

Rite Smiles

Dental Care for Kids



Something to Smile About

Rite Smiles



Dental Care for Kids

Rhode Island's New Medicaid Dental Program

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Rhode Island Oral Health Access Project: Background

- The Special Senate Commission on Oral Health made specific recommendations on strategies to improve access to dental services in Rhode Island
- Grant funds from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, through the Center for Health Care Strategies, supported the Rhode Island Oral Health Access Project with the planning, design and implementation of the RIte Smiles program.
- Program Goal: to improve access to dental care for children enrolled in Rhode Island Medicaid

The Oral Health Access Project

So Much To Do!

- Partnered with Rhode Island Foundation and Rhode Island KIDS Count to get the work done – divide and conquer:
 - Foundation: awarded capacity building grants
 - KIDS Count: engaged community
 - Medicaid (CCFH): transitioned Medicaid from a payor to a purchaser of children’s oral health services.
- Awarded performance-based grants for 15 projects. These were key building blocks to increase access to dental care for RI’s most vulnerable populations. See *Closing the Gap* report at www.rikidscount.org
- Developed effective financing structures by implementing a new dental benefits delivery system for RI’s youngest children on Medicaid



Dental Benefits Manager Program Development

- Challenge: remain budget-neutral
- Value-based purchasing with an experienced Medicaid dental managed care organization
- Begin with the youngest children (birth-6 years) and “age” them into the program
- Emphasis on **prevention and primary care** to avoid costly dental procedures long-term
- 1915 (b) Federal Waiver



Rite Smiles



Program Descriptors

- Same dental benefits as Medical Assistance fee-for-service
- No cost to families (no co-pays or premiums)
- Mandatory for eligible children (born on or after May 1, 2000) to enroll in the dental plan



Funding Strategies

Achieved short-term savings by:

- Changing RI Medicaid orthodontia criteria
 - Used nationally recognized orthodontia case review criteria/index
 - Resulted in adequate savings to improve provider rates

Long-Term Savings will be achieved by:

- Getting children into a dentist earlier for regular care
- Ongoing education and prevention to decrease the incidence of dental caries and more serious dental conditions



The Rite Smiles Dental Plan

- Contracted with *UnitedHealthcare Dental*
- A statewide network of participating dentists to choose from
- Claims processing, customer service & provider relations
- Coordination of transportation & interpreter services, if needed
- Unique education component for enrollees and dental providers - *This is critical*



Requisite Activities

Parent Outreach

- Parents of non-utilizing RItE Smiles eligible children are being contacted

Provider Outreach

- A pediatric dentistry mini-residency program will be offered to RItE Smiles practices through a collaborative effort



Results to Date

- Over 32,000 children are enrolled
- DHS now has an accountable entity to monitor children's access to care
- Participating dental providers went from approximately 27 (over \$1,000/yr.) to approximately 139 (& growing) in 65 locations
- Reimbursement rates increased



Program Monitoring

- Established baseline oral health program indicators of unmet need – view at: www.ritecareresearch.org
- After program implementation, annual measurement will take place—
 - Year 1 Establish process and outcome measures
 - Year 2 Implement a performance improvement program and financial incentives for specified measures



Keys to Success

1. Client based approach
2. Implemented Rite Smiles without additional money in a time of fiscal austerity
3. Very strong community collaborations and partnerships
4. Dental Provider Community Support
5. Dental Society and Legislative Support



For more information about RItE Smiles please
visit our website at:

www.dhs.ri.gov

And click on *RItE Smiles -Dental Care for Kids*