



Results of the Earlier Is Better project

Diane Flanagan on behalf of Earlier Is Better Partners CHAW Senior Project Manager dflanagan@chw.org

Funding for the Earlier Is Better (EIB) oral health project for Wisconsin's Early Head Start families ended Dec. 31, 2016. The five-year grant from the Healthier Wisconsin Partnership Program, a component of the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment at the Medical College of Wisconsin, utilized research methodology to measure its impact and outcomes. The EIB partnership included: Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin, Medical College of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Department of Health Services' Oral Health Program, Wisconsin Dental Association and Wisconsin Head Start Association.

EIB staff trained 210 home visitors/parent educators (HV/PE) to use a parent oral health education toolkit (POHET) and provide Wisconsin EHS families with the knowledge to make good oral health decisions.

HV/PE were surveyed before and after training to determine changes in their knowledge and confidence related to oral health. Survey results indicated the following positive trends:

- While 57 percent of survey questions indicated a high level of HV/PE oral health knowledge before training, there were significant increases in their oral health knowledge for the remaining 43 percent of the survey questions.
- HV/PE surveys indicated statistically significant increases in their confidence to provide oral health education to families following the EIB training. Confidence indicators ranged from 11 percent to 55 percent before training while immediately following EIB training, HV/PE confidence indicators ranged from 75 percent to 95 percent.

Parent/caregiver surveys were conducted before the first, second and third home visits where oral health education was provided by the HV/PE. From the first to the third survey, parents/caregivers reported statistically significant increases of the following oral health behaviors for their youngest-paired child:

- Dental home rates (64.1 percent to 73.8 percent)

- Visits to a dentist within the last 12 months (53.5 percent to 68.3 percent)
- Brushing child's teeth twice or more per day (65.7 percent to 78.8 percent)

The EIB partners leveraged the findings of the project to secure a four-year grant through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) that is focused on establishing a statewide integrated oral health program to reduce the prevalence of oral disease in pregnant women and infants. The new program, Healthy Smiles for Mom and Baby (HSMB), is managed by Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin and will build on the significant accomplishments of EIB by expanding the reach of oral health training to additional home visitation programs, current and future medical/dental providers and local health departments throughout Wisconsin. To sustain the positive impact of EIB the POHET training will be implemented via a technology platform to allow HV/PE access to these training modules online. The development of this web-based training is the combined efforts of EIB and HSMB and will be available by August 2017.

"This project demonstrated that HV/PE can be effectively trained in oral health education and also helped families understand the importance of a dental home for their children. This dovetails nicely with the WDA dental home initiative that seeks to have children seen by age one in a dental home. Prevention and early care are the best ways to address dental access," said **Dr. Tom Raimann** (Hales Corners), who serves on the EIB board.

The EIB Final Report and Executive Summary can be found at <https://www.chawisconsin.org/eib/>.

For more information, contact Diane Flanagan, senior project manager with Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin, at dflanagan@chw.org or 414-337-4564.

Delta Dental of Missouri licenses dental home kit

Delta Dental of Missouri has licensed the Wisconsin Dental Association Dental Home continuing education materials for its "Dentist by 1" outreach to 2,603 in-network Missouri dentists.

Since 2009, WDA Dental Home CE materials have helped 13,600 dentists in five states (Georgia, Indiana, Minnesota,

Missouri and Wisconsin) become more comfortable examining and treating infants in a general practice setting. Licensing fees and individual kit sales have generated more than \$16,000 in non-dues revenue for the WDA to date.

WDA member dentists and dental hygienists can access all nine dental home

DVD chapters and related print materials on WDA.org under the Dental Professionals tab. Log in to access this member benefit.

Early childhood oral health educational videos and materials for parents and caregivers also available on WDA.org under the Your Oral Health tab.