

**Virginia Health Catalyst  
Greater Richmond/Petersburg Oral Health Alliance  
Tuesday, December 3, 2019  
10:00-12:00pm | Glen Allen, VA**

**Attending:** Sharon Logue (VDH), Susan Pharr (Virginia Dental Hygienist Association), Leslie Crocker (CARES Shelter/VSU), Mary Tognarelli (Children's Hospital of Richmond), Lisa Bender (RMHF), Roberto Noriega (Healthy Petersburg), Tonya Adiches (VDH), JohnJason Cecil (Anthem), Lisette Johnson (YWCA Richmond)

**Staff:** Sarah Holland, Lauren Sawyer, and Brita Bergland

**Action Items:**

- **Adult dental benefit in Medicaid:** There are a few ways you can learn more and support the addition of an adult dental benefit in Medicaid in 2020:
  - [Join the Virginia Health Catalyst policy webinar](#) on Friday 12/20 at 10:00 am. Register for the policy webinar [here](#).
  - [Register for Legislative Action Day](#) on January 28, 2020. We're making this our biggest Legislative Action Day yet and we need you! Register to attend [here](#).
  - [Share advocacy postcards at your next meeting](#). Each of the five versions highlights a way in which an adult dental benefit would support Virginians. Bring the postcards to your next meeting or event to share with your partners, fill out our postcard request form [here](#).
- Catalyst will release a **request for proposals** to fund up to three community-level planning projects (\$7,500 each) with a focus on systems level change that impact the oral and overall health of pregnant women, children, and families in the Richmond/Petersburg area. *More information to come!*

**Next meeting:** March 26, 2020, 10-12pm, Catalyst offices (4200 Innslake Dr. Glen Allen, VA), Washington room

**Proceedings**

**Policy updates**

- Medical assistants providing fluoride varnish in medical settings: Currently, the code only allows LPNs and above to apply fluoride varnish in medical settings. With support from provider associations across the state, we are proposing a change in the code to include medical assistants to the list of approved providers. Hoping to go through relatively easily in 2020!
- EPSDT varnish: Working through Medicaid policy group to get it fluoride varnish reimbursed up to age 5, per EPSDT recommendations. Currently, VA Medicaid only reimburses for varnish up to age 3.
- Water bottle filling stations: American Heart Association is the lead on legislation that would mandate new school construction to require at least 2 filling stations in the new building. This is

a great opportunity to lift up water instead of sugar sweetened beverages and increase access and use of fluoridated water in schools.

- Teledentistry legislation: Virginia Dental Association writing legislation to define terms of teledentistry in the code. Catalyst is working with them to ensure the definition would remain true to continue store and forward teledentistry in the future.
- Medicare legislation: A package of health reforms focused on prescription drugs (HR 3) would reinvest savings into Medicare dental coverage and other health care improvements. It is out of the committee, and passed through the House of Representatives. This is a huge achievement in awareness of oral health on the federal level!
- Adult dental Medicaid benefit: Even though it did not make it into the Governor's budget on 12/17, there is still an opportunity to include an adult dental benefit in Medicaid through a budget amendment. The Governor's budget currently includes \$200 million in unallocated funds, some of which could be allocated for a comprehensive adult dental benefit. We'll be pursuing this aggressively, **but to make this a reality, we need your support.**
  - Join the Virginia Health Catalyst policy webinar: On Friday at 10:00 am, Virginia Health Catalyst will host its annual policy webinar. During the webinar, we will share more information on the Governor's budget and how you can support an adult dental benefit in 2020. Register for the policy webinar [here](#).
  - Register for Legislative Action Day: Join Virginia Health Catalyst and health advocates from across Virginia for Legislative Action Day on January 28. During the day, we'll be in Richmond sharing with legislators the importance of adding an adult dental benefit in Virginia. We're making this our biggest Legislative Action Day yet and we need you! Register to attend [here](#).
  - Share advocacy postcards at your next meeting: Tell your legislators that an adult dental benefit is important with one of Virginia Health Catalyst's advocacy postcards. Each of the five versions highlights a way in which an adult dental benefit would support Virginians. Bring the postcards to your next meeting or event to share with your partners, fill out our postcard request form [here](#).
- Dental therapy: not currently on the table in VA, but could come into the workforce conversation as a way to implement a new workforce model. There are different opinions on success of the model in states where it has been implemented.

### ***Alliance History and Goals***

- History of alliance and workgroups created upon initiation in 2017. Changes in last year:
  - School age is now statewide [school-based health workgroup](#) – informing VDH about what is happening at local level and help VDH make recommendations about distributing funding for school-based services
  - Pregnant women workgroup made up of mostly state-level people – rolled up into [Early Dental Home workgroup](#) to reduce redundancy
  - Alliance was created to lift up local level issues and concerns. A few of our successes:

- Grassroots advocacy meetings in 2018 (Sen. Dance from Petersburg to help understand the impact of a dental benefit on people within her community – thanks Roberto!)
    - Safety net workgroup helped improve referral source – 211 Virginia: working on updating and improving available information (standard template with clinics) to help people find the right resource they need from dental safety nets
- Alliance goal: information sharing collaborative to ensure people in the region have the tools and connections to keep the oral health work alive at the local level
  - All regions very different and have different initiatives and ways of developing projects
  - Oral health and integration: comprehensive health care that includes oral health
    - Incorporating oral health into overall health – the connection is imperative. Ex: poor oral health impacts your A1C levels for people with diabetes. Poor oral health impacts ventilator associated pneumonia rates for people who are intubated.
    - New and improved [Integration Toolkit](#) is available online!
- Structure
  - Share information about what’s happening locally, policy update, talk about what’s needed to improve oral health across VA. We want to keep grassroots workgroup and 211 updates as needed
  - Keep communication lines open: schedule meetings ahead of time. Opportunities for “special meetings” during General Assembly, for example. Share agenda beforehand
  - Who do we need at the table: Review who is actively participating to find areas for representation
    - Important to highlight successes, talk about new structure, reiterate goals of the alliance
    - Aligning goals with people’s jobs to easy integration and participation
  - Alliance representative: will attend statewide alliance meeting to share resources, network, successes/challenges. TBD in Spring 2020
- **New request for proposals – coming soon!**
  - Catalyst is excited to offer up to three minigrants (\$7,500 each) to fund community-level planning projects with a focus on system level change.
  - Planning to improve upon/expand an existing project – time, equipment, staff – to grow good ideas. We can help to find more funds for implementation of the projects.
  - Must impact children, pregnant women, families because of its tie to MCH grant
  - *Please share with partners!*

### **Announcements**

- **YWCA**: Many pregnant women have significant oral health needs that cannot be completed throughout their pregnancy (Medicaid pregnancy benefit runs out after 60 days). Usually grant funded. Continuing to educate women about the oral health benefit
- **Petersburg Health Consortium**: Healthy shopping program with seniors to find healthy food items – how to shop wisely, sodium. Incorporate oral health messages here

- Next Oral Health workgroup meeting: 2/10, 3pm
- **CARES shelter:** Oral health lessons with new kids coming into shelter
  - VSU students minoring in public health want to get involved
- **VDH:** added prophys (cleaning) to the remote teams by request of school nurses and parents on consent forms. Appointments are a little longer with sealants, but everyone has been accepted
  - Education about what sealants and varnish do. Information is sent home about the services with consent forms.
- **Anthem:** new benefits include GED testing, taking people to grocery store, food banks and farmers markets