

Waiver Project Proposal: Healthy Mouths, Healthy Mothers, Health Babies

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Project Title	<p><i>Healthy Mouths, Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies: Improving the Oral Health of Pregnant Women in Thurston County</i></p>
Rationale for the Project	
<p>A woman’s oral health can impact both her pregnancy and her baby. During pregnancy, an infection in the mouth can spread to the body, leading to pregnancy complications. Poor oral health during pregnancy may be associated with preeclampsia and premature birth. A mother’s poor oral health can adversely affect her baby as well. A woman with active tooth decay can pass cavity-causing germs to her baby after birth, greatly increasing the chances that her baby will develop cavities in the first two years of life and have poor oral health for a lifetime.</p> <p>The good news? Tooth decay is almost 100% preventable and pregnant women with active tooth decay can avoid pregnancy complications or putting their babies at risk of getting cavities early in life by getting cavities treated. The bad news? Many women fear dental treatment and x-rays will harm their unborn babies and therefore, are reluctant to have their cavities treated. Additionally, many pregnant women have difficulty accessing dental care because many dentists received little or no training in dental school related to managing and treating their pregnant patients. Some dentists are also wary of accepting Medicaid insured adult patients.</p> <p>Evidence demonstrates that when pregnant women access dental care and receive necessary treatment, they have healthier pregnancies and better birth outcomes, and their babies have a far greater chance of being cavity-free by age two. To support healthy mothers and healthy babies, Washington Dental Service Foundation (WDSF) and CHOICE Regional Health Network (CHOICE) are proposing to work together to incorporate pregnant women into CHOICE’s Access to Baby and Child Dentistry (ABCD) Program. CHOICE’s ABCD Program is part of an evidence-based statewide ABCD Program in which coordinators in local communities connect Medicaid insured children 0 through age 5 with dentists who have been trained to serve young children in their local communities. Since its inception in 1995, the ABCD Program has launched and sustained programs serving all of Washington’s 39 counties and has increased utilization of dental services by young children dramatically – from 13% when the program was launched to over 50% today. In fact, Washington state leads the nation in the number of Medicaid insured young children accessing dental care; this percentage exceeds utilization for commercially insured children. The Healthy Mouths, Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies project aims to do the same for pregnant women.</p> <p>The Healthy Mouths, Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies project meets the following federal objectives for Medicaid:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase access to, stabilize, and strengthen provider networks available to serve Medicaid and low-income populations. Healthy Mouths, Healthy Pregnancies, Healthy Babies project staff will recruit dentists – both those participating in the ABCD Program and others – to serve Medicaid-insured pregnant women. Providers will be incentivized to participate by receiving free Continuing Dental Education developed by the University of Washington School of Dentistry and by working with coordinators to identify the number of Medicaid-insured pregnant patients they are willing to accept into their practices. Project coordinators will develop and manage referral lists and connect pregnant patients to dentists. Patients will be guaranteed access to care, and providers will not be overwhelmed with requests for appointments. Additionally, prenatal medical providers will be engaged and trained through free CME to address oral health during prenatal visits and to refer patients to dental care. • Improve health outcomes for Medicaid and low-income populations. By receiving dental care and necessary treatment, Medicaid-insured pregnant women will be more likely to experience better oral health, healthier 	

pregnancies, and better birth outcomes. Their babies will be more likely to experience better oral – and overall – health.

- **Increase the efficiency and quality of care for Medicaid and other low-income populations through initiatives to transform service delivery networks.** The Healthy Mouths, Healthy Pregnancies, Healthy Babies project will develop and support the integration of medical and dental systems (referral networks, consultation, and information sharing) to better support pregnant women’s oral and overall health.

Project Description

Which Medicaid Transformation Goals¹ supported by this project/intervention:

- X Reduce avoidable use of intensive services
- X Improve population health, focused on prevention
- Accelerate transition to value-based payment
- X Ensure Medicaid per-capita growth is below national trends

Transformation Project Domain(s) involved:

- X Health Systems Capacity Building
- X Care Delivery Redesign
- X Population Health Improvement – prevention activities

The goal: The goal of the Healthy Mouths, Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies project is to dramatically increase the number of Medicaid-insured pregnant women in Thurston County who are connected with dental care and receive necessary treatment and as a result, do not transmit cavity-causing bacteria to their babies. The result? Healthier pregnancies and healthier babies. Special attention will be paid to pregnant populations that experience oral health disparities, including Native American and Latino women.

The Issue:

- Approximately 40% of pregnant women have either tooth decay, gum disease or both;
- In 2012, nearly 50% (42,155) of children in Washington were born to mothers insured by Medicaid – in Thurston County, 40% (1,221) were born to mothers insured by Medicaid;
- In 2014, only 26% of women (pregnant and not pregnant) received a dental service in Washington; and
- Oral health disparities are profound; non-Hispanic Blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians and Alaska Natives in all age groups, generally have the poorest oral health of any racial and ethnic group.

Key Interventions:

- Leverage ABCD coordinators and partners to outreach to Medicaid-insured pregnant women in Thurston County and provide care coordination, case management, and connections to dental care in their local communities;
- Develop and manage a dentist referral network that includes providers to serve Medicaid insured pregnant patients;
- Ensure dentists have the information and training they need to manage and treat pregnant patients - provide prenatal continuing dental education and other training as needed;
- Recruit medical systems/practices that serve pregnant women to include oral health as part of prenatal care and refer patients to dental care – provide prenatal continuing medical education and other trainings as needed;
- Identify and engage with other community partners that serve pregnant women – including Community Health Workers, Latino, Native American and other groups - to provide education, outreach, and referrals

Outcomes:

1. Connect pregnant women with dental care and ensure they receive necessary treatment before their babies are born;
2. Incorporate pregnant women into ABCD programs into other counties/regions of WA state. The ABCD program includes 30 local programs serving all of WA's 39 counties; and
3. If feasible, incorporate patients with diabetes.

Links to Complementary Transformation Initiatives:

- Washington Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics – Transforming Pediatric Practices Initiative – patient centered medical home training for pediatric primary care teams.
- Washington's ABCD Program

Potential Partners, Systems, and Organizations:

- **Managed Care Organizations: Molina has indicated support for this project.**
- **Whatcom Alliance for Health Advancement (WAHA) has indicated support for this project**
- Thurston/Mason Dental Society
- Health Care Systems
- Home Visiting Programs
- Thurston County WIC Programs
- Community Health Workers
- Washington's ABCD Public Private Partners: Washington Health Care Authority; Washington Department of Health; University of Washington School of Dentistry; Washington State Dental Association
- CIELO
- Latino Community Fund of WA
- Hispanic Roundtable (Olympia)
- Lacey Moms Meetup
- Nisqually and Chehalis Tribes

Core Investment Components

Cost of Developing and Implementing the Healthy Mouths, Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Project in Thurston County: \$22,000

- Coordinator (.2 FTE including 26% benefits): \$15,000
- Training and Technical Assistance (medical and dental CDE and technical support): \$5,000
- Outreach (Advertising, Materials, Other): \$2,000

Cost of Implementing Project Statewide: \$22,000 (local program costs, based on Thurston County project) x 30 programs = \$660,000. Costs are estimates and based on average FTEs, training, technical assistance, and outreach costs. Washington Dental Service Foundation can support public/private partnerships in this work, and will explore funding needs with partners as appropriate.

Cost Per Person Served Annually: \$26.09

Implementation Timeline: Healthy Mouths, Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies could be fully implemented in Thurston County in a year; the project could be embedded in ABCD Programs statewide in 3 years.

People Served in Thurston County: Approximately 904 pregnant women in Thurston County and 25,293 statewide (based on numbers of children born to women insured by Medicaid in 2012).

ROI: For pregnant women, dental care can reduce costs by \$2,433 per person, per year for pregnancy complications (Jeffcoat MK, Jeffcoat RL, Gladowski PA, Bramson JB, Blum JJ. Impact of periodontal therapy on general health evidence from insurance data for five systemic conditions. Am J Prev Med. 2014;47(2):166–174).

Annually, the project could save up to \$4,923,030 in costs associated with pregnancy complications (ROI based on % of Medicaid-insured women in WA not receiving a dental service with tooth decay and/or gum disease (40% of 25,293) and pregnancy complications (20%) multiplied by \$2,433).

Project Metrics

- Number of pregnant women accessing dental care
- Number of dentists accepting Medicaid insured pregnant women
- Number of medical systems/practices integrating oral health into prenatal care
- Reduction in cavities for babies born to Medicaid insured women