Oral Disease a Prevalent Comorbidity Related to Addiction: The Role of Oral Health in Treatment and Recovery

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WHY Oral Health Matters?

• It’s not just teeth!
• Mouth, tissue, bone, teeth
• Ability to be healthy and functional – eat, speak, smile, kiss

“Live, laugh, love across the lifespan”
Impact of Dental Disease and Poor Oral Health

Medical - Dental Condition
• Infection - decayed teeth
• Gum disease with inflammation and bleeding
• Fungal and viral infections in the mouth and head
• Pain and pain management needs
• Impact on full body and body systems

Impaired Function
• Broken, decayed teeth that result in difficulty biting, chewing and digesting
• Difficulty speaking and communicating clearly
• Difficulty concentrating and focusing
• Diabetes
• Heart disease
• Osteoporosis
• Inflammatory disease
• Sepsis - infection
• Chronic pain leading to alcohol and drug use and relapse risk
• Depression
• Aspiration pneumonia/respiratory illness
• Oral cancers
• Dry mouth
• Nutritional issues
• Speech difficulties
• Poor self-image
“If you’re not managing oral disease, you aren’t managing health care... or its cost.”
Pathways to Oral Health Access: Forks in the Road

Pathways to dental access for adults who are low-income, low-resource, dentally-underinsured, or Medicaid-covered.

(3) Community-based Oral Health and Dental Program, e.g. senior centers, mobile/van programs, community-based operatories, nursing homes, etc. Vouchers.

(1) Private Dental Offices "Go to the Dentist"
Case by case re: cost, location, accessibility, financial models/sliding fee/payment plan, pro bono.

(2) Emergency Department (Urgent)
Traditional or diversion program.

Vary significantly re: availability of dental providers on site or referral, willingness to provide pain management ongoing or repeatedly, f/u referral network, etc.

Programs vary by cost, location, accessibility, financial models, subsidies, and support services.
NH Financial and Benefit Considerations

• Cash or credit payment options
• Commercial Dental insurance
  • Availability of insurers
  • Expenses including co-pays, deductibles and caps
  • Scope of coverage – what services are provided? How often? By whom?
  • Prevention v. restorative needs
• NH Medicaid
  • Children – Comprehensive
  • Adults – Limited benefit, “emergency-only” with antibiotics, pain management and extractions. No dentures.
• Medicare – Traditional
  • Traditional has no dental coverage
  • Advantage may provide a “value-added” benefit that is defined by the insurer
Identifying Oral Health Resources and Promising Practices in Community-based, Non-traditional Settings

An inventory and examination of the state’s community-based oral health programs with consideration of promising and best practice criteria for use by providers, policy-makers, program planners and consumers.
NH Oral Health Coalition Baseline Survey I Interactive GIS Map

[Google Maps logo]

[www.nhoralhealth.org] and click on the GIS Map Link
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