

Successful Partnerships to Improve Oral Health in Head Start

Contact Information

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Funded enrollment: 767

Program Information

Type of Program

Head Start

Location of Program

Center-based program option

Partnership Information

The partnership is between the Head Start of Lane County, community health centers of Lane County, the Lane Community College Dental Clinic (also known as the Clock Tower Dental Clinic), the United Way of Lane County, the Lane County 100% Access Coalition (coalition that includes medical groups, two hospitals, industry, and medical insurers), and various volunteer groups from the faith community.

Oral Health Activity

Education
Disease prevention
Service delivery

Activity Description

On a quarterly basis, the program offers “family dental days” (an 8-hour clinic) to children and families who are uninsured. The program utilizes an 18-chair full service dental facility that is housed in the Lane Community College Dental Clinic. The program has obtained funding (small grants) from community sources to support stipends for dental hygiene (second year) students and dental assistants to assist community health center staff, dentists, and volunteer dentists (pediatric and general dentists). During the family dental day, the program provides full service dentistry to up to 80 patients. Patients, primarily children from families without insurance, are scheduled through Head Start of Lane County. The program is also involved in a larger community effort to offer remaining treatment slots to families without insurance living in the 16 school districts in Lane County that are referred through the Lane County Dental Prevention Program. All members of the family are provided oral health treatment in the same visit to reduce barriers related to work schedules and transportation. Faith community volunteers (typically a church group will “sponsor” a clinic with a team of volunteers) assemble educational

materials, dental supplies, assist with scheduling, provide child care (specifically when parents require more time consuming oral health treatment than their children), and serve as runners throughout the day. Community health center staff and United Way volunteers also assist families with the Oregon Health Plan and the Family Health Insurance Assistance Program enrollment and connect them with other low-cost treatment options in the community. The federally qualified health center will continue to be the “dental home” for families that are seen on that day. Children will automatically be eligible for the oral health prevention services that occur in the county school districts.