

Oral Health in School Based Health Centers: Contributing Factors to Success

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Purpose

To determine the facilitating forces and barriers to providing comprehensive oral health in School Based Health Centers (SBHCs).

Background

- Dental problems are the most commonly cited unmet need among children.
- Tooth decay is one of the most common diseases of childhood .
- Children miss school because of tooth decay.
- BPHC estimates as many as 9,228 dentists or other practitioners are needed to serve the 3,329 designated shortage areas.
- Only 1 in 5 children receives EPSDT screening and treatment.
- Only 8.2% of SBHCs provide comprehensive dental care.
- Only 13% of SBHCs have a dental provider.

Methods

Design: Qualitative Formative Research, Purposive Sample

Setting/Participants: Data from the Census was used to identify states with oral health services. State association executive directors were asked to identify key informants in their states.

Procedure: Telephone interviews lasting 45 minutes were conducted.

Analysis: Constant comparative method used to look for recurring themes.

Limitations: Data are from a limited number of respondents. Only key informants with successful programs were interviewed.

Conclusions and Implications

Factors that affect an SBHC's ability to deliver oral health services include, staffing policy issues, unstable funding and management

Recommendations:

State policies regarding scope of practice of hygienist should be expanded to be more favorable towards hygienist providing comprehensive care in non traditional settings.

SBHCs also need to be able to find stable sources of revenue. Creative arrangements need to be made to maximize the use of volunteer dentists and mobile units.

Implications:

NASBHC will explore advocacy. NASBHC will need to make strategic alliances with other organizations that have a similar oral health policy agenda.

Results



Common Barriers

- Hiring qualified hygienists
- Maintaining users per day
- Transportation
- Space in schools
- Funding
- Finding a supervising dentist

Hygienist Supervision Requirements

Physical Presence of Dentist Required

Physical presence not required; states may require cooperative arrangement

Physical presence in private dental office but may require cooperative arrangements in other settings

Physical presence of dentist required in private dental office but not in other settings

Restrictive

Favorable