

Oral Health/Maternal and Child Health

Assignment Description

We have recently received a 3-year oral health grant from HRSA to develop oral health capacity in MT in collaboration with the University of Washington School of Dentistry, the MT Dental Assoc, and a variety of other stakeholders statewide. The Fellow will coordinate these activities, equivalent to a Program Manager in our organization. A primary responsibility of this position will be to track the progress in goal areas supported by the grant: (1) placing University WA dental students and residents in rotations throughout underserved areas of MT; the Fellow will work with the Primary Care Office to assess Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas; (2) enhancing capacity to support dental students and residents through teledentistry and provide increased dental care in rural and remote areas of MT through ongoing teledentistry programs; (3) promoting community-based programs such as water fluoridation and sealant services.

In the latter area, in particular, there will be the need for the Fellow to conduct surveillance, analysis, and interpretation and to publish findings. For each area, the Fellow will be expected to conduct program evaluation. The Fellow will be responsible for managing Montana's participation in the National Oral Health Screening Survey in collaboration with the MT Dental Association.

Day-to-Day Activities

1. Support dental student/resident rotations in MT: Identify suitable sites and preceptors for rotations, consistent with University WA School Dentistry criteria; manage documentation of agreements; coordinate evaluation of students and preceptors.
2. Facilitate working groups with partners and stakeholders to develop recruitment materials to bring dental professionals to underserved areas of MT.
3. Coordinate student/resident rotation placements by providing logistical support such as identifying housing options, and providing problem solving and mediation in the event of difficulties in placements.
4. Promote community-based prevention services, in particular, ensure that children in underserved areas are screened, receive sealants, and receive follow-up care as needed. This includes working with Medicaid to ensure reimbursement, and maintaining a database with baseline and follow-up screening and sealant rates and subsequent dental "missing and filled" status, plus analysis and evaluation.

Potential Projects

The Fellow will design a surveillance system for fluoridation and for sealant use, based on three main data sources: Medicaid dental use files, our ongoing school-based survey of dental health, and MT Department of Environmental Quality's community water fluoridation data base. The Fellow will use these for surveillance, analysis and evaluation of fluoridation (or naturally occurring fluoride) and dental caries experience of children in Medicaid; surveillance, analysis, and evaluation of sealant use and missing and filled status of children in Medicaid, to assess the need for early treatment or urgent care of these children.

Preparedness Role

All MT DPHHS staff are trained in ICS and have in the past been called upon to participate in a variety of urgent responses. The Oral Health Program and the Family and Community Health Bureau do not have direct, ongoing activities in Emergency Preparedness, although all of the epidemiologists in the division, and the Fellow, are available to be mobilized under the supervision of the Division's Emergency Preparedness plans.

Assignment Location: Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Helena, MT

Primary Mentor: Carol Ballew, PhD, MA, MS(Hon), BA
Senior Public Health Epidemiologist

Secondary Mentor: Denise Higgins, BS
Chief, Family & Community Health Bureau; Title V Director