



Implementing a Basic Community Dental Health Coordinator Program

How this program benefits private practice and public health:

Step 1

Gather statistics on the unmet dental need in your community.

Look at Medicaid and commercial insurance utilization. These statistics are available from the American Dental Association (ADA) and your state dental association. These are potential patients for health centers and practices.

Step 2

With members of the local dental society, meet with representatives of Head Start, the United Way, community health center dental staff and hospital emergency room staff to determine what populations are not adequately accessing dental care and where the needs for oral health education, preventive services and patient navigation are greatest.

Step 3

Contact the ADA's Council on Access, Prevention and Interpersonal Relations (CAPIR) staff for a presentation about the Community Dental Health Coordinator (CDHC) program. Schedule the meeting when dental leadership, community stakeholders and community college hygiene and dental assisting faculty and staff can attend.

Step 4

The "basic" version of the CDHC program requires no change to the state practice act. The curriculum breaks into "stackable" credits, which can be integrated into an existing dental assisting or hygiene program.

Step 5

Meet with the executive director of the local community health center to discuss how case management is currently utilized to address the needs of the underserved. Discuss how oral health case management/patient navigation could be integrated into all departments.

Step 6

Contact the state primary care association and ask to discuss dental needs and how CDHCs can help

Step 7

Meet with hygienists and dental assistants to discuss the CDHC program as a career pathway, especially in those areas with an abundance of dental auxiliaries.

Step 8

Provide community support for students going through the CDHC program. Offer mentoring and counseling opportunities to discuss coursework with the students, as well as how they can utilize these skills upon completion of the coursework.

Step 9

As students proceed through the program, keep the state dental association informed on their progress. Invite other sites in the state to learn about the program. Consider using the state oral health coalition as a communication vehicle.

Step 10

Inform state legislators of the success of the program showing statistics of patients navigated into care, diverted from using the emergency room, and improvement in the population's oral health status. Show how oral health is important throughout a person's life.

Questions? Contact us!

American Dental Association

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For more information about the American Dental Association's *Action for Dental Health: Dentists Making a Difference* campaign, visit ADA.org/action.