

Leticia Reyes, RDH



Leticia Reyes, graduated from Cerritos College in 1977 as a registered dental hygienist. After 20 years she was forced to stop clinical practice due to carpal tunnel diagnosis and pursued a bachelor and master degree which provided her the opportunity to pursue an internship in Beijing, China focusing on oral health and diabetes. Just when she thought her career in dental hygiene was over, she was selected to be part of a unique program made possible by the California Endowment through the University of the Pacific School of Dentistry. This grant created the position of Dental Coordinator at Lanterman Regional Center as a “Social Dental Worker.” This new career provided many new opportunities to work in the Social Services field serving persons with developmental disabilities. Once the grant concluded Lanterman Regional Center recognized the value of having a dental coordinator to coordinate dental services and maintained this position. Leticia continues to work to build community capacity to provide for the oral health care needs of individuals with special needs.

“.....we still have a long way to go to develop the community –based capacity to adequately meet the needs of this underserved group.”

Education: Graduated from Cerritos College and completed post graduate degrees with a Masters in Science from Yoson University.

Personal/Program Awards and Recognitions:

- Community Health Foundation Awards
- UOP Recognition Award
- Recognition Awards from Special Olympics

Primary function in public health position: As dental coordinator for Lanterman Regional Center my focus is to establish a community-base dental program for approximately 8000 DD clients. The program includes identifying dental issues, development of Hospital resources, recruitment and training dental professionals, creating prevention programs, establishing a triage and referral system, aligning community –based coalitions as well as implementation of grants.

What experiences prepared you for your work in public health? I had no specific training but as a dental hygienist we have so much training and critical skills that go untapped, I found this new arena opened up a great opportunity to explore a new field in dental hygiene.

What is the most enjoyable aspect of dental public health?

Being part of the Clinical Services Team at Lanterman Regional Center and seeing the commitment of the different members of the team who serve individuals with disabilities as well as their families. .

Proudest public health accomplishment:

Many come to mind however these stand out: being selected as one of the pioneer dental hygienists to work in a social service setting allowing me to grow professionally and working on an LACare Grant with the most severely disabled and vulnerable individuals.

Public Health employer/branch/department and official job title:

Dental Coordinator
Lanterman Regional Center
Clinical Services Unit

Contact Information:

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