Background

- Oral health is an integral part of an older person’s life, as it greatly affects one’s overall health and well-being.
- According to former Surgeon General, Dr. David Satcher: “Oral health is a critical component of health and must be included in the provision of health care and the design of community programs.”
- The Academy of General Dentistry considers oral health “the key to general health,” as dental diseases can have adverse physical, functional, emotional and social effects.
- Poor oral health may cause oral pain and difficulty eating, as well as the development of numerous diseases in older adults.

The Statistics

- According to recent data from the CDC:
  - Complete tooth loss is experienced by 15% of adults aged 65-74.
  - Among older adults living at or below 100% of the federal poverty line, 34% lack all of their natural teeth.
  - Almost 40% of American adults aged 65 and older have not visited a dental professional in the past year.

References:
Medicaid Coverage

Medicaid programs are required to cover dental services for children and youth under age 21 but there are no minimum coverage requirements for adults.

Types of Adult Dental Services Covered for Non-Pregnant, Non-Disabled Adults under Medicaid, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Service</th>
<th>Number of States</th>
<th>Services typically included</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emergency only</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Emergency extractions, other procedures for immediate pain relief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Examinations, cleanings, and sometimes fluoride application or sealants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restoration</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Fillings, crowns, endodontic (root canal) therapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periodontal</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Periodontal surgery, scaling, root planing (cleaning below the gum line)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral surgery</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Non-emergency extractions, other oral surgical procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodontia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Braces, headgear, retainers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MACPAC, June 2015 Report to Congress on Medicaid and CHIP

Project Overview

In October 2014, with funding from the Department of Health and Human Services’ Office on Women’s Health, the Administration for Community Living (ACL) entered into a three-year contract with The Lewin Group to identify and promote vetted, low-cost, community-based oral health programs for older adults.

The goal of the project is to develop a Community Guide to Adult Oral Health Program Implementation that highlights promising oral health programs and provides key steps for communities interested in starting their own program.

Ultimately, ACL and OWH hope to encourage the development of additional oral health programs serving older adults.

Subject Matter Expert Working Group

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- Beth Truett, MPH, Oral Health America
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- Katherine Wino, DDS, J.D., Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Key Project Components

1. Environmental scan of community-based oral health programs for older adults
2. Identification of promising programs
3. Community Guide on how to start an oral health program
4. Searchable registry of identified programs to be housed on ACL’s website

Environmental Scan

- Systematic review
  - Reviewed national, state, local level organization websites
  - Conducted searches using pre-determined list of keywords

- Program submission form
  - Disseminated to over 500 stakeholders; received over 200 submissions

- Key informant interviews
  - Interviewed 11 individuals

- In-depth program information research
  - Collected all available programmatic online information
  - Contacted each program to request additional information

Why A Community Guide?

- The Community Guide for program implementation will include guidance for communities interested in starting, enhancing, or replicating an oral health program for older adults
- The site will include resources to help programs:
  - Conduct a needs assessment
  - Develop a vision, mission, and goals
  - Establish partnerships
  - Design the program
  - Finance the program
  - Implement the program
  - Evaluate the program
  - Ensure sustainability
Six Service Delivery Models

Identified programs are organized into six common service delivery models:

1. Dental Clinic Model (e.g., permanent setting)
2. Mobile-Portable Model
3. Eligibility and Enrollment Model (e.g., referrals, care coordination)
4. Virtual Model (e.g., telehealth)
5. Event-based Model
6. Outreach and Education Model

Dental Clinic Model

- Walker Methodist Dental Clinic provides oral health care to older adults in the Minneapolis, Minnesota community as part of the larger Walker Methodist Health Center network.
- The dental clinic opened in 2006, and through a major grant-funded expansion in 2015, the clinic doubled its capacity to provide oral health care and oral health education.
- The clinic is open four days a week and is staffed by University of Minnesota School of Dentistry faculty and students, with additional support from Walker Methodist staff.
- In addition to providing oral health care to older adults, the program teaches geriatric oral health care continuing education courses to dental professionals.

Mobile-Portable Model

- Senior Mobile Dental is a nonprofit organization that brings portable dental equipment to community facilities and provides oral health services to older adults.
- In 2013, the program expanded its staff and services to provide a full range of oral health services, including fillings, extractions, and denture services.
- The program is staffed by dentists, hygienists, a denture technician, and a full dental support team.
Eligibility and Enrollment Model

The Elder Dental Program is a community-based nonprofit program dedicated to helping low-income older adults in southern Massachusetts access quality oral health care at reduced costs.

Financially eligible individuals are matched by the program’s manager to a participating dentist located in the community.

All appointments occur in the office of the participating dentist.

Virtual Model

The Virtual Dental Home program provides oral health services in multiple locations across California.

Dental hygienists and assistants gather diagnostic records, provide basic oral health services to individuals in the community, and communicate with dentists using a telehealth system to form treatment plans.

The Pacific Center for Special Care at the University of the Pacific, Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry created the Virtual Dental Home program in 2009.

Fifteen different communities in California have implemented the model, and programs in Hawaii, Oregon, and Colorado are in the process of adopting and adapting the program.

Event-Based Model

The Missions of Mercy (MOM) Project operates mobile clinics in strategic locations across Virginia and other states, providing preventive, restorative, and surgical oral health treatments to low-income individuals via two- or three-day events.

The Virginia Health Care Foundation provides instructions and guidance on how to conduct a Missions of Mercy project.
Outreach and Education Model

- Smiles for Seniors is an educational program for caregivers of older adults that distributes free educational materials on daily oral health maintenance (e.g., maintaining brushing and flossing a part of the daily routine) and other oral needs among older adults (e.g., nutritional needs, common signs of dental disease).
- Dental hygiene assistance is particularly important among older adults who have loss of strength or mobility, or have conditions such as Alzheimer’s or Parkinson’s disease; this program also tailors oral health education materials for caregivers of these populations.
- Smiles for Seniors is administered by the Ohio Dental Association.

Searchable Registry of Programs

- The ACL website will have a searchable registry of oral health programs targeted to older adults identified and reviewed by this project. Searchable categories for the programs include:
  - Age
  - Specific Populations
  - Geographic classification (e.g., urban/rural)
  - Setting type
  - Program model
  - Services delivered
  - Integration with other services
  - Funding and payment for care
  - Staffing
- The registry will include the programs identified in the environmental scan
- Promising programs will include profiles with additional information

Programs Identified, by State (n=207)
Program Profiles

Sample Promising Program Profile

All program profiles include:
- Program name and location
- Program overview
- Information on program model, target population, services delivered, etc.

Promising program profiles include additional information on:
- Program history and development
- Program sustainability
- Program impact

Thank You!

Have questions?
Please contact Oral.Health@lewin.com