

# Addressing Oral Health and Diabetes through Medical-Dental Integration

The goal of the Oral Health-Diabetes Medical Dental Integration (OHD-MDI) initiative in South Carolina is to build a statewide system that provides education and outreach to help support the integration of oral health and chronic disease services. The intended result is to strengthen community-clinical linkages to include diabetes screening for dental patients and dental screenings for patients with diabetes.

## WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

The estimated prevalence of diagnosed diabetes in South Carolina is 13% among adults aged 20 years and older.<sup>1</sup> In comparison with other states, SC's counties are among the Southern cluster that rank above the national median for diagnosed diabetes. Research supports that addressing unmet oral health needs improves diabetes-related outcomes for people with uncontrolled HgA-1-c levels.

## WHAT ARE WE DOING?

The South Carolina OHD-MDI project builds on existing CDC funded diabetes prevention and oral health functions to facilitate administrative, community and clinical activities. This includes ongoing partner education and training to improve the consistency, accuracy, and timeliness of oral health messaging for the care of adults with diabetes.

## WHO ARE WE WORKING WITH?

Key project partners include Community Systems Directors and their teams housed in each of the four statewide public health regions. These four teams will be charged to expand diabetes and chronic disease education and care coordination efforts in high need communities. Another key and essential component of the OHD-MDI initiative is the MDI Leadership Team. This team of providers, community partners and agency personnel provide advice and oversight regarding program direction, including the identification, allocation, management and maximization of project resources.

## HOW WILL THIS BE DONE?

### SC will employ the following strategies and anticipates success by:

- expanding existing oral health networks
- integrating oral health messages into education and outreach activities for people with diabetes
- strengthening community-clinical linkages to include diabetes screening for dental patients and dental screenings for patients with diabetes
- raising awareness through social media

<sup>1</sup> Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. County Health Rankings. 2014. Retrieved from: <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/south-carolina/2018/measure/outcomes/60/data> on April 12, 2018.