

# Maintaining the Connection: Dental Case Management for the Multi-Diagnosed Marginally Housed

Avantika Nath, DDS

Principal Investigator, SPNS Oral Health Initiative

# Multidiagnosed



20 Years of Leadership  
A LEGACY OF CARE



2018 RYAN WHITE ALL GRANTEE MEETING AND 10TH ANNUAL CLINICAL CONFERENCE

# Marginally Housed



20 Years of Leadership  
**A LEGACY OF CARE**



2018 RYAN WHITE ALL GRANTEE MEETING AND 10TH ANNUAL CLINICAL CONFERENCE

# Federal Definition

“The condition and social category of people without consistent housing because they cannot afford or are otherwise unable maintain safe, adequate housing or lack fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.”

# Where are we? "The Tenderloin"



20 Years of Leadership  
A LEGACY OF CARE



# The Tenderloin: Hardest Hit

3,220

Number of homeless

Almost half the number in SFO

27,000

Cumulative AIDS cases in SFO

Highest HIV/AIDS viral load in SFO

AIDS is the primary cause of death

# Who Are We?

## The Tenderloin Oral Health Collaborative

A collaboration between Tenderloin Health, the San Francisco Department of Public Health (Tom Waddell Health Center), the Asian & Pacific Islander Wellness Foundation and the Positive Resource Center

# Main Goals of the Collaborative

Increase access to oral health care services and oral health care information for people living with HIV/AIDS in the Tenderloin

Create a sustainable funding stream for oral health services

Ensure the ongoing provision of high quality and effective oral health services to the target population



# Original Model of the Oral Health Initiative in the Tenderloin

Oral Health Coordinator paired with Outreach

Intake and follow-up was assigned to the coordinator

Heavily administrative with data entry, meeting organization, and other tasks emphasized

# Challenges with the Oral Health Initiative in Tenderloin Health

Poor client retention

Homelessness

Multiply Diagnosed (SA, MH, HIV+)

Poor staff retention

6 Dental Coordinators in just 3 years

Had effect upon client care – LTFU, engagement

Limited client confidence in clinic

# Boston University: 8 Roles of the Dental Case Manager

Patient Recruitment

Transportation & Scheduling

Visit Accompaniment

Visit Explanation

Referrals & Translation

Retention Services

Patient Education

Collaboration with HIV Case Managers

# Patient Recruitment

## Referrals came from 3 sources

SFDPH Medical Team

Tenderloin Health HIV Services Case Managers

Partnering Agencies

## Awareness of the Project came from 3 sources

Discussions with case manager

Flyers

Word of mouth from other clients

# Transportation & Scheduling

49% stated that physical health problems limited their daily physical activities.

The Dental Case Manager worked closely with the medical team, the case management team, and the outreach team to coordinate services on the same day.

The client population served is very transient and can be difficult to engage. Having multiple appointments on the same day was very effective for improving client health outcomes

# Visit Accompaniment

43% stated that emotional/social problems limited daily activities

Client homelessness was often paired with mental health and/or substance abuse issues

Limited experience with dental services

Dental Case Manager discusses more than just dental care with the client creating an open and supportive environment

Strong reliance upon outreach activities for tracking down and engaging patients

# Visit Explanations

55% of the clients served described the health of their teeth and gums as poor

75% of all US adults experience some degree of dental fear

Over half of the clients served indicated that they did not receive regular dental care of any kind

Discussions of expectation and fear was a vital part of the Dental Case Manager duties

# Referrals & Translation

“[The clients] don’t want to step outside of the neighborhood because of a comfort level. As soon as they step outside they are viewed as junkies and homeless.”

Understanding of the San Francisco system of care is often very limited. It is vital the dental case manager refers clients to culturally competent services

Many clients are mono-lingual Spanish speaking. The DCM, being bi-lingual, is able to translate for the clients as needed



# Retention Services

## Challenges to retention:

Homelessness

Mental illness

Substance abuse

Incarceration

Oral health care not often a priority due to these issues

# Retention Services

“Dental care oftentimes get reprioritized because other needs aren’t being met like medical, mental, and housing. Their teeth falling out is the last thing they think about.”

“[The only way to ensure that clients come in for their scheduled appointments is to have staff call] the evening before, the morning of, and then [have an outreach worker] bring them in and take them home.”

# Patient Education

Health literacy in the client population is low.

Trust in health systems is also low.

The Dental Case Manager is able to tackle these interrelated issues through trust and length of tenure.

# Collaboration with HIV Case Managers

“[Working with the population] is a bit of a challenge because not only do they have a complicated medical history, they are also on multiple medications, and they almost always have mental health and substance abuse issues.”

Collaboration is key. HIV Case Managers are on-site. The majority of the clients served under this grant are assigned to one of these service providers. Medical services are also on-site.

# Background & Education

The Dental Case Manager has no formal education, only experience with the population and the partnering agencies

# DCM Role in Health Outcomes

Arranges referrals and linkages into primary medical care and case management for substance abuse and mental health services

Arranges escorts for outside appointments

Assists with benefits, eligibility, and counseling

Advises client on available services and medications (smoking cessation, etc.)

# Client testimonials

“I can smile again!”

“I can get dressed up and feel good and proud!”

“I feel confident in public.”

“MY whole outlook on life is different.”

# Advantages

Resulted in a reduced no-show rate

Reduces long-term costs of dental care by providing early education

Emphasizes the lack of funding for these services – nonreimbursable



# Client Retention

## KEY FACTOR:

Building a relationship with the patient

# Maintaining Relationships

Knows every client by name

Knows where they can be found

Knows individual personality traits

Knows current, presenting issues

Personal linkages and referrals to relevant services

# Client Satisfaction

- Provision of care
- Complaint resolution

# Acknowledgments:

Tenderloin Health –management and staff  
San Francisco Dept. of Public Health  
Boston University, School of Public Health  
Health and Disability Working Group,  
Evaluation Center on HIV & Oral Health