



P.O. Box 484, Avon, CT 06001  
Phone / Fax (860) 677-4048

Celebrating 12 Years of Service  
[www.swallowingdiagnostics.net](http://www.swallowingdiagnostics.net)

## ***ORAL HYGIENE – WHAT’S A SPEECH PATHOLOGIST TO DO?***

*By Cheryl Rowe, SLP-CCC*

What we do know, is aspiration pneumonia in nursing home residents occurs roughly ten times more frequently than in the elderly who reside in the community. Pneumonia is the most common cause of death from nosocomial infection in the elderly. Pneumonia results in functional declines and increased health care cost. Oral bacteria from dental plaque in saliva is linked to pathogens involved in pneumonia. These oral pulmonary pathogens increase in the elderly with poor oral hygiene and decrease in those with good oral care.

A study<sup>(1)</sup> last year compared differences in attitude of oral health care in nursing personnel working with dependent elderly and severely disabled patients. A questionnaire was administered to 398 personnel covering:

- (1) personal oral health care habits,
- (2) experiences and attitudes in assisting oral care and
- (3) willingness to assist patients / residents with their daily oral hygiene.

Three hundred and sixty-four persons answered the questionnaire, including 70 registered nurses, 148 nursing assistants and 146 home care aides. The study revealed that oral care assistance is viewed as more disagreeable than other nursing activities. Although registered nurses were found to have more positive attitudes toward oral care assistance than the other groups, they were less involved in the daily practice of oral hygiene care. The results indicate a gap between knowledge and practice in nursing personnel's attitudes toward oral health care of dependent elderly and severely disabled patients. This is an ongoing problem.

As speech pathologists we must educate ourselves about the role of oral health and hygiene and its relationship to our dysphagia patients. We can assert ourselves as vital players on a team involved in training family and caregivers in oral care procedures and their importance in helping prevent medical complications and improving quality of life.

One excellent resource is the Oral Health Nursing Assessment and Interventions available on [www.rnao.org](http://www.rnao.org)

- Nursing Best Practice Guidelines (tab at the top of website)
- Clinical Practice Guidelines (tab on left hand side)
- Guidelines and Fact Sheets
- Scroll down to Oral Health
- Oral Health: Nursing Assessment and Intervention- was developed by nursing and SLP.

Another resource is [www.rgpc.ca](http://www.rgpc.ca). Click on the oral hygiene pocket docket to share with your nursing staff and see the hot topic menu to the right of the screen for the oral health of frail, older adults series. This source also provides you a link to OHAT (Oral Health Assessment 1001).

Footnote <sup>(1)</sup> Gerontology , Volume 14, Issue 1 - pages 28-32 - June 28, 2008

## ***Continuing Education***

***By Alicia Cox, SLP-CCC***

Everyone knows that continuing education is an ASHA requirement in order to maintain your Certificate of Clinical Competency.

ASHA requires that all CCC-SLP certificate holders accumulate 30 certificate maintenance hours or 3 CEU's (1 hour equals .1 CEU) within a 3 year period in order to maintain your certificate of clinical competency. If you received your CCC's after 2005, the 3 year interval began the first January after the date your certification was awarded (e.g. if you received your CCC's in February 2007, then your interval is from Jan 1, 2008- Dec. 31, 2010). If you were awarded your CCC's prior to 2005 you can look up your interval at [www.ASHA.org/certification/certmainIntervals.htm](http://www.ASHA.org/certification/certmainIntervals.htm) or call 800-498-2071.

When your interval is completed, you must submit a compliance form. This can be done at ASHA online by logging into "my account". Look for "certificate maintenance" and follow the directions. You can also print a compliance form from [www.ASHA.org/certification/SubmitComplianceForm.htm](http://www.ASHA.org/certification/SubmitComplianceForm.htm) and return it to ASHA via regular mail. Only the compliance form needs to be submitted. You do not need to send your course certificates and documentation unless you are audited. Because you may randomly be selected for an audit, it is important to maintain all records of your activities including certificates, proof of attendance, dates of attendance, and number of hours earned.

Your courses/activities do not need to be from an ASHA CE provider. Acceptable activities include 1) activities in your scope of practice, 2) activities related to any area of clinical practice, and 3) activities that meet the requirements of professional development. Professional development is an instructional activity in which you are the student and attendance can be documented by a third party, e.g. your employer or educational institution. Activities can be business oriented if you are running a private practice, supervisory oriented if you are in management, employee sponsored in-service activities, or college work by accredited programs such as studying a foreign language needed to communicate with the population you work with.

For a list of activities that are *not* intended for CEUs, log on to the ASHA website, click on "continuing education" and then under "frequently asked questions" read "activities that are not intended for CEU's".

More information can be found at ASHA's website under "continuing education".

Also, a requirement for CEUs has been officially established in the State of Connecticut SLP licensure laws. According to CSHA all SLPs will need to complete 2.0 CEUs (20 contact hours) between October 2009 and October 2011. Be sure to hold on to your education documentation in case you are audited. Any CEUs accepted by ASHA will also be accepted in Connecticut.

# ***CSHA CELEBRATES 60 YEARS!***

The Connecticut Speech-Language-Hearing Association is celebrating 60 years of commitment and dedication to providing and improving clinical services to those with communicative handicaps. Be sure to support your state association by becoming a CSHA member. To sign up go to [www.ctspeechhearing.org](http://www.ctspeechhearing.org)

## ***SDX Blossoms as Health Care Changes***

*By Katrina Woodward*

Swallowing Diagnostics had a very productive 2009, increasing our FEES services throughout Massachusetts and Rhode Island, and expanding our staffing contracts throughout central and southern Connecticut. With this exciting growth and ongoing development, we have continued to bring on new staff members.

**Sonia Barkman** will coordinate operations and contract staffing work; her bio follows this article.

**Anne Yodkins** is heading up SDX accounting and

**Cynthia Griffin** should be contacted for licensure renewals and insurance information.

Cheryl Rowe and I will continue as Regional Managers; Cheryl will be covering western and southern Connecticut; I will cover eastern Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. I will also be working on new business projects and coordinating continuing education seminars; please feel free to send me any suggestions you may have.

SDX hosted a successful conference entitled Pediatric Dysphagia for the School Clinician on October 10<sup>th</sup>. Professor Justine Joan Sheppard presented the seminar cosponsored by AllStar therapy and UCONN's Department of Communication Sciences. It was fantastic to meet so many new people from school systems throughout Connecticut and Massachusetts, and refreshing to see the renewed interest sparked in these therapists as children with dysphagia are integrated into the school in increasing numbers.

We hope to see you all after the holidays when SDX rings in the New Year with the first 2010 peer group (see details below). Stay tuned to the SDX website at [www.swallowingdiagnostics.net](http://www.swallowingdiagnostics.net) ...in early Spring 2010, SDX plans to host a dysphagia conference geared towards the geriatric population, specifics to be announced.

Health care reform remains a hot topic these days. The priority of many agencies is to ensure that treatment is provided efficaciously and appropriately. Instrumental examinations, especially the cost effective FEES, are playing a bigger role in the documentation of necessity of treatment for dysphagia. Medicare continues to require that

patients treated for dysphagia have either completed an instrumental assessment or have a diagnosis of dysphagia transcribed into their medical chart.

On the legislative home front: Connecticut's Legislative Program Review Committee began an investigation this summer into how it and other states determine scopes of practice. Per CSHA, it appears that this investigation was prompted by the unsuccessful attempt of the Connecticut ENT Society to remove "diagnose" from our scope of practice last spring. CSHA's lobbyists expect that this proposal will resurface, so be sure to join CSHA now and support the association that supports you! Visit their website at [www.ctspeechhearing.org](http://www.ctspeechhearing.org).

Also of note, Connecticut, speech pathology licensure has doubled! All SLPs renewing after October 1, 2009 will be required to pay \$200 to renew their license to practice. For information on CEU requirements see Alicia's article on page 2.

The SDX family thanks you for your continued support, and we wish you and yours a healthy and happy holiday season.

### ***Sonia Barkman...***

...holds an MBA in Finance from the University of New Haven and has held various positions in the fields of telecommunications, manufacturing and construction. She comes to Swallowing Diagnostics with three years experience in the health care industry, however, her livelihood is derived from over twenty-five years experience in accounting. She has managed her own accounting, personal finance and tax preparation business since 1991.

Sonia oversees SDX finance and operations, as well as contract staffing. She enjoys working with numbers and is enamored with helping others. She looks forward to working with all the talented people at SDX as we grow and expand.

Please join us for the first 2010

## PEER GROUP MEETING

Tuesday, January 19<sup>th</sup> 2010 from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.  
 at Giulio's Pizza and Restaurant  
 126 Middletown Avenue  
 North Haven, CT 06473  
 (203) 239-3515

### GUEST SPEAKER: Ron Bucci, RD, NHA

Ron began his career as a dietitian, at Yale New Haven Hospital where he worked his way up to Food Service Operations Manager. He continued in the field as Director of Food and Nutritional Services at Bridgeport Healthcare Center, and then obtained his license as a Nursing Home Administrator. He is currently the Executive Director of the award winning assisted and independent living facility, Wesley Village in Shelton, Connecticut. Mr. Bucci specializes in dealing with quality of life and nutritional issues in the elderly.

Come join your colleagues for great food, conversation and networking opportunities.

Please RSVP to Katrina Woodward at (860) 573-0120  
 or e-mail [Katrina@swallowingdiagnostics.net](mailto:Katrina@swallowingdiagnostics.net)  
 by Monday, January 11<sup>th</sup>

### WORD SCRAMBLE

Unscramble the words and fax your answers along  
 with your name and phone number to  
 (860) 677-4808 - ATTENTION: Cynthia  
 to win dinner for two.

YINGYAEHARPOGOPDARSHAL

YENGSPICHUCOCARR

NADOGATOGLINSWICWISSL

ICKIHTT

ISTANCAMOIT

YUSRLR

YENBOSEPODICTOPRICF

The winner will be contacted by phone.

For your convenience, SDX staff can  
 be reached at the following numbers:

Ann Caselden - serving Massachusetts  
 (413) 427-1656

Alicia Cox - serving Waterbury, Danbury  
 and Litchfield Counties  
 (860) 306-3473

Cheryl Rowe - serving Middlesex, New  
 Haven and Fairfield Counties  
 (860) 604-2943

Laurie Watts - serving Rhode Island  
 (401) 487-5439

Katrina Woodward - serving Eastern  
 Connecticut, Massachusetts & Rhode