

Central Appalachian Oral Health Summit

Summary of Takeaways

TREATING NON-TRAUMATIC DENTAL CONDITIONS IN THE ER PRODUCES HEAVY FINANCIAL BURDEN

Dr. Raj Khanna and colleagues at the Marshall University School of Medicine studied the costs incurred by patients coming to the ER for **non-traumatic dental conditions** between 2010 & 2016. Some takeaways include:

ER Patient Costs from a Single Provider



ER Patient Costs from All Providers



Patients are in a cycle of using the ER for dental care

Uninsured patients
4x more likely

Medicaid patients
2x more likely

ORAL HEALTH IMPROVEMENT IN CENTRAL APPALACHIA REQUIRES COLLABORATION & LONG-TERM INVESTMENT

Oral health experts from around Central Appalachia identified major needs for improving oral health. All of it will require collaboration and long-term, significant investment.

Resources

Use community health workers as an effective, low-cost way to identify patient needs and link to appropriate care.

Integrate Electronic Health Records with dental records into a Health Information Exchange.

Data

Track and aggregate standardized county-level oral health data.

Highlight a study on the ROI of including an adult dental benefit in Medicaid to identify potential costs and savings.

Messaging

Humanize the message advocating for oral health care.

Highlight the ROI of preventative oral health interventions of frequent ER users.

Oral health is overall health!

FUNDERS CAN CHOOSE A RANGE OF ACTIONS TO IMPROVE ORAL HEALTH OUTCOMES

- Be realistic about startup costs for dentistry
- Include an oral health component in grants whose focus may not be oral health
 - Include toothbrushes in backpack feeding programs
 - If you fund a youth group or after-school program, invite a dental hygienist to show kids how to brush their teeth
- Fund Communications efforts related to oral health
- Fund policy work that supports better oral health outcomes
- Support dental providers to alleviate repayment shortages
- Convene funders, oral health workers, and other experts to collaborate and bring more attention to oral health
- Use your foundation's influence to advocate the importance of oral health to legislators
- Leverage your funding with other funders



The Health Working Group of the Appalachia Funders Network develops and supports strategies to address systemic issues that undermine a culture of health in Appalachia. The Oral Health Committee planned and sponsored the 2018 Oral Health Summit.