Reinventing Oral Health
In Michigan:
Community Grantee Profiles
2013
ABOUT THE INITIATIVE
According to American Activist Bob Black, “The reinvention of daily life means marching off the edge of our maps.”

Through its Oral Health 2014 initiative, the Michigan Oral Health Coalition works to reinvent oral health. The Reinventing Oral Health in Michigan initiative is a bold step forward to help ensure our state’s prosperity and quality of life, now and in the future.

An achievement of success for the Michigan Oral Health Coalition through its Oral Health 2014 initiative is its development of community networks built on facilitative leadership principles. The Coalition’s vision of impact is to inspire communities to create networks of innovation, advocacy and leadership to improve the oral health of their children and adults.

In November 2012, the Coalition announced its 2013 Community Mini-Grant Program to assist communities in developing and furthering local coalitions as they establish a foundation for creating social change toward oral health. This approach allows traditional and non-traditional stakeholders to bring a collective voice to local issues and determine which strategies will work best.

In January, the Coalition announced its 2013 Community Mini-Grantees:

- Bay County Health Department (Bay County)
- Central Michigan District Health Department (Clare County)
- Episcopal Diocese of Northern Michigan (Marquette County)
- First Steps Kent (Kent County)
- Jewish Vocational Services Tri-County Dental (Oakland County)

The community grantees selected represent a diverse geographic mix of urban versus rural; non-profit organizations with different missions; and size and ethnicity of population. Each grantee received $1,500 to support coalition-building strategies in addition to services valued at $20,000. To learn more about our community grantees, we encourage you to read their enclosed profiles.

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Bay County Health Department

GRANTEE PROFILE
Bay County Health Department and its community partners recently completed a Community Health Assessment for Bay County that brought oral health issues to their attention. Results of the assessment show that 43% of Bay County adults and 26% of children do not receive routine dental care. The percentage for children increases by 10% for families whose incomes fall below $50,000. Additionally, approximately 10% of residents are uninsured and about 20% are enrolled in Medicaid. Access to care and a lack of knowledge about dental services available are seen as the biggest problems facing Bay County. Due to the results of the assessment, a dental work group was formed to determine why dental services are not being utilized and how to improve access to affordable dental care for Bay County residents.

With the help of the Coalition’s Mini-Grant Program, the dental work group was able to participate in a facilitated planning session to work towards their goals. They started with determining what resources are available for uninsured, low-income, or Medicaid families. As a result, an informational sheet that lists dentists accepting Medicaid and Healthy Kids Dental was posted online and mailed out to more than 500 residents. In addition to increasing access to care, BCHD hopes that people will begin to see the importance of oral health care and understand its affect on overall health. The efforts from BCHD and the dental work group are sure to make an important impact on the oral health of Bay County residents!

PRIORITY AREA
Access to Care

BAY COUNTY FACTS

Population
107,434

2013 County Health Ranking
53rd of 83

Medicaid-enrolled Residents
20,389

Uninsured Residents
9,605

Dental Health Professional Shortage Area
No

Medicaid Dental Coverage
Healthy Kids Dental Fee-for-Service, Adult

GRANTEE CONTACT

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GRANTEE PROFILE
Central Michigan District Health Department began its role in the initiative by successfully convening the pilot project that preceded the mini-grants. Developing the Vision of Impact was an energizing process for the Design Team and Clare-Gladwin Health Improvement Workgroup members. In the pilot project, data were collected from prospective Kindergartners via oral health screening and parents through a knowledge and behaviors survey. The Coalition has released its Clare County Oral Health Assessment Report in January 2013. With 50% of Clare County children with early childhood caries, the Coalition will use the Report to create a broad-based support for an increase in the Medicaid medical reimbursement rate for fluoride varnish.

The Clare/Gladwin Health Improvement Planning Workgroups meets regularly and shares information on many health issues as well as oral health. At a recent meeting, the group discussed plans to increase the oral health literacy of the community by providing tooth wheels for local dentists, pediatricians, and obstetricians to give to their patients. Oral health will also be the key note at community baby showers and other family community events. Toothbrushes and referral information will be distributed as well. Plans are also underway to host a training session for local dentists to learn about the age one dental visit. They are a wonderful group of people who are committed to improving the health of their community!

PRIORITY AREA
Maternal & Child Oral Health Improvement

CLARE COUNTY FACTS

Population
30,104

2013 County Health Ranking
75th of 83

Medicaid-enrolled Residents
8,443

Uninsured Residents
2,807

Dental Health Professional Shortage Area
Yes

Medicaid Dental Coverage
Healthy Kids Dental Fee-for-Service, Adult

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GRANTEE PROFILE
The Justice and Peace Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Northern Michigan (EDNM) included the theme “Oral Health for All” as a track in its education, organizing and action conference last October. There, they learned about the complexities of the collaboration necessary to improve oral health across the UP. The UP currently faces many barriers to good oral health including a high caries rate among free and reduced lunch children, a limited number of reduced fee or free dental clinics, a shortage of dental professionals, and a lack of access to fluoridated water. Because there are so many different pieces involved in oral health, the EDNM is worried that no one is able to see the whole picture, making it difficult to look at from a patient-centered, through the whole life-cycle viewpoint.

With the help of the Coalition’s Mini-Grant program, EDNM and their partners are beginning to network across the state and put together those fragmented pieces. During their first strategic planning session, four focus groups emerged, each with a specific target: one to work with seniors; one for teens and young adults, beginning with a pilot project in Sawyer to provide dental care for kids in a school-based clinic; one focused on aiding people with limited resources; and one to help develop a comprehensive plan to achieve “Oral Health for All” across the UP. With what is planned to be a multi-year initiative, the EDNM is tackling a big problem across the UP and we at the Coalition are excited to see the impact of their efforts.

PRIORITY AREA
Access to Care & Oral Disease Prevention in Marquette County

MARQUETTE COUNTY FACTS
Population
65,703

2013 County Health Ranking
17th of 83

Medicaid-enrolled Residents
10,033

Uninsured Residents
6,492

Dental Health Professional Shortage Area
Yes

Medicaid Dental Coverage
Healthy Kids Dental
Fee-for-Service, Adult

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First Steps Kent

GRANTEE PROFILE
First Steps Kent is a nonprofit in Kent County working to strengthen and coordinate early childhood services. As part of their efforts, First Steps also convenes and coordinates the Kent County Oral Health Coalition, a partnership of over 40 individuals and 20 organizations with a focus on increasing access to dental care. The need for dental access is currently one of the top five areas of concern on the Kent County Community Health Needs Assessment. In 2008, 21% of Kent County residents had not visited a dental health care provider in the past year. The number jumps significantly for residents with less than a high school education (44%) and residents from lower income households (45%).

The Kent County Oral Health Coalition wants to engage and empower the community by giving their target population a voice within the Coalition. With the help of the Mini-Grant, the Coalition plans to recruit 2–4 community members from underserved groups who can provide feedback about community needs and bring the Coalition’s efforts back to their communities. We at the Michigan Oral Health Coalition are excited to see First Steps Kent and the Kent County Oral Health Coalition making an effort to actively get their community involved in increasing access to dental care.

PRIORITY AREA
Oral Health Improvement in Kent County

KENT COUNTY FACTS

Population
608,315

2013 County Health Ranking
16th of 83

Medicaid-enrolled Residents
119,386

Uninsured Residents
2,807

Dental Health Professional Shortage Area
Yes

Medicaid Dental Coverage
Fee-for-Service, Children
Fee-for-Service, Adult

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GRANTEE PROFILE
Jewish Vocational Services Tri-County Dental Health is dedicated to increasing access to care for uninsured low-income people, those with Medicaid, and people with special needs throughout Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb Counties. With the help of the Coalition’s Mini-Grant Program, Tri-County Dental Health will partner with Oakland Integrated Healthcare Network, a federally qualified health center look-alike in Pontiac, to form a coalition in Oakland County around the goal of increasing access to dental care for people with disabilities. The coalition will be a unique collaborative between the mental health and dental health communities.

Over 95% of adults with disabilities have Medicaid benefits for basic dental services. However, access to care is difficult because of the low number of dentists accepting Medicaid reimbursement, no specialty coverage, and a perceived lack of training by dental professionals. Additionally, patients with disabilities may not feel as comfortable going in for treatment, and some dentists may be unsure how to help put them at ease. To help overcome this obstacle, Tri-County Dental Health is working with the University of Detroit Mercy to help educate dental students on what they’ll encounter while treating patients with disabilities. The coalition in Oakland County intends to identify other strategies to ensure that appropriate dental care is available for people with disabilities. Tri-County Dental Health has already been making a big difference in their community, and we are excited to see the positive impact of their new efforts!

PRIORITY AREA
Access to Care for Adults with Developmental Disabilities

OAKLAND COUNTY FACTS

Population
1,205,508

2013 County Health Ranking
22nd of 83

Medicaid-enrolled Residents
146,723

Uninsured Residents
108,687

Dental Health Professional Shortage Area
No

Medicaid Dental Coverage
Fee-for-Service, Children
Fee-for-Service, Adult

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