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Lasting Lessons from Pandemic Responses in Safety Net Dentistry

CareQuest Institute Continuing Education Webinar

April 7, 2022





# Lasting Lessons from Pandemic Responses in Safety Net Dentistry



# WEBINAR | Thursday, April 7, 2022 | 1–2 p.m. ET | ADA CERP Credits: 1

#### MODERATOR



#### Lisa E. Simon, MD, DMD Fellow in Oral Health and Medicine Integration, Harvard School of Dental Medicine

#### PRESENTER



#### Sarah E. Raskin, PhD, MPH

Assistant Professor, iCubed Oral Health Core and L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs, Virginia Commonwealth University

#### PRESENTER



#### Deborah V. George, BSN, DDS

Executive Vice President and Chief Dental Officer, Jessie Trice Community Health System, Inc.

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# Older Adults Delayed Dental Care During the Pandemic

- Nearly 6 million Medicare participants put off dental care as a result of COVID-19.
- Postponing dental care may result in a spike in diagnoses and treatment of more severe oral disease among older adults.
- At least **75% of total dental costs were paid for out-of-pocket** among Medicare or Medicare Advantage participants.



### Read the report at carequest.org



# Upcoming Webinars at CareQuest Institute



**April 21:** Community-Centered Grantmaking: Why, How, and What Lies Ahead

**May 5:** Dental Fear and Anxiety: Why It Exists and What Providers Can Do to Help

**May 19:** Building a Teledentistry Program that Expands Access and Increases Equity

### We hope to see you there!



# Mental Health and Oral Health

A new study from CareQuest Institute is the first to evaluate the relationship between oral health and mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic. The article appears in *Frontiers in Oral Health*.

"Evidence suggests that individuals who have experienced a mental health disorder underutilize dental services."



Learn more at carequest.org



## Teledentistry Helps Provide the Right Care at the Right Time

# 6 out of 10

patients had an in-person visit within three weeks of their teledentistry visit. Learn how teledentistry can help increase access to care at carequest.org



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# **Question & Answer Logistics**

- Feel free to enter your questions into the **Question & Answer box** throughout the presentations.
- We will turn to your questions and comments toward the end of the hour.

Welco	ome			
Feel free to ask the host a		estion	S	
Type your question here				



# Learning Objectives

At the end of this webinar, you'll be able to:

- Recognize how lessons gleaned from disruptions at Federally Qualified Health Centers can inform changes in the broader oral health industry.
- Discuss the unique and promising opportunities in medical-dental integration, teledentistry, and minimally invasive dentistry created by the pandemic.
- Discuss how the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted oral health care delivery and revealed gaps in dental public health emergency preparedness and response.
- Explain how transitions in dental care caused by the pandemic galvanize opportunities to pursue health equity.





### Vision

A future where every person can reach their full potential through optimal health

#### **Mission**

To improve the oral health of all

### Purpose

To catalyze the future of health through oral health





# **Today's Presenters**

### Lasting Lessons from Pandemic Responses in Safety Net Dentistry



#### WEBINAR | Thursday, April 7, 2022 | 1–2 p.m. ET | ADA CERP Credits: 1





Lisa E. Simon, MD, DMD Fellow in Oral Health and Medicine Integration, Harvard School of Dental Medicine

#### PRESENTER



Sarah E. Raskin, PhD, MPH Assistant Professor, iCubed Oral Health Core and L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs, Virginia Commonwealth University

PRESENTER



Deborah V. George, BSN, DDS Executive Vice President and Chief Dental Officer, Jessie Trice Community Health System, Inc.



Dental Safety Net Providers' Experiences with Service Delivery During the First Year of COVID-19 Should Inform Dental Pandemic Preparedness

Sarah Raskin, PhD, MPH Virginia Commonwealth University



#### **ARTICLE IN PRESS**

#### Investigation

#### Dental safety net providers' experiences with service delivery during the first year of COVID-19 should inform dental pandemic preparedness

Sarah E. Raskin, PhD, MPH; Vuong K. Diep, MPH; Katherine Chung-Bridges, MD, MPH; Lisa J. Heaton, PhD; Julie Frantsve-Hawley, PhD

#### ABSTRACT

**Background.** COVID-19 disrupted oral health care delivery and revealed gaps in dental public health emergency preparedness and response (PHEPR). Emerging dental PHEPR frameworks can be strengthened by means of understanding the experiences of the discipline's frontline workers—dental safety net providers—during the initial phase of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Methods.** Experienced qualitative researchers interviewed dental safety net directors and clinicians (n = 21) in 6 states to understand their experiences delivering care from March 2020 through February 2021. Interview transcriptions were analyzed using iterative codes to identify major and minor themes. Conventional qualitative validity checks were used continuously to ensure impartiality and rigor.

**Results.** Three major themes were identified: unpredictability caused concerns among staff members and patients, while also deepening fulfilling collaborations; care delivery was guided by means of various resources that balanced safety, flexibility, and respect for autonomy; and pandemicdriven changes to oral health care delivery are timely, long-lasting, and can be somewhat fraught.

**Conclusions.** The human, material, and policy resources that providers used to control infections, serve vulnerable patients, maintain clinic solvency, and address provider burnout during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic can improve dental PHEPR.

**Practical Implications.** Dental PHEPR should address concerns beyond infection control within and between practice models, governmental agencies, and professional organizations. Examples of such concerns include, but are not limited to, guideline synchronization, materials exigencies, task shifting, and provider resilience.

Key Words. COVID-19; dental pandemic preparedness; dental safety net; federally qualified health centers; public health emergency preparedness and response; infection control; provider resilience; qualitative methods.

 Dental safety net providers' perspectives on adapting service delivery during the onset of the COVID- 19 pandemic – Dr. Sarah E. Raskin and colleagues

Many in the dental community have been affected by COVID-19 and

As a result, the ADA is launching the JADA+ COVID-19 Monograph—a digital collection of stories, reflections, and accounts from any

perspective, in any format, including articles, essays, podcasts, videos, graphics, and photos-that is open to all contributors. Submit your



#### Introduction

Sponsored by Petterson Dente

COVID-19 story here.

want to share their stories.

Federally qualified health centers (FQHCg) provide dental and medical care to United States residents excluded from the country's employment-based healthcare system, 1–3 With the onset of the CQ/UN-19 pandemic, FCHCs found themselves in the position of providing services in a constantly changing public health climate to not only their existing patients, but also to individuals newly eligible for Medicaid benefits due to job losses and other financial consequences of pandemic shuldowns. 4–6 Mandatory dental office shuldowns and service instalators, appointment cancellations and delays, and concerns about the safety of their patients, employees, and employees: families required FOHC staff to constantly adapt in order to continue providing highquality and necessary care to halt or treat existing oral disease and prevent new or worsening conditions.7–9

We studied FOHC provident' experiences, observations, and perspectives on delivering dental services during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic (between March 2020 and February 2021).7 We conducted interviews with 21 dential staff members (clinical directors, dentists, executives) from 15 FOHCs in seven states between January 26, 2021 and February 28, 2021 via Zoom videoconferencing software. We conducted a thematic analysis of transcribed interview recordings. Full details of the methodology can be found here.

This Menograph aims to elaborate on POI4C dental staff members' experiences during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic by providing in-depth quadatoms. Quadations provide supplemental evidence on three themes (Unpredictability, Resources, and Permanent Transformation), and each theme is divided into sub-themes.





All Stories Submit Your COVID-19 Story Q

#### Stories by type

> Practitioners (58)
> Personal Essay (35)
> Region-Northeast (22)
> Region-West (22)
> Clinical Observations (16)
> Region-South (16)

> Art and Photography (11)

See all





20

# **Methods: Understanding Provider Perspectives**

- Recruitment and data collection
  - Sample: Dental directors, administrators, clinicians (n=21)
  - Semi-structured interview (digital; recorded and transcribed)
- Thematic analysis
  - Iterative identification of major themes
  - Summary memoing by hand
    - Refine sub-themes
    - Identify quotations
      - Common sentiment
      - Insightful in uniqueness
- Validity checks
  - Reliability check (n=5)
  - Member checking (themes and sub-themes)



Theme 1: Unpredictability caused concerns among staff and patients, while also deepening fulfilling collaboration.



# Concern

Safety, Professional Responsibility, Revenue

# Collaboration

Within team, patients and community members, & dentistry



# Theme 2: Service delivery was guided by various resources that balanced safety, flexibility, and respect for autonomy.



### **Policy Resources**

Governmental & Professional, Practice





### Human Resources

Task-shifting, Staff Consolidating & Scheduling, Temp Furlough or Absences

### Material Resources

Financial, Physical Space, PPE, Vaccines, Testing



# Theme 3: Pandemic-driven changes to comprehensive health service delivery are permanent, overdue, and mostly welcome.



# **Discussion: Thematic intersections**

"Gowns were one of the hardest things to get a hold of. A womens leaders' group here . . . received some sewing machines to make masks for the community. We ask(ed) them if they could make us reusable gowns. They, of course, were very happy to oblige and we paid them a pretty fair price for the gowns. We figured we'd rather keep the money (in their community) . . . They sold us about 120 gowns using material that we found that was ASTM level two material, which was great. They got it in all colorful colors and everything else to make it feel a little bit more fun for people coming into the clinic, not as scary when we're dressed up."



# **Discussion: Workforce**

- 1. The pandemic-prepared oral health workforce is flexible, prioritizes safety, and leads with empathy and compassion.
- 2. Successful oral health workforce collaborations involve *all* units and extend beyond the clinic.
- 3. The oral health workforce of the future:
  - is prepared to implement and sustain teledentistry
  - empowers multi-disciplinary teams that prioritize preventive care
  - proactively fosters resilience



# **Contact Information**

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# Experiences and Lessons from JTCHS

Deborah George, DDS

**EVP and Chief Dental Officer** 

# Jessie Trice Community Health System Snapshot

- Jessie Trice Community Health System (JTCHS), located in Miami, Florida, became the 1st Federally Qualified Health Center in Florida and 5th in the nation 55 years ago.
- **Mission:** To improve quality of life and achieve health equity for all by providing access to innovative, quality, comprehensive primary health care.
- JTCHS owns and operates 11 comprehensive primary care centers, a 40-bed women's residential center for substance use treatment in one university, and 40 school-based health suites.



# Oral Health Practices, Programs, and Providers

- JTCHS has five oral health practices and 45 oral health team members, including:
  - General dentists
  - Dental hygienists
  - 3 board-certified dentists in pediatric, periodontics, and oral surgery
  - Support staff
  - PEPPER, a humanoid robot (joined team three years ago)
- JTCHS hosts two 2 AEGD residency programs
  - New York University Dental Medicine Langone
  - Larkin Community Hospital in Miami



# A High-Risk Patient Population

- JTCHS clinical sites are located within zip codes with some of the highest case rates for COVID-19 in Miami-Dade County.
- JTCHS high-risk populations include those who have tested positive for COVID-19 and have co-existing chronic medical conditions such as:
  - Hypertension
  - Heart disease
  - Diabetes
  - Autoimmune
  - Asthma
  - Obesity
  - Oral diseases
- The patient population is predominantly African American.



# Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic Timeline



- Governor declared a State of Emergency on March 9, 2020.
- Eleven days later, on March 20, an executive order was issued to cease medically unnecessary, non-urgent, or non-emergency procedures or surgeries.
- All dental practices closed March 20 for 12 weeks, except for one clinic which remained open for emergency dental care only.
- AEGD residents were pulled from the health centers.



# Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic Timeline, cont.

- Dental care team was divided into three smaller teams:
  - **Team A:** Dentist and team provided walk-in emergency patient care only.
  - Team B: Dentist and team provided teledentistry visits only.
  - **Team C:** Dentist led ongoing Zoom CE training to dental staff remotely.
- A different dental team rotated every 2 weeks to the dental emergency clinic and wherever they were needed most in the organization.
  - For example, a dental team performed and trained a med team on how to perform COVID-19 rapid tests, assisted in lab, and participated in outreach initiatives.





# Creating a Virtual Command Center

- JTCHS CEO led daily executive team meetings and briefings to ensure consistent messaging to the health care team.
- Guided by health care stakeholders, agencies, and organizations such as CDC, FL DOH, ADA, FDA, and HRSA.
- An executive team member was appointed to provide state, local, and national COVID-19 updates at least twice daily.
- Executive team monitored staff assignments and made recommendations on COVID-19-related cases affecting patients, staff, and family members.



# Creating a Virtual Command Center, cont.

- The IP& C Nurse managed # of staff exposed or out due to COVID-19-related reasons and the required quarantines based on the CDC guidelines. Provided daily updates.
- CFO monitored the status of critical orders and needs, including COVID-19 rapid tests.
- Finance ensured funds were available and proactively ordered supplies, including PPE, equipment, refrigerators for anticipated vaccine storage, and extra oral suction units.
- JTCHS staff was briefed daily.







# Leaders Rise to the Occasion

- JTCHS leadership made several important changes:
  - Enhanced the telehealth platform, making it more userfriendly for patients/staff
  - Repurposed areas
  - Rearranged clinic furniture for social distancing
  - Installed thermo cameras
  - Identified strategies to keep patients engaged:
    - Telehealth
    - Community outreach
    - Culturally diverse messaging about COVID-19
      prevention, signs/symptoms, and safety
    - Information on how to access med/dent visits/phone care was constantly updated on JTCHS website and social media


### "We Care Calls" and Communication

- "We Care Calls" were made to team members and staff.
- Executive Team received daily briefing and updates on patient access:
  - Number of visits to medical, dental, and behavioral health clinics
  - Number of telehealth visits
- Executive Team received daily briefing on number of COVID-19 tests and vaccines administered, and the number of COVID-19 positive patients/staff, hospitalizations, and telehealth follow-ups.
- Medical & dental practices reopened fully June 2020.



Ensured a sufficient # of extra oral suction units to reduce aerosols generated while performing dental procedures



Made patient reception areas safer

Ensured a steady supply of PPE

## **Treating Patients with Care and Compassion**

**Patients feared** contracting COVID-19 in dental clinics, medical clinics, and emergency rooms.

### An example:

- 35 y/o African American/female
- Point of care COVID-19 test negative
- Presented to the dental clinic c/o pain, fever, and difficulty swallowing,
- Dx: Cellulitis
- Referred to the nearest hospital
- Diabetic elevated blood glucose
- Hospitalized x5 days





By December of 2020, we reached ~65% dental productivity.

### **Conquering Fear at JTCHS**









The dental team performed COVID-19 rapid tests and administered vaccines to community residents and continued to provide full-service dental care and COVID-19 screenings chairside.



In January 2021, JTCHS received and offered the COVID-19 vaccine to the health care team.

### Staff Felt a Sense of Community and Pride

- "We are fortunate to have a proactive CEO and executive leaders that looks out for the welfare of the care team and patients. The medical and dental care teams were kept informed and equipped to continue to serve the community while being protected."
- "Everyone was able to come together and to do what they could to make sure we were able to meet patients' needs, as well as to make sure we were doing so without putting our lives and our family's lives at risk. Dental led and trained JTCHS staff on COVID-19 rapid testing."
- On infection prevention and control: "No one contracted COVID-19 as a result of working in dental, despite working in one of the highest-risk professions. Infection prevention and control measures were shared with patients, who appreciated point-of-care COVID-19 testing offered in the dental setting."



### Lessons We Learned in the Last Two Years

- Teledentistry/team-based telehealth visits increased access to care.
- Infection prevention and control practices in the dental setting were and are effective.
- There's an opportunity to strengthen oral health and primary care integration.
- It's important to diversify the oral health team and include a patient-centered health care navigator.
- There's a greater need to focus on prevention.
- We need to take care of employees.
- There's an increased need to address the social determinants of health.



### The Future of Dentistry at Community Health Centers

We need to strengthen our oral health education and prevention platform and include messaging on how poor oral health can adversely impact the management of diabetes, heart disease, and pregnancy, and may increase the chances of complications from viruses such as COVID-19.

### How?

- Promote prevention and optimize dental care visits
- Strengthen dental-medical integrative care model
- Increase patient access and workflow efficiency



## **Prevention Promotion and Visit Optimization**

- Caries risk assessment and caries control
- Children: Every visit is a sealant visit
- Minimally invasive dentistry
- Focus on pregnancy and oral health
- Oral cancer screenings
- Point-of-care COVID-19 rapid tests, HbA1c, and HIV screenings in the dental setting
- Point-of-care vaccines in the dental setting
- Educate and address vaccine hesitancy (such as COVID-19 and HPV)



## Strengthen Dental-Medical Integrative Care Model

- Use team-based telehealth care visits (dental, medical, nutrition, pharmacy, and behavioral health).
- Increase use of intraoral camera in school-based programs.
- Hire key position: Patient-centered health care navigator to help improve access to preventive dental health care, work closely with the primary care medical team, and coordinate oral health visits for prenatal patients, children, adolescents, adults, and seniors with chronic medical and dental diseases.
- Registered dental hygienists are poised to manage the dental suite located in the pediatric medical practices.
- Participate in research studies e.g., chairside salivary diagnostics.



### Increase Patient Access and Workflow Efficiency

- Enhance AEGD Residency Program, dental scribe, EHR.
- Increase access to dental procedures and decrease patient time spent in the dental chair
  - Teledentistry
  - 3D Digital Impression Scanner
  - CAD CAM Mill
- Remote monitoring
  - Bluetooth toothbrush
  - Temp/BP/glucose checks
  - Oral images
- PEPPER humanoid robot provides introduction to the oral health program, ability to provide age-specific oral health education and post op instructions, etc.





## "The only way out is through and the only way through is together."

-Robert Frost

## Thank You!

### **Contact Information**

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# **Round Table Discussion**



# Public Health Preparedness



# **Medical-Dental Integration**



# Teledentistry



## **Infection Control**



## Vaccination



# Finding Joy



### **Contact Information**

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# **Questions & Discussion**



### To Explore More Industry-Leading Research



#### www.carequest.org/education/resource-library



Oral health and overall health are inextricably linked. There is mounting evidence to suggest that poor oral health is related to a <u>variety of chronic health constitions</u>, such as high blood pressure, dementia, diabetea, and obesity. Despite this known connection, dental care is still largely sliced from medical care. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that integrating basic health screenings into a dental setting could save the health care system up to \$100 million every year.<sup>1</sup>

CareQuest Institute for Oral Health conducted a nationally representative survey in January and February 2021 to assess consumers' perspectives on oral and overall health (n=5320). CareQuest Institute also conducted a nationwide survey of oral health providers to assess perspectives and current behaviors related to interprofessional practice (n=377). Consumers and oral health providers described a lack of integration between medical and oral health care, and a desire for increased interprofessional collaboration.

Key Findings: Medical-dental collaboration is currently uncommon.



### Webinar Evaluation

Complete the **evaluation by Friday, April 15** to receive CE credit.

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April 21, 2022, 12 – 1 p.m. ET

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