



Dental Public Health State Activity Submission Form

ASTDD’s goal in collecting information about successful state Dental Public Health activities (e.g., practice, program, service, event, or policy) is to share this information with other states, territories, and stakeholders who may be interested in implementing similar activities. We thank you for your time and willingness to share your experiences.

Please complete the form below and return to Lori Cofano, ASTDD Best Practices Project Coordinator, at lcofano@astdd.org

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STATE DENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH ACTIVITY (e.g., practice, program, service, event, or policy) Minimum=300 Maximum=500	
Activity title:	Teledentistry Oral Health Focused Telehealth (Virtual) Services
State/Territory:	OR
Summary overview, which may include the following:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectives • Rationale • Personnel • Key partners • Costs & sustainability 	
<p>Advantage Dental Oral Health Center (“Advantage Dental”) has a long history of leveraging teledentistry as part of its services in its ongoing mission to improve the oral health of all and create a healthier population through improved dental health. Advantage has run an emergency 24/7 on-call hotline for over 20 years that provided audio-only emergency-focused teledentistry services in Oregon. In 2019, Advantage provided audio-only teledentistry services to just over 1,100 individuals. These services were either emergency “hotline” calls or asynchronous encounters performed in remote locations in conjunction with hygienist services and x-rays.</p> <p>In 2020, Advantage saw an acceleration in the use of teledentistry and the sophistication of implementation. With the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, Advantage Dental, together with DentaQuest, established hotline phone services throughout six states (AL, KY, MA, OR, TX and WA) providing oral health tele-consult services to anyone seeking emergency care.</p>	

Advantage Dental worked quickly with a cross-functional team to identify and select a teledentistry platform to further advance services. In partnership with MouthWatch, a series of pilots were planned and launched between March and Sept. 2020, focusing on improving the process and understanding of teledentistry. By Dec. 2020, Advantage completed the roll-out of a synchronous teledentistry platform to 59 OR and WA practices, while delivering over 7,400 teledentistry encounters by the end of 2020.

These expansion efforts continue with a focus on Oregon practices, due to the broad scope of services and telehealth state policies. The intent is to utilize teledentistry as a means to expand access to oral health education and care delivery to underserved populations, particularly in rural areas where access to essential care is limited. At the start of 2021, the virtual visit share was 2.2 percent and by August, increased to 4.5 percent of total patient encounters.

The Advantage Dental team is driven by its core mission: To improve the oral health of all and believe that teledentistry services will continue to transform the oral health care system and the way people think about oral health care for the better.

Lessons learned (Successes and Challenges):

In implementation of teledentistry, it is necessary to consider the target population, staff buy-in and adoption, technological connectivity challenges for both provider and patients, and security infrastructure within an organization. These are all factors that could impact teledentistry workflows and overall success of the program.

One challenge encountered during the implementation of teledentistry across Advantage Dental Oral Health Center and affiliated practices was the mindset of staff on providing oral health care through virtual channels (teledentistry). Dentists are highly skilled surgeons that are trained to provide care by services that require placing hands on a patient’s oral cavity. With the addition of teledentistry services, it requires providers to provide care in an unconventional manner. To help with this transition, practices were asked to brainstorm what challenges faced their practices. Together, they created solutions by identifying how teledentistry could be utilized as a tool to address these

hardships. For example, a one-page overview “Quick Start Guide to TeleDent Implementation for Practice Managers” was created identifying three steps shared by staff that led to the success of implementation. The second step was identification of the ideal candidate for TeleDent. This section included a list of patient types that is utilized with the practice manager and dentist to select which patients would be used initially with TeleDent appointments.

The second challenge was the security infrastructure within the organization, which could impact teledentistry workflows. Depending on the size of an organization, security infrastructures may be in place that impact the functionality of a teledentistry platform. This requires allocation of resources upfront and ongoing with platform updates for due diligence to avoid impact to workflows.

TO BE COMPLETED BY ASTDD	
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