

## **Reducing Disparities in Early Childhood Caries**

This panel will present current efforts by several of the NIH-funded Centers for Research To Reduce Oral Health Disparities to address disparities in Early Childhood Caries (ECC). The Centers are working with communities to identify factors contributing to oral health disparities in ECC and develop and test strategies for eliminating them. The Centers are partnering with other academic health centers, state and local health agencies, community and migrant health centers, lay organizations, and institutions that serve targeted patient populations. Efforts are being directed towards racial/ethnic groups, including Native Americans, Asian, Hispanic, Mexican-, African-, Chinese-, and Filipino-Americans. Topics being explored by multi-disciplinary teams include: identification of susceptible children; prevention of ECC; effects of ECC on the quality of life; impact of cultural attitudes and other barriers that may prevent parents and caregivers from taking their young children to the dentist; the role of parents and caregivers in passing on cultural beliefs that lead to dental fear; and involving pediatricians and nurse practitioners in reducing ECC.

**Learning Objectives:** 1. Describe health disparities in early childhood caries prevalence among racial/ethnic groups. 2. List current approaches being explored through research to address health disparities in early childhood caries. 3. Describe the participatory approach being used in research focusing on these health disparities.

**Panelists:** Ruth Nowjack-Raymer, MPH, PhD  
Peter Milgrom, DDS  
Raul Garcia, DMD, MMedSc  
Jane A. Weintraub, DDS, MPH

**Moderators:** Scott M. Presson, DDS, MPH  
Andrea Azevedo, DDS, MPH