

Dane County Dental Pain Initiative

PROGRAM REPORT July 2019



Background

ED dental visits were a problem: Madison hospital emergency departments (EDs) and urgent care clinics reported almost 5,800 patient visits for non-traumatic dental conditions in 2010. Usual care would typically include antibiotics, instructions to follow up with a dentist, and often a prescription for an opiate medication for pain control. Too often, patients returned with recurrent infections because of barriers to obtaining dental care.

Addressing the problem: In 2014, a local physician, public health coordinator and emergency dentist met to discuss creating a standardized, best-practice protocol for providers to follow when a patient presents with dental pain to emergency settings. The community dental care coordinator role was being developed simultaneously and would address the dental care access issue which resulted in preventable return visits.

The initiative grew: It included representatives from all Dane County hospital EDs and urgent care centers, the Oral Health Coalition of Dane County, local dental providers, Safe Communities' Task Force on Safe Prescribing of Opioids, and Dane County EMS to develop a jointly agreed upon best-practice protocol which includes prescribing recommendations for dental infections, non-opioid pain management and care coordination for definitive dental treatment, and was launched in February 2015. [More information can be found at: www.publichealthmdc.com/documents/ED-UCCDentalDataRpt201703.pdf]

Progress to date

- Clinical algorithm has been adapted and is being utilized by all EDs & Urgent Cares (UCs) [www.publichealthmdc.com/dentalpain]
- Some providers have incorporated the algorithm into their own SmartPhrases
- A Standardized SmartPhrase is being finalized, which can be embedded in each ED's & UC's Epic system for provider access and convenience. This will include all components of the protocol:
 - ⇒ Clinical algorithm
 - ⇒ Link to Malamed's local anesthesia videos
 - ⇒ Antibiotic and pain management prescribing recommendations
 - ⇒ Discharge process with contact info for the Dental Care Coordinator at More Smiles WI and faxing instructions for direct referral
- Non-Traumatic Dental Pain Protocol Implementation Checklist was developed

“The algorithm gives our providers the policy to back up their prescribing choice with the patient.”



Progress to date (continued)

- Dental Trainings were developed and have been provided to GHC and UW providers, (it was determined that UPH-Meriter provides in-house training for their staff). These hands-on Dental Trainings, in the administration of dental anesthesia, continue to be available upon request.*
- “Dental Chests” containing supplies for dental anesthesia and treating dental emergencies have been distributed to many EDs & UCs and continue to be available upon request.*
- More Smiles WI contact info is included in some ED’s & UC’s dental pain patients’ discharge summaries (UW-TAC and SSM UC in progress). SSM Health EDs recently added faxing the dental referral to More Smiles to their discharge process.



“I am now referring to More Smiles WI with clear instructions for patients to call.”

Results

- All ED/UC referred patients who contact More Smiles are given a dental appointment within 1 to 5 days
- Highest number of calls to More Smiles come from patients of healthcare organizations that have had the most training in dental pain protocol
- Repeat dental pain visits have shown a decline since 2016 in all participating EDs & UCs
- Number of ED visits for dental pain have been cut by more than half since 2014, dropping from 2,405 to 1,123 visits in 2018. Drop in UC visits is similar. The combination of this initiative, collaboration, and increased local dental resources may attribute to this positive outcome.

Challenges

- Inability to collect prescribing data to evaluate changes in prescribing practices
- Provider turn-over, which results in breaks in continuity and communication gaps
- Delays in making systemic changes (IT process, etc...)
- More Smiles dental care coordination is still underutilized by ED/UC patients (number of calls compared to number of ED/UC dental pain visits is low)

Next steps

- Group members will be contacted when SmartPhrase is operational; technical assistance will be offered
- A webinar for medical providers on dental pain management in emergency settings is being produced by Wisconsin Department of Health Services. Notification will be given when it’s available
- Reconvene group biennially to provide updates and refresher for new members

* Dental Chest or Dental Training Session requests may be made to Dr. David Gundersen: dfgund@gmail.com or (608) 443-8986