

Dental Public Health Activity Descriptive Summary

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Partnering to Provide Perinatal Oral Health Care

In 2017, the Michigan Initiative for Maternal and Infant Oral Health (MIMIOH) launched with the intention of improving the oral health of pregnant women as well as the oral health of her future children. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) awarded nearly 1 million dollars to the University of Detroit Mercy School of Dentistry (UDM) to implement a project that would place a Registered Dental Hygienist (RDH) directly within an OBGYN setting. MDHHS and UDM partnered with the Michigan Primary Care Association (MPCA), the organization that represents Michigan's Federally Qualified Health Centers. Since October of 2017, over 4100 individual women and children have received oral health services from the embedded RDH in eleven sites across the state and demonstrated the sustainability of this project within certain practice settings. This project highlights the opportunities for truly integrated care but also demonstrates the challenges associated with interprofessional practice.

Lessons Learned:

- Not every RDH may be an appropriate fit for this position. The ideal candidate will be able to be a self-starter and work to integrate into the culture of the clinic. They also need to be comfortable managing their own schedule as well as coaching reluctant patients who may not wish to seek oral health care. **The right RDH is critical to the success of each site.**
- For project sustainability purposes, children's oral health may need be included in services provided in order to obtain enough billable encounters.
- The success of this project needs to be looked at though a comprehensive lens, with the understanding that the referrals facilitated by the RDH for comprehensive services assist in the sustainability of the position. Some sites had difficulty recruiting an RDH due to salary constrictions and professional shortages. To facilitate the project, allowances were made for a part time RDH in certain areas.
- One site had to stop the project due to staffing issues as well as the inability to develop sustainability.
- Michigan offers adult dental Medicaid benefits for most pregnant women, unless the patient is on MOMS insurance which is "Emergency services only". This does not cover dental care and presents challenges in obtaining billable services in areas with high MOMS usage.
- While MDHHS, UDM and MPCA have a thriving partnership, dealing with each institution's practices and timelines proved challenging from a management perspective.

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