# Dental Public Health Project/Activity Descriptive Report Form

Please provide a detailed description of your **successful dental public health project/activity** by fully completing this form. Expand the submission form as needed but within any limitations noted. Please return completed form to: lcofano@astdd.org

**NOTE:  Please use __Arial 10 pt. font__.**

| CONTACT PERSON PREPARING THE SUBMISSION AND TO ANSWER QUESTIONS |
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## SECTION I:  ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

**Title of the dental public health activity:**

**The South Carolina Dental Web-Based Directory for Individuals with Special Health Care Needs**

**Public Health Functions* and the 10 Essential Public Health Services to Promote Oral Health:**
Check one or more categories related to the activity.

| "X" | Assessment |
|-----|------------|
| x | 1. Assess oral health status and implement an oral health surveillance system. |
|   | 2. Analyze determinants of oral health and respond to health hazards in the community |
| x | 3. Assess public perceptions about oral health issues and educate/empower them to achieve and maintain optimal oral health |
| | **Policy Development** |
| x | 4. Mobilize community partners to leverage resources and advocate for/act on oral health issues |
| x | 5. Develop and implement policies and systematic plans that support state and community oral health efforts |
| | **Assurance** |
|   | 6. Review, educate about and enforce laws and regulations that promote oral health and ensure safe oral health practices |
| x | 7. Reduce barriers to care and assure utilization of personal and population-based oral health services |
| x | 8. Assure an adequate and competent public and private oral health workforce |
| x | 9. Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility and quality of personal and population-based oral health promotion activities and oral health services |
|   | 10. Conduct and review research for new insights and innovative solutions to oral health problems |

**\*ASTDD Guidelines for State and Territorial Oral Health Programs that includes 10 Essential Public Health Services to Promote Oral Health**

**Healthy People 2030 Objectives:**  Please list HP 2030 objectives related to the activity described in this submission. If there are any state-level objectives the activity addresses, please include those as well.

**Provide 3-5 Key Words (e.g. fluoride, sealants, access to care, coalitions, policy, Medicaid, etc.) These will assist those looking for information on this topic:**

Access to care:  Individuals with Special Health Care Needs, Prevention: Individuals with Special Health Care Needs, dentist directory, online dental provider information

**Executive Summary:  Complete after Section II: Detailed Activity Description.  Please limit to 300 words in one or two paragraphs.**
Provide a brief description of the dental public health activity. Include information on: (1) what is being done; (2) who is doing it and why; (3) associated costs; (4) outcomes achieved (5) lessons learned, both positive and negative.

   The purpose of the Special Needs Network of Dentists (SANDS) online directory

(http://sandsc.org) is to increase access to care for individuals with special health care needs by making it easier to identify dentists who are willing and able to provide a wide variety of dental services. The SANDs (Special Adults Needing Dentists) directory was developed through grant funding from the Duke Endowment.  It was developed in 2015 in response to parent and professional concerns about difficulty in finding dentists to serve individuals with special needs. The directory contains information on more than 3000 dentists. Information is searchable by several factors: dentist name, practice name, location by county, patient's diagnosis and severity of the condition, sedation services offered, language spoken, dental specialty, and if the office accepts Medicaid. Dentist participation in the directory is voluntary and is integrated into the existing state licensure renewal process for South Carolina.

The directory is available to individuals, parents and other caregivers, and health and social service professionals as well as those who assist patients in finding appropriate oral health services. The online directory is not password protected. This website is maintained and updated, and emails are received, by a program director who acts as a concierge to anyone who needs personalized assistance navigating the website. Feedback from parents and professionals indicate that the directory has been successful in linking patients to dentists efficiently.

## SECTION II:  DETAILED ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

Provide detailed narrative about the dental public health activity using the headings provided and answering the questions.  Include specifics to help readers understand what you are doing and how it's being done.  References and links to information may be included.

**Complete using Arial 10 pt.

**Rationale and History of the Activity:**

1.  What were the key issues that led to the initiation of this activity?

    There is a need to address the problems experienced by individuals with special health care needs in finding sources of oral health care in the community. This is a problem of national scope and in South Carolina, which has a large proportion of its population living in rural areas. In these isolated areas, dental providers with the skills to serve people with special needs are scarce. Most dental specialists are concentrated in large cities.

    Prior to the development of the SANDs website, http://sandsc.org/, many families, caretakers, and social workers were unable to find a dentist to treat individuals with special health care needs. Consumers and health professionals (e.g., physicians assisting families) had no systematic approach to identify an appropriate dentist.

    This online resource technology provided more information so that families are empowered to help themselves. The directory has advanced search capabilities so that users can search for dentists anywhere in the state who have specific characteristics important to the patient (such as the ability to serve patients who have a specific diagnosis, the ability to speak Spanish, a location in a specific city, or the willingness to accept Medicaid). A search engine approach compared to more traditional directories allows more interactivity in seeking specific information.

2.  What rationale/evidence (may be anecdotal) did you use to support the implementation of this activity?

The objective of the directory is to improve access to oral health care for individuals with special health care needs, which is consistent with Healthy People objectives and the Surgeon General's *National Call to Action to Promote Oral Health.* The directory has become the foremost resource in the state for linking individiuals with special needs to dentists who can serve them.

3. What month and year did the activity begin and what milestones have occurred along the way? (May include a timeline.)

The directory has been maintained for over four years. While not every hit may be an actual search for a dentist (some hits may represent people becoming familiar with the site), it does demonstrate a substantial level of usage. Reports from parents, physicians, and dentists suggest that the directory is helping individuals with special health care needs to connect with dentists who can serve them.

The majority of dentists in the directory are general dentists. They provide services mostly to special patients who have non-complex treatment requirements. The access-to-care problem of individuals with special health care needs is extensive in the state; the dentists listed in this directory help to increase access to care, but they cannot solve the problem themselves. The state needs the participation of all dentists to properly address the oral health requirements of individuals with special health care needs.

The sections below follow a logic model format.  For more information on logic models go to:  W.K. Kellogg Foundation: Logic Model Development Guide

| **INPUTS** | PROGRAM ACTIVITIES | OUTPUTS | OUTCOMES |
|---|---|---|---|

1. What resources were needed to carry out the activity?  (e.g., staffing, volunteers, funding, partnerships, collaborations with various organizations, etc.)

For the South Carolina Dental Directory for Individuals with Special Health Care Needs, inputsrelate to collecting the dentist information for the directory and creating and managing the website.

*Creating and maintaining the website*: The program coordinator maintains the website, which involves sending out surveys and reaching out to new dentists in the state to add or update office information.  Dentists can complete the survey online to be added to the database or to update their current information.  These updates are reviewed and updated manually to prevent spam entries.  In addition, all dentists in South Carolina are asked to update their information as part of their licensing renewal application. The goals were to make it easy to use and to include a search function that provided information of the greatest importance to the user.

The successful implementation of this project required collaboration among the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) School of Dental Medicine; the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, Dental Division; the South Carolina Board of Dentistry, the South Carolina Developmental Disabilities Council; the South Carolina Dental Association; and the private practitioners who volunteered to be listed in the directory. The support of the Duke Endowment was instrumental in funding the creation of the directory website.

The directory is integrated into other activities of the Dental Program for the Diagnosis and Treatment of the Special Patient, especially the annual continuing education course in special needs dentistry that is offered to dentists. The course is intended to increase awareness of dental disease, increase the capabilities of dentists to serve individuals with special needs, and increase the number of dentists listed in the directory.

The directory and other projects of the MUSC Dental Program for the Diagnosis and Treatment of the Special Patient were integrated into the More Smiling Faces in Beautiful Places (MSF) project, which was sponsored by the oral health program of the state health department with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. This project sought to eliminate oral health disparities among minorities, children with special needs, and those economically disadvantaged who are uninsured or underinsured. The project focused on the needs of children from birth to age six and children and adolescents with

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special needs. The directory was a component of the MSF strategy to create integrated oral health networks and to establish links between medical homes and dentists.

| INPUTS | **PROGRAM ACTIVITIES** | OUTPUTS | OUTCOMES |
|---|---|---|---|

2. Please provide a detailed description the key aspects of the activity, including the following aspects: administration, operations, and services.

Directory activities include individuals entering the directory website and using the search function to identify dentists who meet their requirements. There are both quick search and advanced search functions for the website. The quick search function allows the user to find a dentist by specifying the patient's special need (diagnosis or condition), dentist name, or dentist location. The advance search function contains more search options including: the patient's special health care need diagnosis and severity, sedations options, language spoken, type of practice (general dentistry or specialty type), and if Medicaid is accepted. Users can specify one or more of these search items simultaneously. The search process is intended to give the user the name of one or more dentists who meet the user's requirements.

| INPUTS | PROGRAM ACTIVITIES | **OUTPUTS** | OUTCOMES |
|---|---|---|---|

3. What outputs or direct products resulted from program activities (e.g., number of clients served, number of services units delivered, products developed, accomplishments)?

The project identified dentists who are willing to serve individuals with special health care needs and list them in the online directory along with the office information and website if available.

The project provided the public and providers access to a  directory of dentists willing and able to provide services for individuals with special health care needs. A patient or their family may use the website only once to obtain the name of a dentist and may have no further need for ongoing use of the online directory if an appropriate dentist is identified. In contrast, physicians, family support organizations, caseworkers and even other dentists who may need an appropriate referral use the directory more frequently. The project tracks the number of website hits, which is defined as every time the URL is accessed on the server, essentially a search made on the directory.

| INPUTS | PROGRAM ACTIVITIES | OUTPUTS | **OUTCOMES** |
|---|---|---|---|

4. What outcomes did the program achieve (e.g., health statuses, knowledge, behavior, care delivery system, impact on target population)?  Please include the following aspects:
        a. How outcomes are measured
        b. How often they are/were measured
        c. Data sources used
        d. Whether intended to be short-term (attainable within 1-3 years), intermediate (achievable within 4-6 years), or long-term (impact achieved in 7-10 years)

The desired outcome of the project is that those who use the directory obtained information that resulted in the patient successfully obtaining the required dental care services. This requires that the information on the website is accurate and up-to-date, and that people use the information to receive dental services.

**Budgetary Information:**
NOTE:  Charts and tables may be used to provide clarity.

1.   What is the annual budget for this activity?

The directory is an efficient model because the information it contains is made available to all families in the state able to access the Internet. The self-help nature of the directory makes it less expensive than the alternative of using a telephone hot-line that requires staff to respond to calls

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from providers and families seeking information. The model is more efficient than the traditional alternative of hunting for a dentist in the Yellow Pages or other commercial dentist directory that typically does not indicate whether the dentist will serve individuals with special health care needs. In the initial project phase of identifying dentists who want to be listed in the directory, integrating information gathering with the dentist re-licensing process avoided the cost of a separate survey.

2. What are the costs associated with the activity? (Including staffing, materials, equipment, etc.)

One employee is 50% grant funded.
Website maintenance is approximately $1,000 annually.

3. How is the activity funded?

4. What is the plan for sustainability?

The project has been operational for four years, but there is high expectation that it can be sustained much longer because of the low cost of maintaining the website (approximately $1,000 per year). The major expenses of the project were at start-up, which included personnel time during the planning process, the initial dentist sign-up, the creation of the database, and the launching of the website. On-going cost is low.

**Lessons Learned and/or Plans for Addressing Challenges:**

1. What important lessons were learned that would be useful for others looking to implement a similar activity? Was there anything you would do differently?

2. What challenges did the activity encounter and how were those addressed?

**Available Information Resources:**

Share any models, tools, and/or guidelines developed by the program specifically for this activity that may be useful to others seeking additional information. Hyperlink resources if possible.

The South Carolina Dental Directory for Individuals with Special Health Care Needs:
• Online directory at http://sandsc.org/
• Application for dentist to be listed in the directory at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/muscsands

| TO BE COMPLETED BY ASTDD | |
|---|---|
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| Associated BPAR: | Oral Health Care of People with Special Health Care Needs |
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