

To: Rowan County Board of County Commissioners
From: Alyssa Harris, Public Health Director
Vera Avery, Quality Improvement Specialist
Date: 12/22/2021
Re: Delta Dental Smiles for Children Grant

Situation:

The Rowan County Health Department's Smile Center, has implemented a prenatal dental program which provides education and treatment for uninsured pregnant clients on the importance of establishing and following an oral healthcare regimen. This program intervenes to address oral hygiene issues, which if untreated, can negatively impact the mothers as well as, the newborn infants. This program, sponsored by Delta Dental, allows us to assist approximately 8-10 patients per year. This only addresses a small portion of the population in Rowan County who could benefit from this program if more funds were available.

Background:

Based on a 2016 study of 459 pregnant women on Perinatal Oral Health in North Carolina, less than half of the pregnant women studied reported “good” or “excellent” oral health. Oral care during the prenatal period continues to be a challenge for uninsured women. Many of the changes that occur during pregnancy can affect oral health and often diseases from bacteria in the mouth can reach the fetus and contribute to negative pregnancy outcomes. The study concluded that “to improve maternal and child oral health outcomes, medical and dental care providers must understand the significance of recognizing, preventing and treating oral health care problems during pregnancy.”

Assessment:

Last year, using funds from Delta Dental, the Rowan County Health Department was able to market and promote services for our dental clinic as well as treat patients using this funding. Services provided included exams, education, and restorative treatments. Rowan County Public Health would like to apply for \$5000 for 2021 to increase our reach in serving this vulnerable group of Rowan County residents.

Recommendations:

The Rowan County Health Department respectfully requests approval to submit a grant request to the Delta Dental Foundation, which would allow us the opportunity to positively impact the oral healthcare of prenatal clients in our county. If awarded funding, we would be able to provide much needed education, preventative and restorative care to a deeply needy population and help promote the establishment of oral healthcare as a priority in an overall healthy lifestyle.