

## PROJECT ABSTRACT

**Project Title:** “Catalyzing Oral Health Workforce for Rural and Vulnerable Populations”

**Applicant Organization /Website:** Harvard School of Dental Medicine;

<https://hsdm.harvard.edu/>

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**Period of Performance:** July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2025

**Project Director Name:** Mary Tavares, DMD, MPH

**Name of Training Program:** Oral Health Workforce for Rural and Vulnerable Populations

**Program Discipline(s) included in the residency program:** General Dentistry (Advanced Education in General Dentistry Program; AEGD); Dental Public Health (DPH)

**Planning Year:** July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021

Harvard School of Dental Medicine (HSDM), the New Hampshire (NH)-Vermont Bi-State Primary Care Association, Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center and local Federally Qualified Health Centers are collaborating on a response to create new models to improve access and delivery of dental care by supporting innovative postdoctoral dental residency training programs. This collaborative, multidiscipline application requests funding to create two rural residency program tracks (RT) within the disciplines of general dentistry and dental public health to increase access to oral health services for rural populations in NH.

**Overview:** Access to oral health care can be challenging for NH’s large rural population, particularly for medically complex and special needs individuals. The shortage of oral health professionals will become more acute when NH Medicaid expands adult dental coverage from solely emergency care to primary dental care benefits in early 2021. To help meet this growing need, we propose two dental residencies (a 1-year AEGD and a 2-year DPH) with rural care focused curriculum with the goal to: Increase the number of primary care oral health workforce who can effectively provide comprehensive general and advanced dental care incorporating interdisciplinary and population health (e.g., social determinants of health) approaches to underserved and vulnerable populations with complex medical and behavioral health needs in rural NH. By the end of the 5-year project period we anticipate a total of 17 dental graduates.

**Funding and clinical priority [(P) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8] areas addressed:** We anticipate with this **collaborative project (P1) (AEGD-RT/DPH-RT)** to provide trainees in-depth education and field experiences for rural populations addressing the care and management of medically-complex, **special and vulnerable populations (P5, 8)** (i.e. older adults). Through **formal relationships (P4)** already established with clinical rotation sites, the training will focus on interprofessional practice, social determinants of health, **cultural competence and oral health literacy (P6)**. **Specific, Measurable Objectives Goals:** To date, our current DPH and GPR residency programs have been successful by ensuring **inclusion of underrepresented minorities (P3)** and **discipline retention (P2, 7)** within primary care delivery settings after graduation. Each goal-activity associated with this project will go through a formative process and summative evaluation at the end of each year to make certain all project goals and objectives are met. To ensure sustainability, HSDM will work towards converting the AEGD-RT to a GPR supported by graduate medical education funds, and the DPH-RT will be supported by foundation funds and additional scholarships.