

## PROJECT ABSTRACT

Project Title: Rhode Island Quality Improvement Project: A State Wide Plan to Achieve Perinatal & Infant Oral Health

Applicant Name: Rhode Island Department of Health

Address: 3 Capitol Hill, Room 309; Providence, RI 02908-5097

Contact Person: Laurie Leonard, MS

Phone Number: 401.222.2433; Fax Number: 401.222.1442

Email Address: Laurie.Leonard@health.ri.gov

World Wide Web Address: <http://www.health.ri.gov/teeth/>

Oral health and disease affect a person throughout their lifetime, and the impact of learning quality oral health habits early in life will affect an individual's long term oral health status. Through the *RI Quality Improvement Project: A State Wide Plan to Achieve Perinatal & Infant Oral Health (RI PIOHQI SWP Project)*, the Rhode Island Department of Health plans to increase dental visits for both pregnant women and infants thus increasing an individual's and their family's lifelong oral health. In recent years, private and public RI agencies have received federal and foundation funds to support a variety of oral health initiatives. Despite the many accomplishments, RI faces oral health challenges in encouraging non-dental providers to include oral health topics in discussions with their patients, and dental providers to conduct age 1 dental visits. In 2011, 52.4% of pregnant women said their prenatal provider had discussed oral health issues. Additionally, 34% of pregnant women and 0.3% of infants age 0-12 months (with Medicaid dental benefits) had seen a dentist.

The proposed project seeks to further advance and implement strategies identified by key stakeholder groups including, but not limited to, the RI Oral Health Commission (the state's primary oral health coalition co-chaired by the Lt. Governor), the Perinatal & Infant Oral Health Project Advisory Board, and the RI *TeethFirst!* Leadership Team. The activities proposed in this project are complementary, synergistic and built upon past partnership successes. The project will collaborate with internal and external partners to reduce the prevalence of oral disease in pregnant women and infants through improved access to quality oral health care by:

1. Implementing an electronic dental referral and data collection system,
2. Providing education through the *TeethFirst! Academy* for both healthcare (infant and perinatal medical providers) and service (MCHB-, HRSA- and HHS-funded programs) providers, on the importance of oral health for perinatal women and infants, and
3. Education providers on the utilization of the new electronic system.