



Dental Public Health Activity Descriptive Summary

Practice Number: 07007
Submitted By: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Cavity Free At Age Three
Submission Date: April 2019
Last Reviewed: April 2019
Last Updated: April 2019

Prenatal Oral Health Partnership

The Cavity Free At Three (CF3) program has been testing promising practices to implement prenatal oral health education, screening and referral to a dental provider within health care delivery systems.

The aim of the Prenatal Oral Health Partnership (POHP) is to increase the percentage of women who receive any dental services during pregnancy, with a focus on preventive dental services. CF3 strategically collaborated with health care delivery systems that serve high-risk populations. The first pilots were launched at two Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) within Denver Health Hospital Authority. Later the project expanded to a private UHealth Family Medicine Clinic, and finally several clinics within the University of Colorado College of Nursing Midwifery.

With the exception of UHealth, each clinic was awarded approximately \$5000 per year to offset staff time devoted to the project. The POHP consists of clinical training for staff, a quality improvement approach to test strategies to increase access to dental services during pregnancy, and development of referral systems between medical and dental providers.

Data from Denver Health clinical sites showed that the percentage of patients receiving at least one dental visit during pregnancy within the same co-located medical and dental system increased three-fold, from a baseline of 6% and 4.6%, to 26% and 19% respectively. Staff reported improved knowledge on the safety of oral health services during pregnancy, and improved care coordination.

Lessons Learned:

1) leverage the prenatal intake appointment to normalize oral health education and dental referral as a standard part of prenatal care, 2) utilize a brief risk assessment to allow targeted identification and triage of dental referrals, 3) foster a working relationship between medical and dental providers to find the right communication channels, and 4) requiring clinical oral evaluation was not always acceptable to medical providers.

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