



Dental Public Health Activities Descriptive Summaries

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The Neighborhood Outreach Action for Health (NOAH) Program: Integrated Medical and Dental Health in Primary Care

Pediatric primary care physicians and nurse practitioners are uniquely positioned to change the perception that oral health is less important than and separate from general health. In response to the positive impact of oral health on overall well-being, the Scottsdale Healthcare's Neighborhood Outreach Action for Health (NOAH) Program developed a care model that meets oral health needs and integrates oral health into primary care. In 2006, a dental clinic was built and added to each of NOAH's two existing medical service sites: a community-based neighborhood clinic and a school-based clinic (both have been in operation since 1997). Oral health assessment, care planning and treatment are now included in NOAH's well child care, a service that is provided at the integrated medical and dental clinics. The care model emphasizes prevention of tooth decay for children through frequent dental hygiene services, fluoride varnish applications, and dental sealants delivered by an affiliated practice dental hygienist, a cost-effective approach that produces desirable oral health outcomes. During the school year 2008-09, NOAH has provided ~2,500 preventive dental visits at an estimated cost of \$136,200 (\$54 per preventive dental visit). Preliminary analysis of the first year of the program's dental data reveals that 89% of NOAH children receiving preventive services had no evidence of new tooth decay after one year. Program administrators are confident that this model of integrated service delivery will improve the health of low-income, uninsured children who are at high risk and experience more tooth decay.

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