



Dental Public Health Activity Descriptive Summary

Practice Number: 16001
Submitted By: Division of Oral Health, Illinois Department of Public Health
Submission Date: April 2001
Last Updated: February 2013

Community Oral Health Infrastructure Development Plan

In August of 1999, under the leadership of the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), Division of Oral Health (DOH), a diverse group of key stakeholders met to discuss the need for infrastructure development to assure an adequate number of community-based oral health professionals in Illinois. In September 2000, a contract was awarded by HRSA to the University of Illinois at Chicago, School of Public Health, Health Research and Policy Centers for the "Illinois Initiative for Dental Public/Community Oral Health Infrastructure Development Project."

The purpose of the project was to develop a blueprint for establishing a sustainable community oral health infrastructure in Illinois. The University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health and the College of Dentistry, in collaboration with the IDPH, DOH, were the principal parties involved in the development of the plan. Major activities involved in the one-year intensive planning effort included a statewide consensus conference, three workgroups addressing priority areas, and establishment of priorities and actions for community oral health infrastructure development. The funding was used to cover the costs of contractors and materials to develop the plan.

The resulting Illinois Community Oral Health Infrastructure Development Plan describes three primary priority areas to assure adequate community oral health infrastructure and capacity for an overall goal to eliminate oral health disparities:

(1) Community oral health professional education, training, leadership and practice opportunities, including mechanisms to increase minority applications to schools of dentistry, dental hygiene and public health.

(2) Development of an oral health surveillance system and a community based oral health research capacity focusing on the reduction of oral health disparities.

(3) Enhanced community-based practice, prevention and control programs for the reduction of oral health disparities, including dental practice opportunities to meet the needs of the underserved, and public policies that support community infrastructure for oral health.

Each of the identified priorities is supported by a comprehensive set of objectives, strategies/action steps and identification of implementation elements including due date, resource needs and responsible party. The plan was utilized to garner resources from a variety of projects and activities to address oral health disparities in Illinois. It was also incorporated into Illinois' first state oral health plan in 2002.

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