Boston Senior Oral Health Program
Boston, Massachusetts

Program Overview

The Boston Senior Oral Health Program provides dental screenings and multi-lingual oral health education to older adults living in public housing developments, with referrals to federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) for those in need of dental care. All individuals are offered navigation assistance from Resident Health Resources, who are existing public housing residents trained as oral health advocates for their fellow residents. The program provides dental care free of charge to participating older adults.

Program History and Development

The Boston University Partnership in Health and Housing, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, the Boston Housing Authority, and the Boston Public Health Commission conducted the initial research demonstrating the need for this program. A survey revealed that of all the older adults living in Boston’s public housing developments, 52 percent were in need of dental treatment, 41 percent were in need of new dentures, and 28 percent were found to have potentially cancerous lesions. Only six percent were able to afford dental insurance.

The program first started as a Massachusetts Department of Public Health initiative in 2009. Since 2013, the program has continued as part of the Partnership in Health and Housing at Boston University School of Public Health.

Program Sustainability

- Boston Senior Oral Health Program receives funding through a partnership between Boston University Schools of Public Health and Dentistry, Fenway Community Health Center, the Boston Housing Authority, the Sunshine Lady Foundation, and the DentaQuest Foundation.

Program Impact

- In 2013, the Boston Senior Oral Health Program assisted 245 older adults in public housing with free dental care.
- The program screened over 260 older adults in 2013 and successfully referred 80 percent of these individuals to FQHCs for preventive and restorative care.

Program Contact Information

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## Program Features

### Age
- [ ] 0-17 (Children and Youth)
- [ ] 18-60 (Adult)
- [x] 60+ (Older Adult)

### Service Delivery Model
- [ ] Dental clinic model (e.g. permanent setting)
- [x] Mobile-portable model
- [ ] Eligibility and enrollment model (e.g. referrals, care coordination)
- [ ] Virtual model (e.g. telehealth)
- [ ] Event-based model
- [ ] Outreach and education model

### Dental and Oral Health Services
- [x] Emergency services
- [x] Basic services
- [ ] Screenings
- [ ] Cleanings
- [ ] Fluoride varnish
- [ ] Sealants
- [ ] X-rays
- [x] Comprehensive services
- [ ] Fillings
- [ ] Scaling/root planing
- [ ] Extractions
- [ ] Oral surgery
- [ ] Root canals
- [ ] Dentures, partials, relines, repairs
- [ ] Crowns
- [ ] Bridges
- [ ] Orthodontics

### Specific Populations
- [ ] Homeless individuals
- [ ] Individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities
- [ ] Individuals with physical disabilities
- [ ] Individuals with specific or complex medical conditions
- [ ] Individuals with low income
- [ ] Individuals with no dental insurance
- [ ] Individuals with Medicaid
- [ ] Veterans
- [ ] Refugees/immigrants

### Staffing
- [ ] Dentist
- [ ] Dental hygienist
- [ ] Dental therapist
- [ ] Dental assistant
- [ ] Dental/dental hygiene students
- [ ] Nursing staff
- [ ] Community health workers
- [ ] Non-dental clinical staff
- [ ] Non-clinical staff

### Geography
- [ ] Rural
- [x] Urban

### Service Delivery Setting
- [ ] Hospital
- [ ] Dental school
- [ ] Community/safety net clinic
- [ ] Private dental office
- [ ] Long-term care facility
- [ ] Senior center/community center
- [ ] Private residence
- [ ] Fairgrounds/stadium/parking lot
- [ ] Church
- [ ] School
- [ ] Homeless shelter
- [x] Public housing

### Payment for Care
- [x] Medicaid
- [ ] No charge to client
- [ ] Sliding fee scale
- [ ] Out of pocket
- [ ] Commercial dental insurance

### Other Program Services
- [x] Referrals to dental and oral health services
- [x] Care coordination/care management
- [x] Patient education
- [ ] Caregiver education
- [ ] Provider education
- [ ] Advocacy/coalition

### Program Funding
- [x] Foundation/organization grant
- [ ] Public funding (e.g. local, state, federal)
- [x] Private donations (e.g. individuals, businesses)

### Integration with Services
- [ ] Medical services
- [ ] Behavioral health services
- [ ] Vision services
- [ ] Pharmacy services
- [ ] Transportation services
- [x] Translation services
- [ ] Nutrition services

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*This profile was prepared using publicly available information. Date of last update: March 2016*