Healthy Smiles for Employability Program in Near Eastside Indianapolis

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The Near Eastside (NES) Indianapolis community is subject to several negative social determinants of oral health, including low income, which can impede access to oral health care and put residents at a higher risk for oral health problems. The Indiana University School of Dentistry's (IUSD) Healthy Smiles for Employability (HSE) program aims to improve oral health, well-being, and employment outcomes in the NES and neighboring communities by providing dentures to low-income and uninsured residents and connecting them with local agencies that provide job assistance services. Program components of HSE include (1) program organization, (2) community engagement, (3) participant recruitment and enrollment, (4) dental and employment services, and (5) program evaluation. Collaboration with community organizations such John H. C. Boner Center, Wheeler Mission, People’s Health and Dental Center, and others serves as an immense asset to recruit HSE candidates, and provide job advancement and retention services, social services as well as other essential resources to HSE participants. The IUSD HSE Community Research Showcase exhibit will feature interactive components relating employability, oral health, and sharing the experiences of HSE participants.