Collaborative Care Dental Hygiene: Characterizing the Need in Arkansas.

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Objectives

- Develop a collaborative care practice model for dentists and hygienists in Arkansas.
- Provide training to support oral health providers practicing in advanced dental roles.
- Additional objectives:
  - improve oral health care for vulnerable underserved populations;
  - increase the number of children receiving oral health education, oral prophylaxis, dental sealants, and fluoride varnish therapy;
  - increase the number of elderly in long term care facilities receiving oral health education, oral prophylaxis, head and neck cancer exams, and fluoride varnish therapy;
  - promote a collaborative care model to the students in the dental hygiene program as well as licensed dentists and dental hygienists in Arkansas; and
  - promote the dental hygiene profession as a career opportunity to a diverse population when providing treatment to elementary school children.

Methods

UAMS faculty (three dental hygienists and one dentist) licensed by the Arkansas State Board of Dental Examiners (ASBDE), will enter into a collaborative agreement established with the Arkansas State Board of Dental Examiners. Upon the development and delivery of the collaborative care curriculum, collaborative care clinical rotations will be incorporated during the fall, spring and summer semesters. Under-served and vulnerable populations will be the target for the clinical rotations.

Results / Measurable Outcomes

Measurements will consist of:
- number of patients treated;
- number and type of services provided;
- dates and number of Collaborative Care CE courses given;
- number of attendees for the Collaborative Care CE courses;
- pre-test and post-test scores for students in in DHY 3334 and DHY 3245 Community Dentistry I and II;
- number of graduates from the program each year after the implementation of the curriculum;
- number and year of Collaborative Care I and II permits issued by the ASBDE.

Conclusion

Benefits from dental hygiene students’ participation in collaborative care community-based settings includes evidence-based instructional methods allowing students to become adept in their ability to deliver cross-cultural care in alternative practice settings. Students are more likely to enter into a collaborative care practice model if exposed to all aspects of that model as part of the dental hygiene curriculum. A bonus outcome of the pilot project will be the exposure of a diverse population of elementary school students to the dental hygiene profession thus increasing awareness of dental hygiene as a career and potentially increasing diversity in the profession.

References

Collaborative Care Dental Hygiene: Characterizing the Need in Arkansas. (2014). Arkansas Department of Health. M. Phillips, PhD, MPH, MBA, Eds, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, College of Public Health

Problem

Arkansas is in the bottom quartile of the lowest tier of states meeting national dental health criteria. In an effort to address the needs of underserved vulnerable populations the “Dental Hygienist Collaborative Care Program” was enacted in the 2011 legislative session. Preparing dental hygiene students for collaborative community settings requires much more than didactic education. Students require a basic threshold of clinical skills to work in a collaborative setting. Producing technically competent graduates, who possess good communication skills, cultural competency, cultural sensitivity, and health literacy, is challenging for the traditional dental hygiene school curriculum.

ACT 89 COLLABORATIVE CARE PERMIT I AND II

In the 2011 Regular Session of the Arkansas 88th General Assembly Senate Bill 42 was passed and entitled: An act to authorize dental hygienists to perform dental hygiene procedures for persons in public settings without the supervision of a dentist; to create a collaborative care permit program for dental hygienists; and for other purposes. Act 89 gave the Arkansas Board of Health the authority to promulgate rules and regulations pertaining to dental hygienists working under collaborative care permits with licensed dentists for the purpose of expanding dental services to underserved areas of the state.