

Development of a New Oral-Systemic Health Instructional Resource for Interprofessional Education and/or Collaborative Practice in a Clinical Setting

Research Team

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ABSTRACT

Introduction

This funding will be used to develop a new oral-systemic health instructional resource in three School Based Health Centers in Chicago. These health centers are administered by the Rush University College of Nursing and housed in schools that serve students from neighborhoods with high poverty rates, teen pregnancy rates and perinatal morbidity and mortality rates. Two of the schools are traditional 9-12th grade high schools and the third is an alternative school exclusively serving pregnant and parenting adolescent girls in grades 6-12. The combined student body composition of the schools is 93% African American and 7% Hispanic; 98% of the students are living at or below the poverty level. The instructional resource will target oral health in pregnant patients and will reduce risk and improve birth outcomes.

The Rush School Health Centers offer a comprehensive model of wellness that focuses not only on the physical care of students, but on education, resource linkage, asset building and emotional wellbeing. To attain this, an interprofessional model of care has been developed. Health center staff is comprised of advanced practice nurses, registered nurses, a physician medical director and certified medical assistants. The health centers are faculty practice sites where nursing, medical, and nutrition students from Rush University acquire team-based clinical training that is purposefully coordinated to allow for interprofessional collaboration and referral.

In spring 2011, the health centers initiated prenatal care services at each school. Pregnancy-related goals of the health centers include increasing access to care for underserved pregnant and parenting teens and improving birth and health outcomes for pregnant and parenting teens. In addition to receiving care, pregnant and parenting students receive extensive education and counseling on healthy pregnancy and postnatal topics, interconceptional health goal setting, comprehensive care coordination and resource linkage in a patient-centered setting.

Baseline data reveals an underutilization of dental services and a high incidence of poor dentition among pregnant girls seen in the health centers. It is estimated that less than 10% of pregnant girls seen in the health centers for pregnancy-related services has seen a dentist in the past 12 months. Despite regular referrals for care, rates of adequate dental care remain low due to a number of obstacles both internal and external to the health centers. It is acknowledged among Rush University students of all disciplines that little didactic time is spent on the importance of oral-systemic health in pregnancy. These funds will enable us to develop and implement an interprofessional instructional resource targeting oral health in pregnancy. These resources will be easily replicated at other clinical teaching sites and will act as a catalyst for increased didactic instruction on the importance of oral-systemic health.