Background Information
Introduction

The Health Center Dental Dashboard User’s Guide is a companion to support the implementation and use of the Dental Dashboard, a set of 15 oral health measures for health centers to use as a part of their quality improvement efforts, to more effectively monitor and measure quality and drive performance within their dental programs.

The User’s Guide is divided into three sections.

The first section provides background information on quality improvement and the use of data and measures to guide program quality and effectiveness.

Section two describes the process used to develop the Dental Dashboard and how the measures can be used as a tool to guide action on program quality, productivity and costs.

Section three provides detailed information about each measure, highlighting specific data tracking and collection requirements, the numerators and denominators, clinical and operational considerations, and how each measure can be used to drive performance.

The Dental Dashboard attempts to balance:

» Feasibility with vision.

» Comparable standards with individually tailored measures.

» Synergy with national recommendations with real-life usability.
Quality Improvement and Oral Health

In 1990, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) defined health care quality as, “the degree to which health services for individuals and populations increase the likelihood of desired health outcomes and are consistent with current professional knowledge.” Since that time, there have been significant strides to drive quality across the healthcare system, but many of these efforts focus on general health and do not include oral health care.

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) requires all health centers to regularly measure and improve the quality of care within their department.

In addition to 15 clinical measures outlined specifically in HRSA’s requirements that must be tracked with Uniform Data System (UDS) data, all health centers are also required to select at least one oral health measure of their choice. For UDS 2015, HRSA added a measure about dental sealants, which is also included in this guide.

“In order to support the provision of high quality patient care, HRSA-funded health centers are expected to have ongoing quality improvement/assessment programs that include clinical services and quality management. To this end, the Health Center Program incorporates systems of quality assessment, quality improvement, and quality management that focus provider responsibilities on improving care processes and outcomes.”

National Oral Health Measures

According to the report, *Oral Health Quality Improvement in the Era of Accountability*, systems for measuring quality in oral health care have been described as being “in a relatively primitive state” with the measures used being little changed in the last three decades. While change can be slow, increased attention and interest on oral health metrics are beginning to emerge nationwide. The federal government and a variety of private sector organizations are engaged in oral health quality activities, such as the development of measures, guidelines and other data sources. Table 1 identifies many of the national organizations that are focusing on oral health quality activities. (More details available in Appendix A.)

Even with the increased focus on oral health quality and measurement, there is no national consensus on how to define quality in oral health care or on a set of oral health quality measures that will effectively support and drive quality improvement within health center oral health programs.

---

2 Executive Summary: Oral Health Quality Improvement in the Era of Accountability. Pacific Center for Special Care (December 2011).

Table 1. Selected National Organizations Addressing Oral Health Quality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Agency for Healthcare Research &amp; Quality (AHRQ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Quality Measures Clearinghouse (NQMC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>» EHR Incentive Programs, Meaningful Use Measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>» The Children’s Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009 (CHIPRA) Pediatric Quality Measures Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental Quality Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy People 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCQA’s Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Network for Oral Health Access (NNOHA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Oral Health Quality Improvement Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The National Quality Forum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dashboard Development: Background

In 2012, a small group of health centers approached Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation (DDCOF) and Arcora Foundation to request support in developing a set of oral health quality measures that could drive quality in their health center dental programs.

Given the foundations’ commitment to supporting health centers within their respective states, DDCOF and Arcora Foundation launched the High-Performing Health Centers Initiative. The goal was to create a strong and sustainable operations structure that supported high productivity and continuous improvement (including oral health) among providers to better manage patient care.

We are using eight characteristics of a quality oral health/dental program identified by the National Network for Oral Health Access (NNOHA), a recognized leader in providing technical assistance and resources to health centers nationwide.3

Two of these characteristics can be supported by the use of oral health quality measures:

1. Have a strong quality improvement program in place.
   - Participate in the health center’s quality management system, track process and outcome measures.
   - Continuously engage in risk management activities.

2. Have access to timely data that allows for rapid feedback and action on quality, productivity and costs.
   - Create an environment in which data are integrated to enhance care.
   - Providers receive regular reports from the business team or delegated person to assist in clinic management.
   - Health center staff routinely produce dashboards and track measures.

and NNOHA guided the Dental Dashboard development.

Using information gathered during the meetings, the planning team finalized and tested the draft Dental Dashboard over a four-month period in early 2014 with nine health centers in Colorado and Washington. The team has continued to meet to refine the measures and to create this guide and its companion reporting template.

---

Why Use a Dashboard?

Dashboards take their name from the dashboards in cars. Although there are hundreds of things happening under the hood, the driver really only needs to know a handful as they drive: How fast am I going? Do I have enough gas? Am I traveling in the right direction?

Just like an automobile, hundreds of processes occur in health centers daily. You could spend all your time reviewing every data source or process, but that wouldn’t necessarily get you where you want to go.

Dashboards allow you to quickly and easily get status updates for the important objectives of your organization. They create a basic framework to share volumes of information in a short amount of time. They are a snapshot and not an in-depth analysis. Regularly seeing the data for an organization makes it much easier to respond quickly to areas of concern, or to change courses of action.

Dashboards can be used to facilitate communication between departments, highlight successful strategies, to maintain momentum in QI activities and identify operational deficiencies. Dashboards can allow organizations to compare themselves to other organizations nationwide when national measures are used. It’s not just a report card; a dashboard should be a tool to instigate action, to become a more sustainable organization and to provide quality care to patients.

It’s possible to track both operational and clinical information through a dashboard. The team that developed these measures recognizes that not every organization will use every measure. Your organization should choose several that are important to you and your community. When in doubt, start small. Start with a few measures that relate to the mission or strategic plan of the organization and expand to other measures once the system is in place.

Successful dashboards should be:

» Simple.

» Used and updated regularly.

» Shared with the right people (leadership, providers and support staff).

» Evolving as the organization and priorities evolve.