



Dental Public Health Activity Descriptive Summary

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Dental Workforce Opioid Education

In 2018 the New Jersey Department of Health, Division of Community Health Services, having been awarded Health Resources and Services Administration funding, entered into an agreement with Rowan University School of Osteopathic Medicine to create three education Modules for the dental workforce regarding opioid prescribing best practices and the opioid epidemic as it relates to dentistry. Because the Modules were non-credit, registration was low. In Year 2, an agreement has been made between the NJ Department of Health and Rutgers School of Dental Continuing Education for Continuing Education Credits to be conferred for registrants who complete the Rowan Opioid Education Modules. Rowan and Rutgers will work together cooperatively to update and include more information regarding opioids into dental student curriculum. The NJ Board of Dentistry is proposing regulations requiring dental professionals receive opioids best practices education as part of the biennial license renewal period.¹

The opioid epidemic and related drug overdose deaths have impacted the United States nationwide. In 2017, New Jersey drug-related overdoses reached 30 per 100,000 people. Dentists are one of the most frequent prescribers of opioids in spite of data that suggests non-opioid analgesics can be as effective for oral pain. This grant provides a budget of \$100,000 annually for 2 years, reduced in years 3 and 4, and includes technology support from Rowan Global (Division of Rowan Global Learning & Partnerships), the administrative unit at Rowan University responsible for developing and delivering all online courses and programs for Rowan University.

Lessons Learned:

Continuing education credits are essential to increase enrollment and participation in the program. Partnerships that include experts in the field and cooperation between academic institutions are recommended. Registrant activity, including completion of modules, voluntary demographic information, and pre and post surveys are included in the modules. This information is tracked through reporting by Rowan Global. The Rowan content developer will report to Rutgers the number of completed courses and registrant contact information so continuing education credits can be conferred.

Staff support was needed to accomplish the goals of this program. Content development support was needed by the sub-grantee, and a staff member at the Department of Health to assist with overseeing grant activities. Rowan hired support staff in February 2019. In March 2019, staff was added to the Division of Community Health Services to provide administrative support. Due to low registration numbers, discussions began with Rutgers Dental School to provide continuing dental education credits and additional marketing, as well as working with the Rowan School of Osteopathic Medicine to increase the content on opioids within the dental student curriculum.

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