Connecticut’s Home By One Program Receives National Recognition for its Work to Improve Infant Oral Health

During the 2006-2007 school year, Connecticut conducted a survey of >600 students enrolled in Head Start Programs throughout the state. Among this group: 30% had experienced dental decay, 20% had untreated decay, 14% had rampant decay, and 18% were currently in need of care. In order to reduce the burden of oral disease in Connecticut’s children, the Department of Public Health, Office of Oral Health developed an initiative, Home By One, funded by a 4-yr HRSA Targeted MCH Oral Health Service Systems grant.

The Home By One program seeks to establish a dental home for all CT children by age one, particularly those at high risk, through an integrated partnership connecting parents, WIC nutritionists, pediatricians, dentists, and advocates. Home By One has successfully implemented oral health education train-the-trainer programs for WIC staff, which in turn educate WIC parents.

In addition, WIC parents receive advocacy training from CT’s Oral Health Initiative, so they can partner to advocate for oral health issues in CT. Pediatricians have been trained in fluoride varnish application; caries risk assessment, and guidelines for dental referral. CT pediatric and general Dentists have been trained in the appropriate technique for age one dental visits, as well as caries risk assessment and fluoride varnish application. In addition to educational and training efforts, Home By One has established partnerships between pediatric practices, dental homes, WIC offices, and HUSKY (SCHIP) case managers to increase the number of providers accepting HUSKY, to provide a safety net referral system to ensure that consistent messages are delivered to parents across a variety of existing contact opportunities, and to decrease the number of missed appointments.

Connecticut’s Home By One program received recognition, in February 2010, added to Innovation Station as an Emerging Best Practice by the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs (AMCHP)(available at http://www.amchp.org/AboutAMCHP/BestPractices/InnovationStation/Pages/default.aspx). In addition, Home By One coordinator, Tracey Andrews presented the Home By One model as a model of effective partnerships at AMCHP’s 2010 annual meeting in Baltimore, Maryland.

The Home By One program to date has trained 935 medical professionals in Fluoride Varnish application, 262 of whom have received full billing credentials. In addition, 175 WIC professionals, and 190 Parents/Caregivers have received training in Oral Health and Advocacy. The Home By One program has also established 35 dental homes to provide comprehensive dental care to Connecticut’s high-risk children beginning at age one.

More information and program resources are available on the web at: http://www.ct.gov/dph/homebyone

Tracey Andrews, RDH, BS Program Coordinator Home By One program
Connecticut Department of Public Health- Office of Oral Health
Tracey.Andrews@ct.gov
Telephone (860) 509-8146 Fax (860) 509-7863
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