child had received mercury fillings at the UPENN clinic without informed consent, one woman with a mouthful of amalgams had recently been diagnosed with Lupus and questioned the onset of the disease since there was no family history of Lupus, and several men with many mercury fillings were upset because they were denied treatment due to high blood pressure, yet there was no mention by the dentists of the possible connection between their fillings and their heart condition.

EVERYONE WE SPOKE WITH WAS EVER GRATEFUL FOR THE INFORMATION WE SHARED!



Karen Palmer speaking to an outraged father because his young child had received mercury fillings at UPENN clinic prior to the event. He said he never received informed consent.



Khadijah speaks to shocked sisters, one of whom was just diagnosed with Lupus. She had a mouthful of mercury fillings and no family history of Lupus.





Carol Ward speaking to an interested passer-by who was shocked to learn that his silver fillings were mercury. He planned to spread the word to friends and family.



Raymond described his years of depression and other neurological problems, which has prevented him from working as a computer technologist in recent years. He wants his filling out!



KWY radio interviewed us for their 45 sec spot, which was aired many times during the next ay and evening. Unfortunately, the major TV stations whom I contacted chose to only focus on the benefits of the free dental clinic, not our outreach.(audio attached) A local West Philadelphia newspaper interviewed me.



Karen Palmer and Sharon Moore being interviewed by KYW radio. The program was aired during the day and evening. (Audio attached)

**June 23, 2012 "NATION OF SMILES, ONE SMILE AT A TIME" FREE DENTAL CLINIC DENISTS AND DENTAL ASSISTANTS STILL NOT CONVINCED!**



Lucille asked for a white composite filling, but was convinced by the UPENN dentist that amalgams would last longer. She said "I could kick myself for allowing a mercury filling."



Karen Burns, disabled dental assistant, approaches skeptic assistants, still not convinced that they are occupationally exposed. Her expression says it all!



**KAREN PALMER MINCES NO WORDS ABOUT THE DANGERS OF MERCURY FILLINGS!**



**ROBERT SCHNATTER CENTER – UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY  
Making A Difference in People's Lives**



Many thanks to our volunteers, Don, Carol Ward, Khadijah Derrios,  
Lydia Jenkins, Sharon Moore, Karen Palmer and Karen Burns

JOURNALIST RANDALL MOORE WAS THERE TO COVER THE EVENT!

