

**PRIMARY CARE  
MODERNIZATION**

# Oral Health Integration

**ELECTIVE CAPABILITY**

Provide dental prevention services in a primary care doctor's office during regular checkups, including screenings, fluoride varnish, oral hygiene education, and when necessary, referrals to oral health providers.

**DRAFT**

**HOW CARE WILL IMPROVE**

**CONSUMERS CAN...**

- Have a care team that understands how problems with your teeth and mouth affect your overall health and well being
- Be screened for oral health problems as part of a general physical exam
- Learn how health behaviors can affect or improve oral health
- Learn how to take care of your teeth and mouth, especially when you have other chronic medical conditions.
- Receive fluoride therapy or fluoride varnish treatment to prevent more serious problems



**PRIMARY CARE  
TEAMS CAN...**

- Train care team in oral health risk assessment, exams and prevention
- Screen individuals for oral health risk factors and symptoms of oral disease
- Educate patients about the importance of good oral health and practices to maintain oral health
- Provide information and education that recognizes culture, language and perceived oral health barriers.
- Provide fluoride varnish or fluoride therapy, as needed
  - Assess patient's medications for risk of negative effect on teeth and gums, and make changes if needed
  - Facilitate patient navigation to oral healthcare services with referrals and track outcomes



**PATIENT EXPERIENCE IN PRIMARY CARE MODERNIZATION**



Marianne checks in for a diabetes wellness appointment. As part of her medical record update, Marianne says that she does not have a regular dentist and hasn't had a check-up in a long time.



During the physical exam, Marianne's primary care provider notes signs of oral disease. The provider explains that researchers have found people with diabetes are more likely to have oral health problems and these problems can make it harder to control diabetes.



Marianne and her provider discuss Marianne's options. Marianne agrees to meet with the team's trained dental health educator. They discuss brushing, flossing and the damaging effects of sugar and carbohydrates on her teeth.



Marianne mentions that she can't afford dental care because she doesn't have dental insurance. The health educator connects Marianne to the team's care coordinator who helps her make an appointment at a dental clinic with lower fees for uninsured patients.



# HOW



## Care Team and Network Requirements

- Conduct patient-specific oral health risk assessments that ask about symptoms or risk factors to screen for oral disease
- Conduct oral health exams that look for signs indicating poor oral health and active problems
- Implement preventive oral health strategies which may include prescribing or changing medications that protect teeth and gums, fluoride therapy, application of fluoride varnish, dietary counseling, and in-house or co-located dental cleanings
- Develop targeted patient education about the importance of good oral health and practices to maintain it, particularly for communities disproportionately affected by dental problems
- Develop a process and protocols to make, manage and close out referrals including connecting patients without dental coverage to safety providers of dental services
- Primary care providers exchange patient information and coordinate care with dental providers, track referrals and oral health outcomes



## Health Information Technology Requirements

- Electronic health record includes modules to capture answers to oral health questions, document information regarding the patient's mouth, build an in-house risk assessment, order referrals, and track patient outcomes over time.
- Patient portal provides educational materials and after visit summaries

## MEASURING IMPACT

### ✓ Patient Experience

- Improved patient experience with respect to timely care, coordination, access to dental care, provider support, and overall satisfaction with provider

### ★ Quality

- Improved preventive oral health care
- Reduced restorative treatments

### \$ Cost

- Lower out of pocket costs for patients when receiving services in primary care
- Reduced preventable ED visits and hospital admissions for severe dental conditions

### 🔑 Access

- Easier access to preventive dental care services
- Assistance getting access to comprehensive dental care through primary care referrals as needed

## IMPROVING HEALTH EQUITY

Rural and underserved communities are disproportionately affected by dental problems and have limited access to dental care in the community. To reduce this disparity, primary care will change in the following ways:

- ✓ **Dental and oral health services provided** in primary care offices increase access to dental care.
- ✓ **Integration of primary care and dental care** improve care coordination.
- ✓ **Reduce need for additional appointments** to receive certain basic dental services.



**LEARN MORE!**  
[rebrand.ly/login38be0](https://rebrand.ly/login38be0)