

Scope of Work

Name of Organization: A.T. Still University, Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health (ATSU-ASDOH)
Name of the project: A Day for Special Smiles
Location of the project: 5850 E. Still Circle, Mesa, AZ 85206
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Introduction

ASDOH requests funds to establish a one-of-a-kind comprehensive, coordinated, and replicable system of dental care for Arizona residents of all ages with developmental disabilities to be known as *A Day for Special Smiles* (DFSS). DFSS will build on ASDOH's success as one of the largest *Give Kids a Smile* event coordinators and oral healthcare providers in Arizona. Support from the Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (ADDPC) is sought for the following DFSS elements:

- Training community dentists to provide specialized care to persons with special needs and creating a database of trained dentists;
- Developing oral health educational resources for developmentally disabled individuals and their caregivers; and
- Promoting DFSS and raising awareness that dental screenings and free preventive dental care (cleanings and fluoride applications) for persons with developmental disabilities will be available during the event.

When fully developed, *A Day for Special Smiles* will also encompass:

- With assistance from partner organizations, identifying unmet dental needs among developmentally disabled individuals;
- Holding an ASDOH-based event during which dental students and volunteer dentists screen, create treatment plans, provide preventive services and oral health education, and make referrals;
- Exposing dental students to special needs care; and
- Delivering follow-up care (e.g. restorative, endodontic, periodontal services) for conditions diagnosed during the campus-based event.

The proposed project directly addresses Goal #3 expressed in the Council's *5-Year Plan Public Session Report*: "Empower persons with developmental disabilities, their families, and others who support them by linking them to information that promotes informed decision making about their choices and their quality of life."

ASDOH's Unique Project Implementation Capability

ASDOH is the only entity in the state of Arizona capable of implementing the proposed project. Dental care for persons with special needs often requires special accommodations for the unique challenges they present, including intellectual deficits, social deprivation, uncontrolled movement, muscle weakness, short attention span, congenital deformities, and oral motor function. As of January 2012, there are only two specialized facilities in the Greater Phoenix area that provide reduced-fee dental care to people with special needs in Arizona; both are run by ASDOH. A third facility, Gompers, closed its dental center in December 2011. The Midwestern University College of Dental Medicine-Arizona, the only other dental school in Arizona, does not have a special needs clinic or a cadre of dental professionals equipped with advanced, specialized training and experience in treating persons with special needs.

ASDOH's Background

ASDOH, Arizona's first dental school, is one of five established schools of A.T. Still University, a 501(c)(3) educational institution with campuses in Mesa, Arizona, and Kirksville, Missouri. Under development is a second dental school, the Missouri School of Dentistry & Oral Health, which is expected to matriculate its first class of students in Fall 2013. ASDOH's central mission is to educate caring, technologically adept oral healthcare professionals who become community and educational leaders

servicing those in need. Since its inception in 2003, ASDOH has garnered national attention for its innovative community-based curriculum and clinical training experiences centered on underserved populations. Each year, ASDOH admits ~76 students who undertake a technologically advanced and innovative dental curriculum. Qualified graduates are awarded a Doctor of Dental Medicine (DMD) degree along with a public health certificate. ASDOH is an active member of Arizona's Statewide Oral Health Coalition, a broad-based group of oral health advocates making a concerted effort to tackle specific, meaningful strategies that improve the oral health of Arizona's population. ASDOH's Dean, Jack Dillenber, DDS, MPH, is nationally recognized as an expert in oral health, public health leadership and programming, community organization, social marketing, and health center design.

Need Statement

The proposed project aligns with ASDOH's mandate to serve the underserved. Access to oral healthcare for persons with special needs is gravely insufficient in the United States for individuals of all ages.

Challenges Specific to Children with Special Needs

The Arizona Maternal Child Needs Assessment (2010) reports that there were at least 288,152 children with special health care needs (CSHCN) in Arizona in 2007, which represented 17% of all children and youth.¹ This population's oral healthcare needs are woefully neglected, with nearly one third (31%) of CSHCN in Arizona reported to have tooth decay or a cavity in the last six months, as compared to 23% of CSHCN nationally. Wealth is also a factor, with nearly half of families with CSHCN (45%) living below 200% of the federal poverty level.

Challenges Specific to Adults with Special Needs in Arizona

Adults with special needs are even more disadvantaged in terms of oral healthcare access. The Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS), the state's Medicaid agency, offers selected dental benefits for developmentally disabled (DD) individuals up to age 21. AHCCCS-participating pediatric dentists provide care to DD children under 16, but patients over 16 are referred to general dentists who tend to lack proper training to treat DD persons and, therefore, cannot accept them as patients. As a result, those patients often suffer from untreated oral diseases. The situation is worse for those over 21. In 2008, the state, under The Arizona Long Term Care System administered by AHCCCS, started offering up to \$1,000 in annual dental benefits to DD individuals over 21, thereby raising the expectations of DD patients and their families. The program has since been canceled, as was adult DD eligibility for emergency dental services. This is why ASDOH is dedicated to providing services to persons with special needs regardless of age.

In December 2011, ASDOH piloted the campus-based *A Day for Special Smiles* and served 23 patients in one of its special needs clinics. The pilot event was a reminder that a coordinated, comprehensive system of care must be put in place for persons with special needs living in Arizona in order to combat their oral health issues.

ASDOH's Ability to Implement *A Day for Special Smiles*

As one of the nation's leading public health dental schools, ASDOH has the capacity, leadership, partnerships, and resources to implement the proposed project. ASDOH's faculty roster includes experts in the field of treating patients with a wide spectrum of developmental disabilities: Maureen Romer, DDS, MPA, President of Special Care Dentistry Association; Denise Frances, DMD; Rebecca Schaffer, DDS; and Timothy Lukavsky, DDS. The implementation of the program will be overseen by Drs. Romer and Frances. Amanda Barstow, a dental assistant on the team treating patients with special needs, will serve as project coordinator and manage the logistical aspects of the program. ASDOH's two special needs clinics will serve as referral sites for patients diagnosed during the campus-based event. The Special Needs Care Unit, located within ASDOH's 43,000 square-foot clinic, is an innovative facility staffed by a dental team that is specially trained, equipped, and capable of providing dental services to persons with developmental disabilities. ASDOH's Dental Care West, a state-of-the-art dental facility in Glendale, Arizona, includes a 1,000-square foot, three-dental chair clinical space devoted exclusively to providing full-spectrum dental care to individuals with special needs.

Specific Objectives

ASDOH will measure the outcomes of the proposed project and evaluate its impact on improving the oral health of persons with developmental disabilities by aiming to meet the specific measurable objectives listed below.

The overarching goal for Objectives 1 and 2 is to increase the state's access and capacity to provide dental services to persons with developmental disabilities by developing a network of dentists trained in special needs care.

Objective 1: Train 10 community dentists to provide care to persons with special needs.

ASDOH will develop and deliver a two-day (16-hour) clinical hands-on program designed to educate local dentists on methods of providing treatment to persons with special needs. Participants will also be educated on how to navigate the system of health plans/care for persons with special needs in order to help reduce barriers to care. Training will consist of lectures, case presentations, equipment demonstrations, clinical observations, and simulated hands-on practice with dental mannequins. Topics may include:

- Consent, guardianship, and other legal considerations
- Oral conditions, common syndromes, and medications in the special needs population
- Behavioral management of patients with autism and other developmental disabilities
- Chair transfers/adaptation considerations
- IV sedation
- Innovative radiographic techniques for special needs

The training is limited to ten dentists due to the size of the clinical space available. Each dentist will be invited to attend the program with a dental hygienist or a dental assistant from his/her practice. For receipt of the training, dentists will be encouraged to participate in the campus-based event and "adopt" a DFSS patient, who will ideally be provided follow-up care free of charge in the dentist's private office. The training will be focused on local dentists in order to facilitate successful matches between DFSS patients and the practice locations of trainees. Since the DFSS patients will be local residents, ASDOH will provide continuing support for trainees, including phone/email consultations and acceptance of referrals for more medically complex patients. Participants will be entered into a database of dentists trained to provide care to persons with developmental disabilities.

Objective 2: During *A Day for Special Smiles*, expose ~80 future dentists to persons with developmental disabilities and their unique oral healthcare needs.

In 2004, the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) adopted a new standard that directs dental programs to prepare their students for the care of persons with special needs. The standard states: "Graduates must be competent in assessing the treatment needs of patients with special needsⁱⁱ". The educators of ASDOH set out to meet and exceed CODA's challenge. They believe that future dentists must learn to treat persons with special needs while at school, especially since the majority of Arizona's dentists currently lack the necessary training, equipment, and/or staff to treat these underserved patients. By establishing DFSS, ASDOH aims to expand special needs training for its students. It is anticipated that 40 patients, specifically with developmental disabilities, of all ages, will be seen during DFSS by ASDOH faculty and volunteer dentists trained under Objective 1. Two students will assist with each patient. Students and volunteer dentists will create patient treatment plans and provide patient-caregiver education on the benefits and consequences of non-compliance with referrals for follow-up care.

Objective 3: By November 2012, develop a resource guide on oral health needs for persons with developmental disabilities. ASDOH will produce 250 copies of a 12-page guide and distribute the guide to group homes for developmentally disabled individuals, families of persons with special needs, and select dental offices. The guide will be based on recommendation "g" listed in *2011 Report: Oral Healthcare for Adults with Developmental Disabilities in Arizona* under *Address Gaps in Knowledge*: Training materials for caregivers, family members, and adult consumers themselves, to support accurate,

easy instruction on prevention and care for oral health.ⁱⁱⁱ Some of the topics covered in the guide will include:

- Guidance for navigating the insurance system and treatment options
- Tips on maintaining good oral hygiene
- List of dentists trained to provide special needs care and their payment details (insurance plans accepted, Medicaid, sliding scale, reduced fees, etc.) organized by office location (Strategic Approach for Recommendations #5)
- Appendix of helpful web resources that includes a database of dentists trained to provide care to persons with developmental disabilities and website links to DFSS partners

Evaluation Plan

ASDOH will measure the outcomes of the proposed program and evaluate its impact on improving the delivery of oral healthcare to persons with developmental disabilities by aiming to meet the specific measurable objectives listed above. Specifically, ASDOH will:

- Track the number of dentists who participate in the workshop;
- Provide pre- and post-session questionnaires to workshop participants to evaluate their increase in skills, knowledge, and ability as well as changes in attitude and comfort levels with providing care to patients with special oral healthcare needs;
- Track the number of patients with special needs served, including the number of procedures by type, number of appointments per patient, demographic information (e.g. age, gender, race/ethnicity), ICD-9 codes, and CDP codes. All of this information will be coded to avoid identifying information and to remain Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) compliant;
- Administer exit surveys to patients and/or their caregivers to gauge the quality of their experiences and inquire if they intend to return to the clinics;
- Track the number of students participating in DFSS;
- Track the number of group homes for developmentally disabled individuals, their families, and dental offices that receive the resource guide; and
- Administer three month follow-up surveys to group homes and dental offices that received the resource guide to evaluate user satisfaction.

Partner Organizations

Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council; Arizona Department of Health Services, Office of Oral Health; the Arizona Dental Foundation (ADF); Special Olympics Arizona (SOAZ); and the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) have agreed to partner with ASDOH on this project. Each entity will be approached to sign a memorandum of understanding outlining its project role. Specifically, ADF has committed to providing supplies and maintaining participant records and statistics for DFSS. Special Olympics Arizona will provide transportation to athletes in their Special Smiles program (SOSS) to attend the event and has offered administrative support where needed. DDD will coordinate the referral of participants through the comparison of both DDD and SOAZ client lists. Additionally, ASDOH has submitted a scope of work to the Arizona Department of Health Services, Office of Oral Health (outlined under Sustainability).

Sustainability

ASDOH plans to offer the workshop again in the future and hold DFSS annually, thereby expanding the number of participating patients and trained dentists. As these numbers expand, so will the number of Arizona dentists trained in special needs dentistry and the number of persons receiving free treatment by becoming their "adopted" patients. ASDOH plans to seek extramural funding for future workshops and follow-up care delivered at its clinics. The School has been invited to apply for a grant to the Arizona Department of Health Services, Office of Oral Health and has requested \$49,600 to deliver follow up care (e.g. restorative, endodontic, periodontal, prosthodontics, surgical services) to 40 patients diagnosed during *A Day for Special Smiles*. This figure is based on the average treatment plan valued at \$1,240 per patient. DFSS has the potential to attract national interest, which is likely to bring in additional external sponsors for the program from national organizations and corporate sources.

Exportability

Outcomes of the proposed project and lessons learned will be disseminated via professional presentations/publications at local, state, and national health professions conferences to ensure widespread awareness and promotion of the program. For instance, project leaders will present at the Special Care Dentistry Association's Annual Meeting on Special Care Dentistry.

ⁱ Arizona Maternal Child Health Needs Assessment 2010. Page 65.

ⁱⁱ Commission on Dental Accreditation. Accreditation standards for dental education programs. Chicago: American Dental Association, July 30, 2004.

ⁱⁱⁱ 2011 Report: Oral Healthcare for Adults with Developmental Disabilities in Arizona. Arizona Developmental Planning Council. Page 91.

