Improving the Oral Health of Agricultural Worker Children

**PROJECT GOALS:**
Agricultural Worker Children Aged 6–9

1. Accurate identification of risk for dental caries
2. Determine which children are at high-risk for dental caries using two standard high and moderate risk assessment tools
3. Increase in percentage of high and moderate risk children receiving sealants, oral risk assessments, and referrals to dental clinics

**PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION 2015–2018**

1. Created Virtual Learning Community
2. Used Electronic Health Records (EHR) to improve efficiency in collecting accurate UDS data
3. Identified the best workflow and documentation techniques

**TOOLS**

1. Development of Change Package
2. New Social Determinants of Health Caries Risk Assessment (SDH-CRA)
3. System for cross referrals between dental and primary care patients

**RESULTS**

1. Mobile populations require adaptations to standard practices in health centers
2. Increasing the focus on Social Determinants of Health in assessing caries risk for children served by health centers is essential as these determinants are often overlooked in traditional screening tools
3. A partnership of primary care and dental care teams expands the opportunities to integrate oral health and primary care and achieve the Quadruple Aim

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FOCUS ON CREATING A FORMAL PROCESS- Participating in this pilot required a refocus on the caries risk assessment process, and establishing a more formal approach to the process than most providers were probably accustomed to - myself included.

Steven Debbink, D.D.S., Chief Dental Officer, InterCare Community Health Network

IMPROVEMENT REQUIRES A TEAM- The TCCH quality team has also been generating a ‘Dental Sealant Opportunities’ report since early 2018. This report identifies children that are still in the denominator that could potentially still be seen in the reporting year. That report is then worked on by the front-desk and dental team to bring the children back in for their sealants.

Richard B. Ballard, Chief Operations Officer, Tri-Cities Community Health

ORAL HEALTH - OVERALL HEALTH IMPROVES- Participation in the Agricultural Worker children Dental Sealant Pilot has made a significant difference to the Omni Family Health Dental Department. We have seen an increase in the percentage of children receiving sealants, oral risk assessments, and referrals to our dental clinics. Overall, participation in this project has helped us increase the delivery of services and improve the oral health of farmworker families.

Julia Vaughan, RDHAP, MHSC, Director of Dental Services, Omni Family Health

CONTINUED TRAINING WORKS- The staff at TCCH has received several in-services during department meeting forums and reminder communications to continue the efforts of capturing this vital CRA meaningful use data at exam/recall visit types with the expectation to include ALL pediatric patients 0–17 years from which the reporting emphasis has remained to be that of 6–9 year old patients.

Richard B. Ballard, Chief Operations Officer, Tri-Cities Community Health

LONG-TERM CHANGE TAKES TIME- Need to change our patients’ understanding of oral disease and what is required to attain lasting oral health. Initiating more meaningful conversations with patients about self-care, their nutritional habits and any other factors that I felt they had a chance to influence. Along with that came the realization that the value of these conversations was immeasurable.

Steven Debbink, D.D.S., Chief Dental Officer, InterCare Community Health Network

REACH OUT TO YOUR EHR PROVIDER- We struggled with the endeavor of providing accurate data due to system software limitations with our dental software and our EMR interfacing properly. We reached out to our EMR provider and identified the best workflow and documentation techniques. Once we started recording the exclusion in the correct fields where our report could pick it up things began to look much more accurate and required much less manual audits.

Richard B. Ballard, Chief Operations Officer, Tri-Cities Community Health

DOCUMENTATION IS CRITICAL- We needed a way for our providers to assess the patient on each visit and determine whether or not they should be included in this measure. By documenting throughout the year we were able to gather all of the information we needed to be ready to report the UDS measure. Our ability to identify risk factors and document them as such has significantly improved.

Richard B. Ballard, Chief Operations Officer, Tri-Cities Community Health

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