

Dental Public Health Activity Descriptive Summary

Practice Number: 49003
Submitted By: Methodist Healthcare Ministries
Submission Date: September 2009
Last Reviewed: October 2017
Last Updated: October 2017

The Methodist Healthcare Ministries School-Based Oral Health Program

The Methodist Healthcare Ministries (MHM) School- Based Dental Program is a comprehensive model that focuses on oral disease prevention, treatment and education. The program is operated by Methodist Healthcare Ministries (a faith-based, non-profit organization). The Program's prevention component includes annual oral health screenings, fluoride treatments, mouthguard fabrication for sports, oral hygiene instruction, nutrition, tobacco cessation, and early intervention programs. The treatment component includes essential services such as emergency, diagnostic, preventive and restorative care.

At the start of the School-Based Dental Program in 2002, the program was integrated into two existing MHM school based health centers located in two school districts of South Central Texas. MHM has established a fixed dental clinic in each of the two school based health centers. Patients qualify for reduced fees based on a sliding fee schedule. Our dental team consists of two dentists, two assistants and one dental hygienist.

This comprehensive dental program addressed Healthy People 2020 objectives in the following areas:

- Percentage of all enrolled children under age 21 who received at least one dental service within the reporting year.
- Percentage of enrolled children in the age category of 6-9 years of age at "elevated" risk who received a sealant on a permanent first molar tooth as a dental or oral health service with in the reporting year.
- Percentage of enrolled children in the age category of 10-14 years of age at "elevated" risk who received a sealant on a permanent second molar tooth as a dental or oral health service with in the reporting year.
- Percentage of children age 1-21 who are at "elevated" risk who received 2 topical fluoride applications as a dental or oral health service within the reported year.
- Percentage of children, age 0-20 years of age who have tooth decay or caries during the measured period.

More than 4,900 dental encounters were provided in the 2016-2017 school calendar year with over 1,200 encounters provided during the summer of 2016. The annual operating budget for the MHM School Based Health Center is approximately \$800,000.

The program was established with an initial grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, but since then has been funded by Methodist Healthcare Ministries. The School-Based Dental Programs have increased the awareness of good oral health for the children, parents, and school personnel in these two communities in rural Texas.

Lessons Learned:

A good marketing strategy would improve our visibility with the communities. Most of our marketing has been primarily by word of mouth. Sending permission forms for the dental screening/fluoride program as well as yearly registration for the School-based Health Center has a more successful return rate when sent home with school registration packets at the first of each school year. Having forms that are easily understood by our parent population has also been very important to the return rate of our forms.

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