A LITTLE ABOUT ME: ORAL HEALTH AND WORKFORCE POLICY
Alignment and the Workforce

Definition

- Alignment is generally defined as the dynamic positioning or adjusting of resources in relation to each other in order to achieve a specific objective.

What is required for workforce alignment?

- Matching the skills of workers with the demand in a given industry or field.

How is this done?

- Ensuring the “right” skills through specific education/training.
- Regulation is used as to validate specialized skills to protect public safety and inform hiring decisions of employers.
WORKFORCE ALIGNMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF HEALTH CARE

Everyone is a consumer of health care at some point
  • (a public good or a business model?)

Demand is complex to measure
  • Employers
  • Current consumers
  • Population health

Health care is highly regulated, because the services are “high stakes”
ALIGNING STATE HEALTH WORKFORCE POLICY

Regulation + Education + Reimbursement + Legislation = Health Workforce Alignment
THE CASE OF DENTAL THERAPY IN VERMONT

How is demand measured?
- Population oral health
- Employers

What is known?
- Unmet demand for dental services among underserved populations (especially rural communities).

What was done?
- Legislation passed authorizing the practice of dental therapy in Vermont as a solution to increase access to care for underserved citizens.
DENTAL THERAPY: THE GOAL

“Increase access for Vermonters to oral health care, specially in areas with a significant volume of patients who are low income, or who are uninsured or underserved.”

— Excerpt from Sec. 1 Vermont Senate Enrolled Act 20
CURRENT STATUS

Legislation Passed
  • 2016

Regulation Defined
  • Board of Dental Examiners

Education Program under Development
  • Dental therapy program under development.
    • Strategies for clinical training

Reimbursement in Place
  • Vermont State Medicaid offers reimbursement dental therapists
ACHIEVING THE GOAL: WHAT NEXT?

Where will dental therapists work (demand parameter – supervision/collaborative agreement with a licensed dentist required)

• Dental practices
• Health Centers
• Other/new models?
NOW: DIVERSIFYING THE DENTAL CARE TEAM, EXPANDING CAPACITY

Dental therapists

• Add capacity for . . .
  • Basic restorative/surgical services
  • Comprehensive preventive services
  • Periodontal disease management services
• At . . .
  • Existing dental practices/clinics
  • New service sites (opportunities for jobs/economic development in underserved areas)

What is the value proposition (from every perspective)?

• Vermonters – increased access to oral health care
• Dentists/employer – what is the financial impact?
  • Initial vs. long-term
Medical/Dental Integration

- Dental therapists embedded into medical care teams could extend comprehensive (basic) dental care to patients in diverse health care settings
  - Long-term Care
  - Oncology
  - Pediatrics
  - Family Medicine
  - ETC.
CONSIDERATIONS

Innovative delivery models

Policy solutions

Stakeholder engagement
“HISTORY HAS ITS EYES ON YOU.”
- LIN-MANUEL MIRANDA

Questions/Comments/Want to connect?
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