

Dental Public Health Activity Descriptive Summary

Practice Number: 45003
Submitted By: Rhode Island Department of Health
Submission Date: November 2011
Last Reviewed: December 2017
Last Updated: December 2017

Rhode Island Prenatal & Pediatric Dentistry Mini-Residency

With grant funding from the Health Resources and Services Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Oral Health Program, Rhode Island (RI) Department of Health established the RI Oral Health Mini-Residency series to address the specific challenges presented by a lack of education opportunities for RI oral health professionals and its impact on the oral health status of vulnerable populations.

Each 2-day forum seeks to strengthen the oral health workforce capacity in RI through enhanced evidence-based knowledge and skills for all members of the dental team (dentist, dental hygienist, dental assistant). The Mini-Residency series also seeks to assure improved oral health outcomes for targeted underserved populations: children ages 0-6, individuals with special health care needs, elders in nursing homes, adolescents, and pregnant women. Each event includes numerous nationally recognized oral health experts.

All training forums are held at a central location, and participating oral health professionals earn continuing education credits. Funding for the series comes from a variety of sources, including federal grants, corporate sponsorships, and revenue from participant registrations. The cost to hold the event averages about \$33,000 including printing, space (including AV, food, etc.), binders, registration, and expenses for expert speakers.

The 2017 Prenatal and Pediatric Dentistry Mini-Residency goals included enhancing providers' comfort level in treating pregnant patients and very young children, and increasing their awareness of best practices for delivering high quality prenatal and pediatric oral health services. The wide-range of speakers (from obstetricians to insurers to liability insurance representatives) allowed attendees to get a holistic view of treating these populations, but there was lower attendance (110 total) possibly due to topic "fatigue."

Lessons Learned:

Input from stakeholders important: focus area, specific lecture/session topics, suggestions for expert faculty/speakers, venue, time of year, length of program and time of year

Participant evaluation essential: overall conference, opinions on topics and speakers, suggestions for improvement and future educational needs/topics for other conference.

There was an issue with low registration numbers leading to the 2016 and 2017 event. The 2016 event was scheduled over the Easter holiday weekend (it was the only Friday/Saturday the event space had available), so that was easily resolved for the next year. The Oral Health Program attempted to increase registration for the 2017 event by doing a paper mailing of the registration and promoting the event more in dental provider settings (RI Department of Health newsletter to dental providers, RI Dental Association newsletter, discussing it at the Oral Health Commission full meetings, etc.).

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