



# An Innovative Model of Collaboration Among Dentists and Nurse Practitioners to Enhance Oral and Physical Health Outcomes

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## BACKGROUND

Recognizing that oral health is increasingly acknowledged to be an integral part of health outcomes and the need for greater integration among dental and health care providers, Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Schools of Nursing and Dentistry collaborated to develop a program that partners nurse practitioners with dentist/physicians (DDS/MDs) to create a new model of health services that will provide comprehensive oral health and physical health promotion and disease prevention to meet the needs of vulnerable populations.

## IMPLICATIONS

This collaboration will foster interdisciplinary education and may lead to transformations in health care delivery by enhancing collaborations among dentistry and nursing to provide greater access to medical/nursing and dental services. The project could better serve the needs of our patients and potentially reduce modifiable healthcare expenses in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

## TIMELINE

### PLANNING & PREPARATION July 1, 2012-October 31, 2012

- NYU Nursing-Dental Clinic site visit
- Renovation of clinic space and purchase of equipment
- Hiring and training of clinic providers and staff
- Preparation of marketing and community outreach strategies

### IMPLEMENTATION November, 2012-June 30, 2015

- Opening of clinic (November 12, 2012)
- Evaluation of outcomes
  - Number of patients seen
  - Diagnostic codes
  - Satisfaction
- Educational evaluation IPE

## PROJECT

**TARGET POPULATION:** the underserved and vulnerable populations in Virginia served by the Virginia Premier Health Plan, Inc. Virginia Premier and the VCU Health System

Using oral health visits as the entry point, family nurse practitioners and dentist/physicians conduct **comprehensive health screenings** to identify and address significant health issues such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, and respiratory illnesses that adversely affect the dental and physical health of these patients. **Care coordination** to link patients with their medical homes will be a focus.

In addition, since women with periodontal diseases may have an increased risk of adverse pregnancy outcomes, including low birth weight and prematurity, a focus of this partnership is to conduct screenings and provide appropriate **treatment and referrals** for pregnant women in the service area.



## PROJECTED OUTCOMES



### Improved

- Dental health
- Oral/systemic health
- Interprofessional education



### Identification and treatment of

- Co-morbidities
- Health promoting opportunities



### Increase in the

- Appropriate use of primary care access

## REFERENCES

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