Collaborations to Increase Access to Dental Care for the Homeless: Partnerships to Develop Oral Health Services through Community-Based Education

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Role and Mission

“In our surrounding neighborhood, and around the globe, USC provides public leadership and public service in such diverse fields as healthcare, economic development, social welfare, scientific research, public policy....”
California
Area: 163,700 square miles
Length: 770 miles
Population: 38,000,000+
Los Angeles County

- 13+ million people
- 4,000+ square miles
- 88 cities
- 1/5 are non-citizens
- 1/4 are foreign-born
- 300,000 population increase per year
- 1/3 of all births in the state
- 2nd largest school district in the nation
USC School of Dentistry

Community Objectives

- “Design and implement clinical outreach programs to reduce oral health disparities in southern California”

- “Incorporate student externships through private and community-based clinical experiences, research environments, and culturally diverse health care organizations”
Role of Health Profession Schools in the Community

- Service delivery at external training sites – Clinical Proficiency
- Care to underserved and multiethnic populations – Cultural Competency
- Service-Learning, civic engagement and ethics – Community service
Pipeline, Profession & Practice: Community-Based Dental Education

National & California Project Goals

• Increase services provided to vulnerable populations through dental school community-based collaborations

• Train graduates with the knowledge and communication skills they need to treat ethnically diverse patients

• Increase student body diversity in the dental school

• Graduate more dentists who choose to practice in communities in need
Developing Clinical and Cultural Competency through Community Service-Learning
Children's Dental Center
USC Mobile Clinic
USC-QueensCare School Clinics
USC Dental Clinic at Union Rescue Mission
MCA Clinic at LAC-USC Medical Center
USC School Clinics and Solis Dental Arts Center
Community WIC Programs
Children’s Dental Center
Children’s Hospital of LA
USC Dental Clinic at JWCH/Leavey Center
VA Health Systems, Long Beach
Hollenbeck Home

USC Dental School: Lifeline of Community Educational Experiences
Homelessness in Los Angeles

- Los Angeles County has an estimated 48,000 people who are homeless on any given night (Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, 2009).

- City of LA has over 25,000 homeless individuals, and Skid Row, a 52-block area just east of downtown LA, has an estimated 5,000 homeless men, women and children at any given time.

- This is the largest “community” in the U.S. of indigent, transient, and low-income residents.

- Families, typically headed by single mothers, are growing in number of LA’s homeless population, as a result of the economic downturn, with about 15% being under the age of 18.

- The average age of homeless adults is now less than 40 years.
Homeless in Los Angeles
Campus-Community Partnership Building

by USC to Serve the Homeless

→ grant from Health Prof. Schools In Service to the Nation
→ co-founder of Dental Coalition for Needy Children
→ participate in Skid Row Health Fairs
→ partner in LA County Health-Faith Project
→ collaborate with LA Homeless Services Authority
→ co-founder of LAC Coalition of Med. Mobile Units
→ USCSD & Union Rescue Mission planning, late 1990s
→ USC-URM Dental Clinic opened at URM in 2000
→ USC-URM Dental Clinic expanded in 2006
→ USCSD & JWCH & LAC DHS planning 2007-09
→ USC-JWCH /Leavey Center opening winter 2009
USC Dental Clinic at UNION RESCUE MISSION
History
Joint effort between the USC School of Dentistry (USC) & the Union Rescue Mission (URM), and in cooperation with UCLA Health Center at URM, to open a 6-chair dental clinic in 2000 for individuals in L.A.’s Skid Row, where no comprehensive dental services existed – 2 more chairs added in 2006

Goals
1- Improve oral health status of people who are homeless
2- Increase the number of homeless adults and children accessing regular dental care
3- Enhance the experience of dental/dental hygiene students providing care to the homeless
USC-URM Dental Clinic
(6 chair clinic in 2000 + 2 Added in 2006)
Our patients are referred for care by over 30 area agencies. We coordinate care with the UCLA medical clinic next door at URM, and also Pepperdine University mental health and legal services at URM, as well as other Skid Row clinics and agencies.

The USC-URM Clinic serves as “dental home” for our patients, since little care exists for the homeless.
Administration & Evaluation

Staffing

- 3 USCSD faculty members (1.5 FTE) direct clinic
- 5-7 USC DDS & DH students provide care on 7 week rotations - comprehensive & emergency treatment (and endo residents twice monthly)
- 3 dental assistants and 1 office coordinator round out the team (three bilingual)
- 6+ DDS volunteers serve as part-time faculty

Evaluation

The program’s productivity is assessed from data:
- numbers of homeless individuals receiving care, services rendered & patient feedback
- number of students rotating, student productivity & faculty and student evaluations of the experience
Student Productivity

Faculty/Student Staffing & Clinic Productivity

- Ratio: 1 faculty usually supervises 3-4 pre-doctoral students
- 7-8 students staff the 8 dental chair clinic (7 week rotations) – care includes comprehensive care including preventive, restorative and prosthetic treatment & emergency care
- 1 chair for faculty to treat walk-in emergency patients (4+ day)
- Each student will generally treat 4 patients per day (DAs are for X-rays, sterilization, lab assistance—rarely chair-side assist)
- Clinic encounters average 32+ patients per day [note: by comparison, the average FQHC dentist produces 16+ patient encounters daily]
- On average each patient requires 5 appointments for treatment completion, which will entail almost 17 total procedures
USC-URM Patient Encounters
Clinical services include:

- Restorations (40%)
- Extractions (25%)
- Partial and complete dentures (25%)
- Root canals (10%)

10,800+ homeless individuals have received care in the past decade

All non-emergency patients receive:
- Comprehensive exam
- Radiographs
- Prophylaxis
- Oral hygiene instructions

1,400+ DDS and DH students and residents have provided care and received training since opening in 2000
Present USC+URM Clinic Funding

- NEVHC (HRSA): 46.5%
- California Wellness: 13.7%
- Parsons: 12.8%
- Unihealth: 12.8%
- Others: 6.1%
USC Dental Clinic at URM

Improving patients’ lives

Influencing students’ beliefs

“the dental clinic is our best mental health clinic”  CEO, URM
Campus-Community Collaborations: Homeless Partnerships and Networks

- HCH-federally funded clinic network
- Skid Row HealthCare Initiative
- CCCLAC-clinic association
- LACDHS-UHHP county taskforce
- Shelter Partnership-donations
- C4CH-local programs
- LAOHF- dental societies/schools
- Children’s Oral Health Project
- LACCMMU-mobile health coalition
Continued Unmet Dental Needs in Skid Row

• The Skid Row Healthcare Survey (2005): 61% of street respondents had not received dental care in the past 12 months despite problems.

• USC—“Dental HPSA for the Low-Income of Central Los Angeles” (2007), which designated the highest priority HPSA score in the state (24 of 25).

• USC/Keck School of Medicine – “The Health Status & Access to Care for Homeless in Central Los Angeles,” which proposed a 20- to 30-chair dental clinic to address the immense oral health needs.

• Survey conducted of our USC-URM adult homeless patients, found that 97% did not have dental insurance (including DentiCal). 52% of patients had sought dental care in the past year but could not get any treatment.

USC-JWCH Dental Clinic at Center for Community Health

Background

Collaboration and planning during 2007-09 between USC Ostrow School of Dentistry, JWCH Institute (FQHC), Weingart Center non-profit agency), with LA County Departments of Public Health and Mental Health, to open a dental clinic, within a multi-disciplinary health center for indigent patients in L.A.’s inner-city area, focusing Skid Row.
Goals
1. Improve the health and wellness of under-served individuals in central LA
2. Increase the number of indigent individuals accessing health care in an integrated services setting
3. Expand dental & dental hygiene students’ experience in an inter-professional rotation
Initial Dental Clinic Operations—2009

JWCH solicited capital funding from government and foundations for site renovation and equipment—

USCSD provided technical assistance and clinic design expertise (especially to re-design for 7 operatories), and obtained donations and discounted purchase prices for chairs, equipment and instruments.
USC-JWCH Dental Clinic

7 Chair Clinic (vs. 4 chair original plan)
USC-JWCH Dental Clinic

Medical & Pharmacy (JWCH), Mental Counseling & Public Health (LAC) Clinics opened in September 2009
Dental operations were to be contracted through USCSD by JWCH, from state Medicaid (DentiCal)/FQHC reimbursements – a plan unrealized due to California DentiCal cuts for adults in July 2009

Due to very limited start-up funding, we opened the dental clinic 1 day per week (December 2009), borrowing USC and JWCH staff and supplies; leveraging dental school faculty, residents, and students (DDS/DH); and recruiting volunteer dentists. In late 2011 we expanded to 2 days each week. Recent LAC funding (May 2012) through a Ryan-White grant has supported us to expand to operations 4 days every week.
USC-JWCH Dental Clinic in Center for Community Health
USC JWCH Patient Encounters
USC-JWCH Dental Clinic

Student Productivity - 4 Days/Week

Faculty/Student Staffing & Clinic Productivity: 7 chairs/4 days

- Ratio: 1 faculty can supervise up to 4-5 pre-doctoral students
- 4-5 DDS students staff 4-5 of the 7 dental chair clinic - care emphasizes preventive, restorative & emergency procedures (dentures starting)
- 3 DH staff on one day per week the other 3 chairs
- 1 chair is used for faculty examining new patients & treating walk-in emergency patients
- Students treat 4 patients per day (DAs are for X-rays, sterilization, lab assistance—not as chair-side auxiliaries)
- Clinic encounters average 28+ patients per day [by comparison, the average FQHC dentist produces 16+ patient encounters daily]
Hired, Not Homeless
Dental care + dentures = better health + enhanced smile + improved self-esteem = increased employability

“They (the mission) could give me a new haircut, a new suit and resume, but without my new smile, I didn’t feel like going to a job interview”
- URM patient

“Since coming to URM, I have had teeth replaced... My smile is now complete. Truly, this has been a boost to my self-esteem and appearance.”
- URM patient

“Missing teeth are both a source of pain and shame for the homeless. Their self-image is crushed. There’s no question the clinic’s been extremely helpful in the recovery phase.” “The dental clinic is our best ‘mental health’ service.”
- URM Administrator
Clinic Funding & Sustainability

Hospitals & Conversion Foundations

Community Hospitals (not-for-profit)

Community Benefit Programs:
Catholic Healthcare West
Kaiser-Permanente

Conversion Foundations from not-for-profit status to for-profit, private (requirements for charitable foundation):
Queen of Angels Hospital → QueensCare
Health Net → California Wellness Foundation
Foundations

Private Foundations
- National (eg: Johnson; Kellogg; Aetna)
- Regional (eg: UniHealth)
- Local (eg: Change A Life)

Family foundations
- Amado
- Weingart
- Parsons
- Irvine
Corporate Contributions

Dental/Medical
- ADEC
- Schein
- Patterson
- Colgate
- Proctor and Gamble
- Johnson & Johnson

General
- National - eg, UnoCal; McDonalds
- Regional - eg, Sempra; Bank of America
Government

Federal-
- HRSA
- BPHC: Health Care for the Homeless
- ARRA/"Stimulus"

County-
- Ryan-White
Student Scholarships & Dentist Loan Repayment

Programs in California

For practice in urban designated underserved areas

• National Health Service Corps (NHSC)
• California Office of Statewide Health Planning (OSHPD)
• Calif. Dental Assoc. Foundation
• Dental Health Foundation
• Delta Dental Foundation
Dental Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) & National Health Service Corps (NHSC)

- **Rational Service Area**
  Central Los Angeles, MSSA 78.2 mmm (Downtown/Florence)
- **Homeless/Low Income Population in Target Area**
  66,414 calculated from data compiled from census and service agencies (2007 data)
- **Ratio of Population to FTE Dentists**
  41,509:1 (1.6 FTE Dentists at the only two community safety-net clinics - 2007 dentist survey data)
- **HPSA Re-Designation, March 2007 (first designated 2003)**
  HPSA Score: 24 (highest priority site in state)
- **National Health Service Corps (NHSC) benefits**
  Site Eligibility (Winter 2003)
  - *NHSC Scholar DDS match (July 2003)
  - *NHSC Loan Repayment DDS recipient (March 2006)
  - *New NHSC Loan Repayment DDS applicant (fall 2012)
  - *OSHPD Loan Repayment in 2009 & new applicant 2012
“Keep up the good work that is definitely needed for the people living down here on Skid Row...I am confident (with my new dentures/smile) of getting a job.”

Patient

“Since coming to URM, I have had teeth replaced and deep cleaning. My smile is now complete. Truly, this has been a boost to my self-esteem and appearance.”

Patient

“This opportunity has allowed me to enrich the well-being of people who are trying to piece their lives back together.”

Student

“I was afraid of the dentist -- what forced me to come was pain. But from the minute I went upstairs (to the clinic), I was treated with such care and respect that I stayed on.”

Patient
USC Dental School - Community Engagement and Collaboration

- Students & Problem Based Learning
- Community Service Clinical Rotations
- Values & Mission
Patients

Clinics

Students

Schools

Community

Medicaid

Funders

Policymakers