



Dental Public Health Activity Descriptive Summary

Practice Number: 38001
Submitted By: Oral Health Section, Bureau of Community Health Services, Ohio
Department of Health
Submission Date: June 2001
Last Updated: November 2011

OPTIONS (Ohio Partnership To Improve Oral health through access to Needed Services)

The Bureau of Community Health Services, Ohio Department of Health (ODH) administers the OPTIONS program, which links people in need of dental care with dentists who have agreed to treat approved patients for reduced fees or free of charge. OPTIONS is a joint program between the ODH and the Ohio Dental Association, operating since 1997. Program services include examinations, x-rays, cleaning, fluoride treatment, sealants, fillings, extractions and full/partial dentures. People with a low household income, few resources and without dental insurance or Medicaid are eligible for the program.

More than 960 dentists and 100 dental laboratories participate in the statewide program. ODH staffing includes program coordination (.2 FTE's) and 7 referral coordinators (equivalent to 5.85 FTE's for case management and administration of the program regionally). OPTIONS referral coordinators facilitate care by matching program clients with providers and providing case management. The annual budget for the program is approximately \$420,000 to administer the program statewide and to pay lab fees for clients qualifying for donated care. Funding sources include state general revenue funds, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Work Force grant funds and support from the Ohio Dental Association.

During SFY 2010-2011, more than 8,400 people were helped by the program with 6,400 referred to other programs such as safety net clinics or Medicaid, and 1,600 matched with OPTIONS providers. Dentists reported treatment value of more than \$1,609,055 (\$953,183 of treatment donated and \$655,872 of treatment discounted).

Lessons Learned:

The success of Ohio's Dental OPTIONS program rests with the referral coordinators who perform the daily tasks of matching eligible applicants with appropriate volunteer dentists. Referral coordinators teach patients the importance of making and keeping their dental appointments. Success also depends on the more than 960 dentists and 100 labs volunteering to donate or discount their services to OPTIONS patients. The ODA is primarily responsible for recruiting member dentists as providers.

Qualifying agencies are awarded grant funds made available through the ODH to operate 4 regional OPTIONS programs. The grantee agencies have an impact on the program's success depending on their ability to hire, train and provide oversight of the referral coordinators' work.

Referral coordinators assist an average of 720 patients in completing their treatment plan each year. Many more individuals needing dental care, on average 7,000, are helped by referrals to other sources of care for which they are eligible (safety nets and Medicaid providers). Although OPTIONS is comparatively small, the people receiving care through OPTIONS are some of the most appreciative patients seen by our volunteer dentists. These are people who would not receive needed dental care without the program. In addition, OPTIONS dentists attest that some of their most satisfying experiences are with OPTIONS patients.

Contact Person(s) for Inquiries:

Mona Taylor, RDH, BS
Oral Health Access Program Coordinator
Oral Health Section
Bureau of Community Health Services
Ohio Department of Health
246 N. High Street
PO Box 118
Columbus, OH 43216-0118

614/466-4180
614/564-2421 (FAX)

Mona.Taylor@odh.ohio.gov

Carrie L Farquhar, RDH, BS
Administrator
Oral Health Section
Bureau of Community Health Services
Ohio Department of Health
246 N. High Street
PO Box 118
Columbus, OH 43216-0118

614/466-4180
614/564-2421 (FAX)

Carrie.Farquhar@odh.ohio.gov