



Smiles for Life Senior Dental Access Program

Multiple locations throughout Washington

Program Overview

Smiles for Life is a preventive oral health program that provides lower-income older adults without health insurance an affordable alternative for routine oral health services and connects them to comprehensive dental care. Participants receive free head, neck, and oral health screenings, as well as free classes such as “Oral Health Care for Older Adults” and “Becoming a Savvy Health Care Consumer.” Dental cleanings and fluoride applications are available at a low cost.

Program History and Development



Hygienist Anita with Bellingham

After discovering that access to dental services was one of the top five health care concerns among seniors in Clallam County, Washington, the Smiles for Life program model was established in 2006. The first two programs began as pilots in Bellingham and Bainbridge Island, Washington, and function as models for other sites. A one-day intensive training session in Bellingham provides the foundation for dental hygienists to inform them about the program model, the equipment and supply side of costs to start the program, and the processes for delivery of traditional dental hygiene services in untraditional settings. Hygienists also learn how to market their programs, recruit potential clients, build partnerships in the community, and contract with a consulting dentist for their programs. There are now over 40 programs throughout Washington

State at senior and community centers. Services are offered one to three times per month, with clinic hours dependent on location. Referrals to partnering dental providers are also provided.

Program Sustainability

- This program provides preventive dental services to older adults covered by Medicaid or for an out-of-pocket cost.
- Washington Dental Service Foundation provided initial startup funding for six hygienists in 2009. The programs are independently operated by licensed dental hygienists.
- The annual budget depends on paid staff support or sole hygienist operation and ranges from \$2,000 to \$3,500.

Program Impact

- To date, Smiles for Life has provided dental services to over 4,000 individuals.
- According to a study by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Smiles for Life reduced costs of the target population and satisfied the client’s need for preventive oral health services.¹
- Reports from all senior center programs were sent quarterly to the Washington State Department of Health from 2007 to 2009 on demographics, client satisfaction, number of individuals served, services provided, and referrals to other healthcare providers. Surveys demonstrated high client satisfaction, increased oral health education levels, and improved self-care.
- Outcomes of the program include an increased number of older adults who received affordable and high quality preventive oral health services, increased oral health and consumer knowledge, and an increased number of older adults linked to dentists for additional care.
- Smiles for Life was recognized as number nine in the top 25 innovative and preventive oral health programs in the United States by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Program Contact Information

Program Phone Number: 206-780-6908

Program Website: <http://smilepartners.org/programs/smiles-for-life/>

¹ Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (September 2013). Dental Professionals in Non-Dental Settings. Retrieved from: <http://www.rwjf.org/en/library/research/2013/09/dental-professionals-in-non-dental-settings.html>



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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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mobile-portable model <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Outreach and education model	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Basic services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Screenings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cleanings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fluoride varnish <input type="checkbox"/> Sealants <input type="checkbox"/> X-rays <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Comprehensive services <input type="checkbox"/> Fillings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scaling/root planing <input type="checkbox"/> Extractions <input type="checkbox"/> Oral surgery <input type="checkbox"/> Root canals <input type="checkbox"/> Dentures, partials, relines, repairs <input type="checkbox"/> Crowns <input type="checkbox"/> Bridges <input 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Individuals with Medicaid <input type="checkbox"/> Veterans <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Refugees/immigrants	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> Non-dental clinical staff <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-clinical staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Referrals to dental and oral health services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Care coordination/care management <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Patient education <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Caregiver education <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Provider education <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advocacy/coalition
Geography	Payment for Care	Integration with Services
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medicaid <input type="checkbox"/> No charge to client <input type="checkbox"/> Sliding fee scale <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Out of pocket <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial dental insurance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medical services <input type="checkbox"/> Behavioral health services <input type="checkbox"/> Vision services <input type="checkbox"/> Pharmacy services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation services <input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> Private dental office <input type="checkbox"/> Long-term care facility <input checked="" 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 checked="" 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