



The Dentists' Partnership Battle Creek, Michigan

Program Overview

The Dentists' Partnership in Battle Creek, Michigan provides free oral health care to low-income individuals without insurance in exchange for community service at local nonprofit organizations. The required number of service hours depends on the monetary value of the dental services needed by the individual, with one hour of service corresponding to \$25 of dental treatment. This program allows both clients and dentists to give back, while allowing clients to gain new skills through their volunteer work.

Program History and Development



Kelly Price volunteers at the Food Bank of South Central Michigan in exchange for dental care (Photo by John Grap/Battle Creek Enquirer)

In 2006, the Battle Creek Health System identified a large number of low-income residents within Calhoun County, Michigan who had unmet dental care needs. A number of community stakeholders then formed the Dentists' Partnership to provide dental care to this population while also getting individuals involved in the community. The program started with 10 dentists in 2007, but has since grown to include 43 dentists and two dental hygienists providing services each month. Services provided have also expanded to include an oral hygiene class, preventive self-care education, orthodontics, and denture services.

The Dentists' Partnership has a significant amount of coordination with the community of Calhoun County, Michigan. It provides transportation to volunteer sites for the individuals, refers interested but ineligible individuals to local federally qualified health centers, and has an extensive referral process with the local Emergency Department. To date, this program has been successfully replicated in 20 communities in the Midwest and has been contacted by many other interested communities.

Program Sustainability

- The Dentists' Partnership receives funding from: the United Way, Bronson Battle Creek Hospital, and the Battle Creek Community Foundation.
- This program is staffed by approximately 56 percent of dentists in Calhoun County, Michigan (33 dentists) who volunteer to treat individuals each month, differing in services provided and number of individuals treated.
- The annual budget for 2016 is \$154,398 and the operating expenses are \$149,898.

Program Impact

- In 2015, the Dentists' Partnership provided \$41,570 worth of dental services to 173 individuals and provided 2,601 hours of community service.
- To date, the Dentists' Partnership has provided roughly \$1,620,000 worth of dental services since 2007 to approximately 5,000 individuals who would otherwise not have access to care.
- A five-year analysis found that this program generates a return on investment of 322 percent, accounting for the value of donated dental services and the value of volunteer service hours.
- Studies have shown that the Dentists' Partnership has contributed to a 70 percent decrease in the number of low-income individuals with dental complaints at the local Emergency Department.
- To date, the Dentists' Partnership has provided over 70,000 hours of community service at local nonprofits.

"The Calhoun County program epitomizes the best kind of private sector, community-based solution to access-to-care problems...this program is organized in a way that everyone can win."
- Norm Palm, Michigan Dental Association

Program Contact Information

Program Website: <https://innovations.ahrq.gov/profiles/program-offering-free-dental-care-exchange-community-service-significantly-reduces-dental>



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Program Features

Note: A checked box below indicates an existing program feature.

Age	Service Delivery Model	Dental and Oral Health Services
<input type="checkbox"/> 0-17 (Children and Youth) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18-60 (Adult) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 60+ (Older Adult)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dental clinic model (e.g. permanent setting) <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile-portable model <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eligibility and enrollment model (e.g. referrals, care coordination) <input type="checkbox"/> Virtual model (e.g. telehealth) <input type="checkbox"/> Event-based model <input type="checkbox"/> Outreach and education model	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Emergency services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Basic services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Screenings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cleanings <input type="checkbox"/> Fluoride varnish <input type="checkbox"/> Sealants <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X-rays <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Comprehensive services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fillings <input type="checkbox"/> Scaling/root planing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Extractions <input type="checkbox"/> Oral surgery <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Root canals <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dentures, partials, relines, repairs <input type="checkbox"/> Crowns <input type="checkbox"/> Bridges <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Orthodontics
Specific Populations	Staffing	Other Program Services
<input type="checkbox"/> Homeless individuals <input type="checkbox"/> Individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Individuals with physical disabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Individuals with specific or complex medical conditions <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Individuals with low income <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Individuals with no dental insurance <input type="checkbox"/> Individuals with Medicaid <input type="checkbox"/> Veterans <input type="checkbox"/> Refugees/immigrants	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dentist <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dental hygienist <input type="checkbox"/> Dental therapist <input type="checkbox"/> Dental assistant <input type="checkbox"/> Dental/dental hygiene students <input type="checkbox"/> Nursing staff <input type="checkbox"/> Community health workers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-dental clinical staff <input type="checkbox"/> Non-clinical staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Referrals to dental and oral health services <input type="checkbox"/> Care coordination/care management <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Patient education <input type="checkbox"/> Caregiver education <input type="checkbox"/> Provider education <input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy/coalition
Geography	Payment for Care	Integration with Services
<input type="checkbox"/> Rural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban	<input type="checkbox"/> Medicaid <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No charge to client <input type="checkbox"/> Sliding fee scale <input type="checkbox"/> Out of pocket <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial dental insurance	<input type="checkbox"/> Medical services <input type="checkbox"/> Behavioral health services <input type="checkbox"/> Vision services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pharmacy services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation services <input type="checkbox"/> Translation services <input type="checkbox"/> Nutrition services
Service Delivery Setting	Program Funding	
<input type="checkbox"/> Hospital <input type="checkbox"/> Dental school <input type="checkbox"/> Community/safety net clinic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private dental office <input type="checkbox"/> Long-term care facility <input type="checkbox"/> Senior center/community center <input type="checkbox"/> Private residence <input type="checkbox"/> Fairgrounds/stadium/parking lot <input type="checkbox"/> Church <input type="checkbox"/> School <input type="checkbox"/> Homeless shelter <input type="checkbox"/> Public housing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Foundation/organization grant <input type="checkbox"/> Public funding (e.g. local, state, federal) <input type="checkbox"/> Private donations (e.g. individuals, businesses)	

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