

To: Rowan County Board of Commissioners

From: Nina Oliver, Public Health Director
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Date: September 9, 2016

Subject: Oral Health Grants

Situation

The Rowan County Health Department (RCHD) is applying for grants to fund start up cost for oral health program in the Smile Center. The Smile Center is looking to fund three new initiatives:

The first initiative is to provide pregnant women who are in enrolled at the RCHD prenatal program, access to important dental services. Oral health is critical to overall health. Many changes that occur in pregnancy, can affect oral health. Diseases from bacteria in the mouth that develop during pregnancy can reach the fetus and contribute to negative pregnancy outcomes. A study from the Journal of Dental Education estimated that more than 18% of pre-term, low-birthrate births were a result of oral infections. Currently, 9.6% of Rowan County births are low birth-weight compared to 9.1% in North Carolina. Studies have also shown significant access to dental care disparities between minority pregnant woman and non-Hispanic white pregnant women. Black and Hispanic pregnant women were significantly less likely to receive dental care while pregnant. There is currently one other dental office in the county that accepts new patients who are pregnant. Lastly, a portion of pregnant women do not have dental benefits, or they do not know that their health coverage will pay for dental services so they do not use it. While Medicaid will cover dental services in pregnant women, many do not use it, and they lose it after they give birth. By providing dental care to women who are pregnant, the Smile Center would increase the number of Rowan County women who receive prenatal dental care which can help to improve the birth outcomes in the county. We will also become the dental home for our prenatal patient's infants.

The second initiative is to provide direct oral health care to students in the Rowan-Salisbury school system. We have previously partnered with the school system on several occasions. The school system transported the students to the Smile Center. However, this was short lived because the transportation was costly and children missed a large portion of their school day. Instead, we will now go to the schools. We will do this by purchasing mobile dental equipment which would allow us to set up a "mobile dental clinic" in the schools. Children will not miss a large portion of their day, its low to no cost to the school system, and children will feel more comfortable because the dental work will take place in an environment they are already familiar with. Recent statistics show that 21% of Rowan County kindergarteners have untreated dental decay while the state only has 13%. The elementary schools with the highest untreated dental decay are: Isenburg Elementary 36%; Bostian Elementary 33%; North Rowan Elementary 30%; Hanford-Dole Elementary 29%; and Millbridge Elementary 28%. Only 50.5% of Rowan County's Medicaid-enrolled children have received any dental services during the last 12 months compared to 53.4% for the state. We will contract with Dr. Luis Crespo to go into the schools. Dr. Crespo has been a contract employee with the Rowan County Smile Center for 10 years

and offers quality and specialized services to children of Rowan County. Our initial contract with Dr. Crespo would be a length of 5-8 years. After 5 years the approximate depreciation value of the equipment would be zero due to wear and tear. After five years of service, Dr. Crespo will retain the equipment. By creating this school based program, the profits that we generate will allow us to buy new equipment or seek out a new grant in a 3-5 year period. We have the support from the Rowan Salisbury School system and from Smart Start Rowan to implement this program. A North Carolina survey showed that children with poor oral health were nearly three times more likely to miss school due to dental pain. By implementing a school based program, we will provide our Rowan County children direct dental care, which will reduce lack of dental care access and prevent them from missing school due to oral pain.

The third initiative will promote healthy oral health habits in school age children. RCHD will do this by promoting health education and services to students and parents. Materials will include information for the oral healthcare of children ages 0-18. We will also purchase promotional materials through Rowan-Salisbury schools to be placed at athletic events, band competitions, school websites and many other areas. The purchase of these materials will support our goal to educate the community, and increase the number of children who have the opportunity to receive quality care at the Smile Center. We hope to continue building our relationship with the community and Rowan Salisbury Schools.

Background Information

Rowan County Health Department's Smile Center is one of two pediatric dental clinics in Rowan County. The Smile Center is the main safety-net provider for the county. We provide compassionate and quality dental care to children 17 and under. We also help families take steps to prevent their children from suffering future dental problems. We continually provide valuable care for populations that are Medicaid recipients, low-income, uninsured, and vulnerable.

Assessment

RCHD is applying for five (5) dental focused grants to fund our three new initiatives:

Delta Dental Smiles for Kids Grant Program (due September 30th): The maximum amount we can seek from this program is \$5000. We will use this grant to help cover uninsured prenatal patients who need dental services. We are seeking \$5,000 of funding for 2017.

Alliance for a Cavity-Free Future (due October 1st): The total amount this grant will award is \$50,000 to all grant awardees. We are seeking this grant to pay for outreach and oral health education focusing on children and women who are pregnant. We will be seeking \$5,000 in funding from this grant.

Salisbury Community Foundation (due September 30th) awards a maximum amount of \$10,000. We will use this grant to purchase educational materials, permissions slips, screening report forms, and advertisements at school events and school resources. We will be seeking \$8,000 in funding for this grant.

Oral Health 2020 (accepted on going basis): The maximum limit is not available. We will use this grant to purchase mobile dental equipment, transportation for new equipment, and training for new equipment. This will cover start up cost to provide direct oral health care to students at the schools. We will be seeking \$50,000 in funding from this grant.

Cannon Charitable Interests (due September 28th): The maximum limit is not available. We will use this grant towards the purchase of mobile dental equipment, transportation for new equipment, and training for new equipment. We will be seeking \$170,000 in funding from this grant.

Recommendation

The Rowan County Health Department respectfully recommends that the Rowan County Board of Commissioners support and approve this opportunity for the Rowan County Health Department to apply for the Delta Dental Smiles for Kids Grant, Alliance for a Healthy Future Grant, Salisbury Community Foundation Grant, Oral Health 2020 Grant, and Cannon Charitable Interests Grant.