Transforming Oral Health for Families

Purpose

HealthEfficient’s “Transforming Oral Health for Families” project is part of HRSA’s Bureau of Maternal and Child Health’s efforts to establish a Network for Oral Health Integration (NOHI), a national program established to improve oral health care for low-income children and other vulnerable populations served by health care programs and providers. The 2000 Surgeon General’s report, *Oral Health in America*, referred to oral health as a “silent epidemic” of dental and oral diseases that burdens children and adults throughout the United States. Poor oral health has a negative influence on children’s speech, physical wellness, and social development. The prevalence of poor oral health is compounded by significant inequities in oral health care based on income level. Children from higher-income groups are twice as likely to have a dental visit each year as children from lower-income groups.

In September 2019, HealthEfficient began the TOHF project to establish, build, and sustain its Network for Oral Health Integration on the East Coast of the US. Over the next 5 years, the project will develop a family-centered and team-based model of integrating oral health with primary care. The target population for the project is children 0-40 months, their parents/caregivers, and pregnant women. To integrate oral health care for this population, HealthEfficient and its project partners will support up to 30 community health centers in New York, Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, DC.

Goals

1. Increase oral health knowledges and skills for providers serving the target populations.
2. Increase health center capacity for oral health case management and interprofessional collaboration to better address oral health risks and needs.
3. Increase the proportion of children in the target population who have access to preventive oral health services, and who have had no caries by age 3.

Methods

To achieve the project goals, HealthEfficient has engaged several project partners to develop and customize models of integration with each health center; to develop assessments and learning materials for health center staff and families/caregivers; and to survey the oral health environment in each region where the project occurs. We are also using the “Breakthrough Learning Collaborative” to enable knowledge sharing, peer collaboration, and improvements at each health center during “activity periods.”
model groups the participating health centers into 3 cohorts of 10 health centers each, with a period of high intensity for each cohort during its corresponding phase:

- **Phase 1:** March 2020 – August 2021
- **Phase 2:** September 2021 – February 2023
- **Phase 3:** March 2023 – August 2024

Each health center will form a multi-disciplinary project team to work with HealthEfficient to plan, implement, and evaluate the integration of oral health services. And each participating health center will receive funding from HealthEfficient to cover staff time and other costs associated with the project.

**More about HealthEfficient**

HealthEfficient is a not-for-profit, mission-driven, membership organization based in New York. We are HRSA-designated as a Health Center Controlled Network supporting 35+ member community health centers nationwide.

Our mission is to help community health centers and other healthcare providers improve their clinical and operational performance by using health information technology, collaborative efforts, and targeted support to deliver efficient, data-driven, evidence-based care to vulnerable populations.

**Contact the Project Director**

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