

**Carol Johnson Smith, RDH, MSHA**

**Director, Oral Health Prevention Program for Georgia**

I graduated from SUNY in Farmingdale many years ago. I practiced in New York for a couple of years and transferred to Atlanta in the 70's. I took my Georgia State practical dental hygiene examination at Emory. It was an issue, even back then, finding a patient in a strange new city. I passed the test, was licensed and immediately begin getting calls to work. Too bad it isn't like that today.

After many years in private practice I returned to college at Georgia State University for a BBA, with a plan to end up with a Master's Degree in Health Administration from GSU. I worked full time and attended college evenings and weekends and graduated in five years reaching my goal, a BBA and MSHA.

Before I even completed the MSHA I was offered a position at West Central Technical College, previously Carroll Technical College, to complete the accreditation document and educate dental hygiene students. I was at the college, as Director, for thirteen and a half years. I had a successful career as an educator and director, and I do miss talking daily with my faculty colleagues and students.

One of the most rewarding aspects of my career was serving children as a private practitioner, serving indigent patients with my students at many clinics in Georgia, and serving those without access to oral health care in the dental hygiene clinic.

When the position for Director was posted at the State Office I felt the opportunity would be a good match for my goals. This could be the ticket to open doors to improve oral health for a larger population of people . Even with state financial restraints, due to the economy, I hope to make a difference even if it is a person at a time.

Please think about volunteering at clinics, for sealant programs, school education programs and health fairs. If you need educational Power Points for any age group please send me an e-mail. Call me if you have questions about what we do in public health or have questions about access to care for any patients. Get involved.

As the mayo Clinic says, "Oral health: A window to your overall health". What you do is important.