

Title: Small Mouths, Big Challenges: Preparing Future Dentists to Respond
“Predoctoral Pediatric Training in General Dentistry and Dental Hygiene”
University of Illinois at Chicago College of Dentistry, HRSA-17-068
Project Abstract

Priority: 2, 4

Data indicate that the oral health needs of children 0-5 years in Illinois, particularly those in vulnerable communities, are not being addressed sufficiently or successfully. In this funding opportunity the University of Illinois at Chicago, College of Dentistry (UIC, COD) will enhance the education and training of Predoctoral and Advanced Standing students by focusing on the oral health needs and care of children aged 0-5 years with particular emphasis on vulnerable, underserved and rural communities. The specific goals of the grants are:

1. Enhance the oral health knowledge and skill sets of dental students by developing and implementing a new pediatric dental course focused on the management of oral health for children age 0-5.
2. Train D2 dental students in pre- and post-natal counseling to provide health education, counseling, and a referral source for expectant mothers at an area FQHC.
3. Provide opportunities for D3/AS3 students to engage with children 0-5 years and their parents/caregivers regarding health education, oral health assessment, treatment and referral at three new community partner sites. The dental students be trained to use social media to engage patients.
4. Expand and enhance D4/AS4 students’ clinical experience managing the oral health needs of children, and providing related health education for parents/caregivers at eight community partner sites as an extension of an existing course.
5. Develop and implement a new oral health education-training program for pre-dent students to build a robust pipeline of prospective dental students who understand the needs of children 0-5 years of age.

The proposed project will educate pre-dent students and dental students during their 2nd, 3rd and 4th year of education and training regarding the oral health needs of 0-5 year-old children in numerous and distinct community-based service settings. The sites will include elementary schools, a pre- and post-natal clinic at a local FQHC, a WIC center, eight community based partner sites, and two county health department sites. At the DuPage County Health Department, dental students will work with children with special needs. At the Douglas County Health Department, dental students will engage with children and the parents/caregivers in a rural setting that also serves a large Amish population. Pre-dent students will be trained in oral health education. The dental students will be educated and trained in examination procedures, delivery of prevention services including diet and nutrition guidance for parents/caregivers and management of the oral health conditions of children 0-5 years of age. The College has two DMD curriculum tracks: traditional four-year pre-doctoral DMD track labelled D2, D3, D4 in the grant narrative each representing the second, third and fourth/final year of dental school respectively. The other track is a seven-semester degree program for internationally trained Advanced Standing DMD students labeled AS3 and AS4 representing the first and second/final year of the program. A total of 580 dental students will benefit from these grant activities in the course of 5 years.