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2017 National Medicaid-Medicare-CHIP Oral Health Symposium

Keynote

Mary Otto
“Teeth”

Mary Otto

Mary Otto is a Washington, D.C.-based journalist who began writing about oral health at The Washington Post, where she covered social issues, including health care and poverty. In 2007, she wrote about 12-year-old Deamonte Driver, a Maryland child covered by Medicaid who died after bacteria from a dental infection spread to his brain. The death of the boy spurred congressional hearings, a revamping of Maryland's Medicaid dental system and increased attention to oral health access for Medicaid children nationwide. After leaving the Post in 2008, Otto spent an academic year studying oral health at Harvard as a Knight Science Journalism Fellow. She now works as an independent journalist and oral health topic leader for the Association of Health Care Journalists. She is the author of the book "Teeth: Beauty, Inequality and the Struggle for Oral Health In America" published in 2017 by The New Press.