Integrating Oral Health and Primary Care: Where We Are, What’s Next

American Association of Community Dental Programs: Preconference

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National Interprofessional Initiative on Oral Health
engaging clinicians, eradicating dental disease

This Presentation

• Reminder: making the “case” for integrating oral health and primary care
• Activities that are already underway
• Tools and resources to support this work
• Becoming a champion for oral health integration
Think about it...

Your primary care provider....

*Listens to your lungs, although*  
*Not a pulmonologist*
Your primary care provider...

*Listens to your heart, although*  
*Not a cardiologist*

Your primary care provider...

*Looks in your eyes, although*  
*Not an ophthalmologist*
Your primary care provider...

Looks in your ears, nose and at your larynx, although Not an Otolaryngologist (Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist)

BUT Your Primary Care Provider

DOES NOT EXAMINE YOUR TEETH AND GUMS BECAUSE HE/SHE IS NOT A DENTIST...
Why We Need a Different Approach to Oral Health Care Delivery: What We Know

- A person’s oral health impacts overall health and quality of life
- Most oral disease is preventable
- Despite the availability of effective prevention and treatment methods, we have seen small improvements in oral health status over the past two decades
  - Among some populations, the oral health status has declined
- Our current model DOESN’T WORK for large segments of our population, including low-income and rural populations
- Lack of access to oral health care contributes to profound and enduring oral health disparities
- WE NEED A DIFFERENT APPROACH: INTEGRATION (upstream, prevention focused)

What We Know (continued)

- There aren’t enough dental providers to address unmet oral health need and even if we train more dental providers, many people can’t pay for their services or dental providers won’t see them
- We need an interprofessional approach that integrates the mouth back into the body and engages all health care providers
  - In 2000, the Surgeon General’s report on oral health called for all health providers to participate in oral health care
  - That call was echoed by the Institute of Medicine in 2010 and 2011 and by HRSA in 2014
And We Are Making Progress!

- A focus on team based, patient-centered care creates an environment for oral health integration
- Health professions educators, accreditors and licensing organizations are including oral health in curricula and on exams
- The scientific evidence demonstrating the connection between oral health and overall health continues to grow

Oral Health Integration into Primary Care - Progress Across ALL of Health Care

Recent Publications in Key Health Care Journals, not just the “dental literature”

- **Health Affairs**: The Dental-Medical Divide – Elizabeth Mertz, December 2016
  - Emphasizes the importance of oral health for overall well-being
  - Examines challenges resulting from historic separation
  - Explores implications for future oral health policy
- **Modern Healthcare**: Moving Dental Health Into Primary Care – Elizabeth Whitman, January 7, 2017
  - Notes growing recognition that improved dental health leads to better overall health is leading some providers to look for ways to integrate dental care into primary care, which tends to be more accessible for patients
Oral Health Integration: Progress Across ALL of Health Care

- **Other Mainstream Media:**
  NPR – A Good Dentist is Hard to Find in Rural America – Alison Kodjak, September 16, 2017
  - “What we know is that oral health is closely tied to overall health.
  - At the Marshfield Clinic centers, dental care is treated as another part of general health care. Dental and medical records are combined. Patients who come to the dentist get their blood pressure and blood sugar checked. Patients who are there for a filling may end up being sent to the hospital for a stress test or diabetes followup.
  - Doctors at the health centers routinely look into patients’ mouths. If there’s a problem, they refer them to the dentist.”

Further Evidence of Support for Oral Health Integration

- **Recognition by Key Organizations**
  - Resolution Adopted in 2016: AMA: (1) recognizes the importance of (a) managing oral health and (b) access to dental care as a part of optimal patient care; and (2) will explore opportunities for collaboration with the American Dental Association on a comprehensive strategy for improving oral health care and education for clinicians.
Making Patient-Centered Approaches to Oral Health Care/Primary Care Integration Happen

• Who has to be involved?
  • Dental providers – need to see themselves as part of a patient-centered team
  • Primary care providers – need to see oral health as a part of comprehensive patient care
  • Educators, accreditors, licensing boards – need to build oral health into curriculum and credentialing
  • Administrators – need to envision how this can happen, lead

• What tools and resources are we going to need?
  • Tools for teaching primary care providers about oral health
  • Models and frameworks for successful oral health and primary care integration; EHRs that support integration
  • Articles and meetings that “get the word out”

What Tools and Resources Have Already Been Created?

• Tools for teaching primary care providers about oral health

• Models and frameworks for successful oral health and primary care integration
Tools for Teaching Primary Care Providers About Oral Health

- **Smiles for Life**
  - On line curriculum
  - Nearly a million visits
  - Free CEU – 17 organizations!
  - “There’s an app for that!” - clinical support tool
  - Other resources (posters, pocket cards, risk assessment)

- **Faculty Resources**
  - Smiles for Life (can be used in a classroom)
  - NYU Oral Health in Nursing Education and Practice tools
  - Physician Assistant Education Association

- **What’s Next?**
  - New modules: community health workers, special needs patients
  - Streamlining and improving interactivity
We Needed Models and Frameworks for Successful Oral Health and Primary Care Integration


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**Oral Health Delivery Framework**

5 actions primary care teams can take to protect and promote their patients’ oral health. Within the scope of practice for primary care; possible to implement in diverse practice settings.

1. **ASK** about oral health risk factors and symptoms of oral disease
2. **LOOK** for signs that indicate oral health risk or active oral disease
3. **DECIDE** on the most appropriate response
4. **ACT** offer preventive interventions and/or referral for treatment
5. **DOCUMENT** as structured data for decision support and population management

**Preventive interventions:** Fluoride therapy; dietary counseling to protect teeth and gums; oral hygiene training; therapy for substance use; medication changes to address dry mouth.

Then Field-Testing The Conceptual Framework

19 diverse healthcare delivery organizations: Private practices, Federally Qualified Health Centers; medical only and on-site dental

Adults with diabetes (9), pediatrics (3), pregnancy (1), adult well visits (1) eCW (5), EPIC (3), NextGen (2), Centricity (2), Success EHS (2)

Oregon PCA, Kansas Assoc. Medically Underserved, Massachusetts League CHCs
Addl support: Kansas Health Foundation, United Methodist Health Ministry Fund

Resulted in a “How To” Guide

“Oral Health Integration Implementation Guide”
Toolkit for primary care teams (Oct 2016)
• Workflow maps
• Referral agreements
• Patient engagement strategies
• Patient/family education resources
• EHR templates
• Case examples
• Impact data and more

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Is This Really Possible in Today’s Busy Practice Setting? YES!

- Patient-centered medical homes and other advanced primary care practices have resources in place to implement now; others can take an incremental approach
- Possible without new members of the team and within a Provider/Medical Assistant “Teamlet”
- Most activities can be performed by a trained Medical Assistant or LPN
- Does not require specialized equipment or space
- Viability in the long-term will require policy and payment changes (e.g., reimbursement for care coordination activities)

What about referrals?

- Modeled on med/surg process
- Goal to take burden off patients
- Requires a referral network able to serve diverse patients
- What else?
  - Referral agreements to clarify expectations
  - Connectivity; ability and commitment to share information
  - Tracking and care coordination processes
  - Logistical support
From a Policy Perspective: How Do We Promote Oral Health Integration?

- **Dentists:** Participate in referral networks & accept patients of mixed insurance status
- **Payers:** Assess adequacy of payment for covered services and consider expanding reimbursement options
- **Researchers and Policymakers:** Invest in research to strengthen the evidence-base for preventive oral health care
- **Lawmakers:** Support patient-centered care demonstrations and new reimbursement models that promote better population outcomes
- **Patient & family advocates:** Engage patients and families in championing for change
- **Educators:** Ensure basic oral health clinical content is taught and learned
- **Practice Administrators:** Serve as champions, provide leadership in service delivery settings and systems, support EHR integration

Be An Oral Health Champion – Get Engaged - Happening in Every State

- **Oral Health 2020 (OH 2020)**
  - National effort, originally funded by the DentaQuest Foundation
  - Creates framework for achieving the goal of “good oral health for all”
  - Does this by connecting “Grasstops, Grass Middles and Grass Roots” in a systems approach
Oral Health 2020 Network

Includes Organizations Such As:

- 33 statewide networks
- 37 State Primary Care Associations
- 20 “Grassroots” organizations in 6 states
- Grantees at national, state and community level
- 1,000 registered users of OH2020 web-based collaboration tool
Oral Health 2020 Network Goal 5: Integrate Oral Health Into Person-Centered Healthcare

- Make targeted investments to develop alignment around effective care models
- Make targeted investments to support national organizations to develop accreditation and certification standards that include oral health
- Engage national dental providers and payer associations in the design and regulation of PCMH, ACO, and other payment reform efforts
- Identify and engage oral health champions within primary care health professions to prioritize the adoption of oral health integration
- Build and expand interprofessional education resources to include oral health for a broad range of clinical professions
- Support oral health care model implementation tools to be published and adopted
- Support implementation efforts to integrate medical and dental records

What Can You Do to Engage OH 2020?

- Reach out to your State’s PCA and see if they are participating
- Connect with your State’s Oral Health Coalition
- Go to the Oral Health 2020 website and search by your state to see if there are others who are engaged in the work
- Support AACDP’s larger effort – share success stories, challenges, opportunities related to improving oral health
- Be a leader in your State, engage your legislators
Contact Information

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