

September 18, 2020

Blood Pressure Pilot Project: Voices from the Field

The Blood Pressure Pilot Project Model

The North Dakota (ND) Oral Health Program (OHP) has implemented a pilot project to address high blood pressure in dental practices. The OHP partners with dental providers, providing training on blood pressure measurement and referral protocols. Dental providers (dentists, dental hygienists, dental assistants, etc.) screen adult patients for high blood pressure using a standardized protocol, referring those identified as having high blood pressure to medical practices. When possible, dental providers follow up on referral outcomes. Through this process, the OHP hopes to increase the detection and treatment of hypertension, preventing further complications of this disease. The pilot project will continue until 2023.

Provider Surveys

An annual survey of dental practices assesses the pilot project and identifies opportunities for improvement. The survey asks about the following topics: training, implementation, data collection, communication, and impacts.

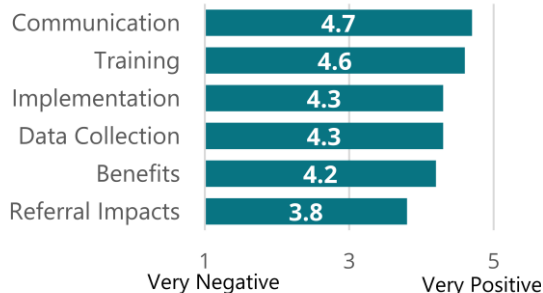


Representatives at six of seven partner dental practices responded to the survey in 2020.

In 2020, dental providers felt **positive** about the pilot project.

Respondents had positive responses to topics on the provider survey.

Average score of responses by survey section.



Source: Component 2 Provider Survey, 2020

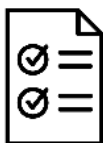
"We are never left wondering."

-Provider in response to the quality of OHP communication

Other Findings

- Multiple respondents mentioned that dental staff now provide information on hypertension to their patients.
- During implementation, some practices adapted the blood pressure protocol to meet their needs – for example, selecting an alternate blood pressure measurement cutoff for referral.
- Dental records are limited in their capacity to record referral data.
- Dental practices experienced little change in the number of referrals from medical providers.

Survey results suggest possible areas for improvement:



Blood pressure protocol revision
to further clarify guidelines and provide opportunities for adaptation.



Increased engagement with medical providers to increase referrals from primary care to dental practices.

Credits

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During Year 3 (September 1, 2020 – August 31, 2021), the OHP will assess the feasibility of these changes and make improvements where appropriate.

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