CareQuest Institute for Oral Health
Request for Research Proposals

Background

At CareQuest Institute for Oral Health®, we operate as a catalyst for systems change, bringing forth ideas and solutions to create a more accessible, equitable, and integrated health system for everyone. We do this through our work in philanthropy, analytics and data insights, education, policy and advocacy, and health transformation, as well as our leadership in dental benefits and innovation advancements. But we don't do it alone. Collaboration and partnership are key to achieving our mission — to improve the oral health of all.

Our Analytics and Data Insights team creates and disseminates actionable research, analytics, and evaluations that providers, policymakers, and advocates can use to improve the oral health care system and better inform policy and financing decisions. Our research is powered by state- and national-level representative data sources, including health care claims data, integrated medical-dental databases, and surveys of health care experiences. By seeking out and analyzing these data sources, we uncover trends in the oral health care delivery system, develop analytical plans that provide actionable results, and make meaningful contributions to the knowledge base through publications and presentations.

Purpose

As part of CareQuest Institute's research and data strategies, we are actively seeking research opportunities that align with our mission. **The goal of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to invite early-career researchers to apply to utilize CareQuest Institute's data resources (see page 3) to complete a research analysis project culminating in a peer-reviewed journal submission that is in alignment with CareQuest Institute's mission.** Focus areas include:

- Conducting population oral health research through use of **surveillance data and metrics**.

- Integrating **medical and dental health** care systems to help improve and transform the health care delivery system.

- **Revolutionizing health systems** to integrate oral health into overall health and demonstrate the efficacy thereof.

- **Transforming patient care** to better classify and predict oral health outcomes and evaluate alternative care approaches (e.g., teledentistry or minimally invasive care) to improve patient access.

- Understanding factors that influence **oral health equity for historically underserved and vulnerable populations**, including racial and ethnic minorities, people with physical, intellectual, or developmental disabilities, people with low incomes, residents of rural or dental professional shortage areas, pre- and post-natal people, enrollees in government insurance programs, patients with chronic health conditions, veterans, or individuals facing barriers to care due to social drivers of health.

- Promoting **public policies** that increase access to and affordability of care for vulnerable populations, especially through safety net clinics.

Eligibility

To submit a proposal in response to this RFP, researchers should:

- Meet the National Institutes of Health (NIH) definition of early-stage researcher/investigator:
  - Have completed their terminal research degree or end of post-graduate clinical training within last 10 years
  - Have not already competed successfully as Principal Investigator on an R01 grant from NIH
- Be affiliated with an accredited university as full-time research or teaching staff in the United States
- Have a promising track record of conducting analyses and producing peer-reviewed publications
- Have the expertise and technology available to analyze and report on large health care datasets
- Be able to meet all project timelines (please see page 1)

CareQuest Institute will be able to fund applications up to $50,000 for direct and indirect costs. Researchers should describe their requested costs as part of their application.

Proposal

As part of their proposal, researchers are encouraged to develop a research topic and question in line with their research interests as well as with one or more of the research and data focus areas described previously. In addition, researchers should provide a description of the intended and anticipated impact of the report, including potential publication and presentation outlets. **Proposals (excluding costs description) should not exceed three single-sided pages. A description of costs should not exceed one page, for a total of four pages for each submission.**

Proposals are due to CareQuest Institute by September 5, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. ET. Proposals will be evaluated using criteria described below, and researchers submitting approved proposals will then be invited to submit a detailed analysis plan (specific variables to be used, analyses to be completed, etc.).

Evaluation Criteria

All proposals will be evaluated utilizing the National Institutes of Health (NIH) scoring system (https://grants.nih.gov/grants/peer/guidelines_general/scoring_system_and_procedure. pdf) across the following criteria: Significance, Investigator, Innovation, Approach, and Environment. Additionally, factors such as intended and anticipated impact and alignment with CareQuest Institute's research and data strategies will also be considered in evaluating proposals.

Overall Impact or Criterion Strength	Scope	Descriptor
High	1	Exceptional
High	2	Outstanding
High	3	Excellent
Medium	4	Very Good
Medium	5	Good
Medium	6	Satisfactory
Low	7	Fair
Low	8	Marginal
Low	9	Poor

Available Data Resources

CareQuest Institute's data resources include medical, dental, and hospital claims data as well as data from a nationally representative oral health survey developed and conducted by CareQuest Institute. Details about each resource are listed below.

1. **Research Databases of Integrated Medical and Dental Claims Data**

   - **Data Sources**
     - These data come from various sources, including third-party Medicaid and commercial insurance claims.
   - **Data Elements Include**
     - *Patient demographics:* age, race, gender, state of residence, reason for eligibility, family status
     - *Claims data*
       – Dental Claims (Current Dental Terminology (CDT) codes)
       – Outpatient Claims (International Classification of Diseases, ninth/tenth revision (ICD-9/10 codes))
       – Inpatient Claims (ICD-9/10 codes)
       – Prescription Drug Claims (ICD-9/10 codes)
       – Long-Term Care Facility Claims (ICD-9/10 codes)
   - **Medical Claims Statistics**
     - Total unique patients: 39,083,416
     - Total claims: 4,933,651,117

2. **Research Databases of Dental Claims Data**

   - **Data Sources**
     - These data come from various sources ranging from third-party Medicaid and commercial claims to direct electronic health record (EHR) extraction.
   - **Data Elements Include**
     - *Patient demographics*: age, race, gender, and state of residence.
   - **Dental Claims**
     - Procedure codes at the tooth level (CDT codes)
     - Financial information including payer classification and total amount billed and paid
   - **Dental Claims Statistics**
     - Total unique patients: 35,533,307
     - Total dental claims 929,859,877
     - Total dental visits: 254,228,331

3. **Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project (HCUP) Claims Data** — State trends in emergency department visits for non-traumatic dental conditions

   - Visit and diagnosis rates, states, demographics (gender, race, age), charges, and payers.
   - Available states include Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Utah, and Wisconsin.
   - All states have data from 2018–2021, while some states have data from 2010–2021.
   - More information on HCUP data can be found here: https://www.hcup-us.ahrq.gov/.
   - Data from the Nationwide Emergency Department Sample (NEDS) from 2015 to 2022 is also available for analysis.

4. **The State of Oral Health Equity in America (SOHEA) survey**

   - The SOHEA survey is a nationally representative survey of consumer attitudes, experiences, and behaviors related to oral health designed by CareQuest Institute for Oral Health.
   - Results were collected by NORC at the University of Chicago in January–February 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2025 and March–May 2024 on adults 18 and older on the AmeriSpeak panel.
   - Randomly selected US households were sampled using area probability and address-based sampling, with a known, non-zero probability of selection from NORC National Sample Frame. Sampled households were contacted by US mail, telephone, and field interviewers.
   - In 2025, a sampling unit of 19,193 was used, with a final sample size of 9,450 and a final weighted cumulative response rate of 9.0%. The margin of error for the survey is 1.61%.
   - Additional information on the SOHEA survey can be found here: https://www.carequest.org/content/state-oral-health-equity-america.

Proposal Submission

As part of their proposal, researchers are encouraged to develop a research topic and question in line with their research interests as well as with one or more of the research and data focus areas described above. In addition, researchers should provide a description of the intended and anticipated impact of the report, including potential publication and presentation outlets. **Proposals (excluding indirect costs description) should not exceed three single-sided pages. A description of costs should not exceed one page, for a total of four pages for each submission.**

Proposals are due to CareQuest Institute by September 5, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. ET. Proposals will be evaluated using criteria described below, and researchers submitting approved proposals will then be invited to submit a detailed analysis plan (specific variables to be used, analyses to be completed, etc.).

Successful proposals will follow the general, abbreviated structure of an [NIH SF 424 grant application](#) and must include the following sections:

1. **Specific Aims** — this section should concisely describe the goals of the proposed research, its expected outcomes, and the anticipated impact of the research.

2. **Significance** — this section should describe how the proposed research will address a particular problem or barrier to progress in the oral health field if the aims are achieved.

3. **Innovation** — this section should describe any novel statistical approaches or techniques that will be used in the proposed research, if any.

4. **Approach** — this section will describe how the proposed research will be conducted. This section should include details about the data source(s) to be used, analyses to be conducted, and outcomes that are expected. For proposals including hypothesis testing, the hypothesis/es should be clearly stated.

5. **Resources and Environment** — this section will describe the resources, facilities, and support available to the research team (e.g., necessary computer and software).

6. **Personnel** — this section will describe the expertise/ training that the researcher and/or research team have that will be necessary for completion of the proposed research.

7. **Budget and Justification** — this section should present and justify all direct costs requested for the application. This section should also include information on contract signatories, including name, email, and address, if the grant is awarded.

The sections above should not exceed three single-sided pages. A description of costs should not exceed one page, for a total of four pages. Proposals should be submitted as a Word document or PDF via email to analytics@carequest.org.