



Missouri Effective Practices Project (MEPP)

Dental School: Building Blocks of Public Health Dental Education

Name of LPHA: Clay

Name of Effective Practice: Dental School: Building Blocks of Public Health Dental Education

Overall Description of Program: This presentation focuses on the Clay County (Missouri) Public Health Center's fifty-year history of providing dental health education to students from Kindergarten to fifth grade. This educational program is provided in both public and parochial schools throughout the county.

Essential Skill: Assessment

Essential Service: Link to/Provide Care

Knowledge Domain: Community Health

NACCHO Oper Defin: Help people receive health services

Planning Time: 3 or more years

Experience/Imp of Program: 4 or more years

Number of staff: 4 or more full-time staff

Department of Program: Community Health

Basis for Need of Program: In 1956, a dental hygienist was hired and her main job was assessment and dental screenings. Her first year, she screened 7,000 students between Kindergarten and 12th grade. Seventy percent had dental disease. After this first year, she saw the disease had not been addressed. There were, at this time, not many dentists, and certainly not insurance. When she went back and saw this continuing lack of care, she started a collaborative effort with the University of Missouri at Kansas City Medical School. They sent a resident to the Clay County Health Department maybe twice a week. He extracted teeth and visited with patients. Over the years, we've added more screening and health education. Ann Wilson was the originator of this idea and she received a Robert Wood Johnson award for her efforts.

Characteristics of the Program: Currently, we have 16% incidence of dental carries in K-12th grade. We have 2 hygienists who screen. However, now we only screen in K-5th grade. Funding was a large part of this reduction in screening. Now we have over 40 schools. Another reason is that from 6 to 8th grade, the students have virgin teeth and not permanent teeth; not a tremendous need there.

We've had the same screeners for 15 years, so our inter-rater reliability is very good. We now have 2 full time hygienists, 1 part-time hygienist, 1 full time dentist, 1 full time dental assistant and 1 full-time program specialist.

Barriers to Implementation: Funding is always our challenge. It's very expensive to run a dental clinic with the staff costs, equipment. Not being a 501c3 does make it a challenge as far as eligibility for grants.

Evaluations: As a result, the rate of dental carries has greatly reduced exceeding the precedent set by Healthy People 2010. Because of the proven success of this curriculum, which establishes a strong educational foundation and then encourages students to progressively build upon that knowledge, the program has been extremely effective. The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services have identified it as a best practice.

Geographical Description: 100,000 to 249,999 **Target Population:** Children

Describe Necessary Funding: \$390,000 per year.

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