

People with intellectual disabilities experience tooth loss at a higher rate than the general population (Report of the Surgeon General, 2000). This is related to problems with oral health self-care, increased oral secretions secondary to cerebral palsy, side effects of medications (decreased secretions), and poor access to routine dental prophylaxis related to physical barriers and insurance barriers (limited services covered by Medicaid and none by Medicare).

According to the Surgeon General Report's Call to Action, a number of strategies must be put in place among individuals and communities to improve the oral health and ultimately the well-being of people with developmental disabilities. While implementation strategies are complex and vary across states, change in perception is needed at local, state, regional and national levels across all population groups (A National Call to Action, 2014). Federal efforts to address gaps in oral health care have been fruitful, as states continue to overcome barriers through advocacy programs and improving provider participation, to effectively and efficiently meet their oral health needs. Continued support from federal agencies to enhance the oral

BACKGROUND



“Oral Health is a key component in overall health”

Quality is About Caring

An Oral Health Study Guide For Dental Professionals

health workforce capacity is necessary. By providing advocates at the state level with all the tools and resources they need, a wider range of people with disabilities will be offered quality assistance.

The film, *Quality is About Caring*, features the community practices of two dentists in the District of Columbia who primarily serve adults with intellectual and other developmental disabilities (IDD). The video includes an in-depth guided tour of their respective offices and demonstrates the many advances in their dental practices that improve access to people with IDD, including both physical and behavioral accommodations. *Quality is About Caring* reviews the DC Medicaid program for dental services. Viewers will receive an extensive look into the oral health care system and how adequate care is provided to patients in the District. *Quality is About Caring* includes information on the structure of the national Medicaid system and analyzes the benefits and enhancements provided by the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waiver.

PLEASE UNFOLD BOOKLET TO SEE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

RESTRICTED RIGHTS LEGEND
Use, duplication, or disclosure is subject to restrictions stated in
Contract No. DCJM 2011-C0012 between the Government of the
District of Columbia and Georgetown University

© 2019 Georgetown University Center for Child & Human
Development
3300 Whitehaven Street NW, Suite 3300, Washington, DC 20007

USE OF THE STUDY GUIDE

This study guide contains a variety of learning activities and discussion questions pertaining to the oral health status of people with developmental disabilities. The purpose of this guide is to increase awareness of the goals, expectations, preferences, needs and services for this specialized population. Specifically, this study guide discusses supports for individuals with developmental disabilities, while increasing knowledge of the service system and promoting a vision for the future of oral health. It can be used by all who advocate with and on behalf of people with developmental disabilities, including self-advocates, family members, service providers, community leaders, policy makers, etc. Anyone who embraces the concept that good oral health promotes overall health and should be part of comprehensive health care will benefit from watching the video, *Quality is About Caring* and participating in these learning activities.

It is recommended that facilitators use this study guide in conjunction with the oral health video to educate policy makers, health care providers, health professions students and advocates to identify and better understand how they can impact the policies and legislation that provide adequate oral health care to people with developmental disabilities. The activities on the following page explore the values, attitudes, services and supports needed for people with developmental disabilities to benefit from community-based oral health care.



ACTIVITIES

- Read your Medicaid state plan
- Research the existence of any statewide or regional committees/task forces that focus on oral health care and people with developmental disabilities
- Identify champions
 - Contact your state dental society and dental schools
 - Contact your state University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (see the Association on University Centers on Disability at www.aucd.org)
- Collect data
- Tell your story
 - Need in your community
 - Cost effectiveness
 - Assess the environment related to state priorities and funding

- 2) What technological advances and tools do you think are necessary to improve the oral health status of people with IDD?
- 3) How does preventive dental care impact key components of overall health, such as pregnancy, cardiovascular disease and nutrition?
- 4) How does your current patient profile differ from those depicted in the video? How can you encourage people with IDD to visit your office?
- 5) What barriers are faced when serving people with IDD in a dental office? What is your role in addressing these barriers? What local resources are available to assist you and your dental office?
- 6) Are you familiar with the states that have a Medicaid dental waiver? What do you know about your Medicaid state plan?
- 7) What next steps can dental professionals in your state/jurisdiction take to promote oral health care?
- 8) How can we tell story of the importance of oral health for individuals with IDD and the need for change?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR ADVOCATES

- 1) If you are a dental student, do you think your program gives you the knowledge and skills to address the oral health needs of people with IDD? If you are part of the dental faculty, how do you need to modify teaching strategies to address the needs of people with IDD?