Asking the Source: Why are safety-net dental services often underutilized?
Community Partners in Oral Health (CPOH)

Purpose: Enhance understanding of the factors that keep community members from accessing oral health services and use this insight to guide community outreach and service design.

Our vision was further informed by the funder, Richmond Memorial Health Foundation and its mission of fostering an equitable and healthy Richmond region.
Community Partners in Oral Health (CPOH):
Community Representatives

Edalio Galarza

Lisa Coles
From Insight to Action

- Insights from Clinic Patients
- Insights from Clinic Providers
- Insights from Referral Organizations
- Action Strategies for Improving Oral Health Access
Most people are worried about waiting to get an appointment, sometimes the schedule is booked so far out and that’s not good. Also, it’s hard to put money aside to when you have everyday life events happening.
Demographic Profile

Of the 97 clinic patient interviewees; most were:

- Between the ages of 18-44
- Female
- Have incomes below $35,000
- Live in a house with children and three or more residents.
- Primarily English speakers, born in the United States, and residents of the Greater Richmond Area for more than five years.
- Uninsured
- Of those who had health coverage, only 25% had coverage that included dental care.

Insights from Clinic Patients
Key Findings

*Ability to Obtain a Full Plan of Care*

- Nearly half (47%) obtained full plan of care, and nearly half did not (48%).
- Reasons why the full course of treatment was not obtained:
  - Cost
  - Pain
  - Scheduling challenges
Key Findings

Dental Care in the Past Two Years

• Almost two-thirds (64%) of the interviewees experienced barriers to dental care in the past two years.
Top Five Barriers:

1. Could not afford the cost of dental care (81%)
2. Could not get an appointment time that would work (40%)
3. Had to wait a long time for an appointment (38%)
4. Could not find a place to go for dental care (29%)
5. Decided not to get dental care because of worry about pain (27%)

Insights from Clinic Patients
Top Five Ideas for Improving Access and Utilization:

1. Make it more affordable or free (68%)
2. Offer more convenient appointment times (30%)
3. Reduce waiting time to get an appointment dental office or clinic (28%)
4. Reduce waiting time at the appointment (22%)
5. Address concerns about pain (17%)
Insights from Clinic Providers

The demand for oral health is huge. A lot of our patients come from a culture where taking care of the teeth was not a priority. The key is education and encouraging self-management practices. There has to be a sense that oral health can affect the individual overall health and can contribute to other healthcare issues. There are not many providers within the community that provide free or cheap oral health care services.
Insights from Clinic Providers

Key Findings

Ideas for addressing cultural or structural factors that may influence disparities or otherwise limit opportunities for good oral health in our community included:

- Make Dental Care More Affordable
- Develop Educational/Health Literacy Tools
- Improve Transportation Access
- Address Language/Cultural Barriers
- Improve Dental Care Delivery
Insights from Referral Organizations

Undocumented families are not eligible for Medicaid and if/when pro-bono work is offered, they target toddlers and teens; adults are often overlooked. The area might not have enough dental clinic resources targeting older populations. Dental visits can be very costly for low-income families. First come first serve option are great options, but not feasible. If families don't have reliable transportation, they have to go to work early and can't afford to camp out, they won't make it a priority.
Insights from Referral Organizations

Key Findings

Ideas for addressing barriers included:

• Make Dental Care More Affordable
• Improve Transportation Access
• Improve Care Delivery (hours, appointments)
• Improve Understanding of Cultural Practices
• Improve Language and Policy Barriers
Comparing Insights

Clinic Patients
- Affordability
- Care Delivery
- Fear

Clinic Providers
- Education
- Health Literacy
- Affordability

Referral Organizations
- Affordability
- Transportation
- Care Delivery
We need to rethink the way we design and deliver healthcare.
Key Clinic Strategies

• Increase outreach to help guide consumers to resources.
• Assess and optimize language staff when communicating with patients.
• Analyze data to determine hygiene concerns; see if it matches with staff and client perceptions.
• Reassess all potential barriers to consumers accessing our services and fund improvements.
• Disseminate accurate information about accessing health care services and immigration status.
Key Collaborative Community Strategies

- Partner with local emergency rooms and urgent care facilities.
- Design outreach about current immigration policies that potentially impact health care or access.
- Develop trainings that address cultural nuance when delivering care.
- Develop and distribute a dental resource directory for all ages, including dentist who accept Medicaid.
Key Advocacy Strategies

- Work with community partners to increase comfort with advocacy and provide support/tools/resources to enable grassroots engagement.
- Engage in vocal, coordinated advocacy to add a comprehensive dental benefit for all adults enrolled in Virginia’s Medicaid program.
- Better understand policies in other states that support access to public health care benefits for adults with various immigration status.
Questions?
Contacts

Julie Bilodeau, Chief Executive Officer
jbilodeau@crossoverministry.org

Katy Latimer, Advancement Assistant
klatimer@dailyplanetva.org

Sherrina Gibson, Manager
sgibson@chsresults.com