Be a Catalyst for Improving Oral and Overall Health in South Hampton Roads

Request for Proposals
Virginia Health Catalyst and United Way of South Hampton Roads

Background

Oral health and overall health are inextricably linked, yet there is often a disconnect between medical, behavioral health, and dental services in the healthcare system. Research shows an association between poor oral health and conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, poor birth outcomes, and Alzheimer’s disease. Pregnant women with periodontal (gum) disease may be up to eight times more likely to deliver their baby prematurely or with low birth weight. In 2016, Virginia Department of Health reported only 31.5% of pregnant women had seen their dentist in the prior year. More than twice as many babies from Norfolk (10.7%) are born with low birthweight compared to babies from Isle of Wight (5.3%); more alarming, the infant mortality rate for African American infants in Norfolk (18.2) is over three times the national average (5.9) and over five times the average for White infants born in the same city (3.4). Also, tooth decay is the most common chronic disease of U.S. children and teens. Poor oral health even affects a child’s academic performance and an adult’s ability to get a job. At the neighborhood level, the percent of adults having visited a dentist in the prior year ranges from 27.4% to 86.2% within South Hampton Roads (Fig. 1).

Given this, there is an opportunity to improve the oral health of pregnant women, children, and adults in South Hampton Roads, which, for the purposes of this project, encompasses Chesapeake, Isle of Wight, Norfolk, Portsmouth,
Suffolk, and Virginia Beach. In a survey of adults in South Hampton Roads, oral health ranked as a top ten health concern and community healthcare service that needs strengthening. Yet, each community within South Hampton Roads is unique in its challenges to improve oral health. The number of dentists per 100,000 residents ranges from 25 in Isle of Wight to 107 in Portsmouth.

Income rates reveal geographic and racial disparities as well – Hispanic households earn more on average than White households in Isle of Wight but bring home just 70% of the earnings of White households in Norfolk. Poverty impacts access to healthy foods, stable housing, employment, and health coverage, and all of which have a direct link to wellness. Many health conditions and social factors directly affect oral health and vice versa; understanding and improving these factors while also addressing oral health access issues will lead to better overall health and more comprehensive care. For example, poor diet can cause tooth decay, and, conversely, oral problems make it difficult to chew crunchy vegetables and meats. Across localities in South Hampton Roads, an estimated 147,000 people experience food insecurity, including nearly 19% of the population in Norfolk and Portsmouth.7 Addressing the root causes of food insecurity and oral health is the best way to improve outcomes and deliver comprehensive care.8

**Oral Health Investment Strategy**

Strong communities and engaged local partners are key to striving for accessible comprehensive care that includes oral health in South Hampton Roads. United Way of South Hampton Roads and Virginia Health Catalyst aim to invest in projects that seek to:

- Identify, understand, and/or address root cause or systems issues that will advance the integration of oral health into the health care system and/or improve oral health outcomes.

Projects may address any population that aligns with United Way’s service population, though at least one of the two selected projects must directly apply to pregnant women, infants, and young children.

**A Focus on Systems Change**

In order to make the most lasting changes for these populations, proposals require applicants to address population health indicators through a health systems change model. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a health systems change is defined as: “a change in organizational or legislative policies or in environmental supports that encourages and channels improvement(s) in systems, community, and individual-level health outcomes.”9 Similarly, population health not only accounts for the health of a group of people, but also includes the distribution of health within that population, such as the effects of health inequities.

Ensuring good oral health for vulnerable populations does not occur in a vacuum – it requires multiple systems to work together. Community-level organizations, corporations, and programs have tremendous knowledge of the problems affecting local populations and are well positioned to bring about solutions. To that end, this RFP is intended to identify collaborative projects that address oral and overall health issues at the systems level. Rather than focus on direct care, funded projects will address broad factors affecting people’s oral and overall health, like public health practices, social determinants of health, and health care policies.
Questions you may consider:

- How can we increase utilization of the Medicaid dental benefit for pregnant women? What messages and venues are/are not successful in reaching this audience?
- What root causes might be associated with dental clinics experiencing a high number of missed appointments? What strategies might be most effective in addressing these?
- What kinds of policies could childcare centers use to increase the number of children with dental homes?
- What barriers exist in implementing a successful referral system for both patients and providers? How could care coordination be improved?

**Grant Conditions**

**Eligibility**

- Applications may focus on any target population that aligns with United Way’s service population. Submissions that focus on pregnant women, infants, and/or young children are strongly encouraged.
- This is a collaborative project; each team must consist of at least three organizations, preferably representing more than one sector (e.g., nonprofit, health system, academic institution, government organization, etc.). One organization will be considered the project lead, and it must be a 501c3 nonprofit. However, United Way certification is not required.
- The project goal must incorporate population health measures and/or outcomes.
- Proposals can request support planning or implementation.

**Grant Term**

The grant will begin on January 1, 2020 and will end on September 15, 2020. Possibilities for renewal will be evaluated during the grant period.

**Grant Award Range**

This funding opportunity is made possible through a combination of funds. Half of the funds will come from Catalyst through funding from the state Maternal and Child Health block grant, and the other half will be matched by United Way of South Hampton Roads. We anticipate selecting up to two collaborative projects that are awarded up to $15,000 each. Funding is intended to be flexible in order to best meet the needs of the proposal and the broader community context.

Funding may cover costs associated with project planning or implementation, such as:

- Materials/supplies
- Curriculum/training needs
- Staffing (including stipends)
- Other purposes
Funding will not cover:

- Direct care
- Food

**Elements of Proposal**

The application is available in the Blackbaud Grantmaking System. Proposals should respond to the following components:

- A brief description of each participating organization, including key staff roles for the proposed project, a history of the partners’ work together, if applicable, and the motivation/drivers for the collaboration;
- A description of the proposal’s target population and how the target population aligns with United Way and/or maternal and child health.
- A project description that includes:
  o a summary of the community-level problem;
  o project goals and measures that demonstrate how you intend to measure and achieve progress towards systems change or systems alignment;
  o whether the project focuses on planning or implementation;
  o a general timeline that details the planning or action steps of your project;
  o specific population health measure/s the project addresses;
- A project budget and budget narrative;
- Any other pertinent information related to the project, such as:
  o identification of any potential barriers and challenges to achieving project goals, including policy issues, changes to internal procedures that the project may necessitate, etc.

**Application and Review Process**

*Blackbaud Grantmaking Application Portal*

All submissions must be submitted electronically through the online application portal. Please follow instructions for logging in and completing the application, which can be accessed from the [Agency Resources webpage](#).

*Submission Deadline & Technical Assistance*

Applications must be submitted by **Friday, December 6, 2019** in order to be considered for funding. The design of the application and submission process for this RFP is intended to support applicant flexibility in determining the scope of the proposed project and the amount of the grant request.

*Technical Assistance*

Technical assistance will be provided by phone, email, and by appointment, depending on the type and complexity of the assistance requested.
For assistance with proposal development, please contact Catalyst staff, who are available to help strategize about a specific proposal idea and will continue to offer technical assistance to the awarded teams throughout the grant period.

Catalyst contact: Brita Bergland, bbergland@vahealthcatalyst.org or (804) 424-2484

For assistance with the Blackbaud Grantmaking System, please contact United Way staff:

United Way contact: Teresa Stafford, tstafford@unitedwayhr.org or (757) 853-8500 x108

Review Process

All submitted proposals will be reviewed by a panel comprised of Catalyst staff and United Way community volunteers. The review process may involve a phone conference or interview with applicants on a case-by-case basis, though it may not be required. In each proposal, reviewers will look for:

- Well-defined goals that are realistic/tangible and measurable
- Detailed steps for planning or implementation of the project
- Distinct roles for each collaborating organization
- Clear commitment to improving population health through health systems change
- Target populations that are aligned with the population focus of one or both funders.

Timeline

- RFP release: October 2019
- Proposal submission: December 6, 2019
- Proposal review and notification: December 2019
- Project start date: January 2020

Grantee Expectations

Grantees are expected to:

- Participate in at least two meetings with the Catalyst and United Way during the grant term to provide updates, share learning, and address any concerns. Dates will be determined once grantees are selected.
- Send at least one representative from each project team to a meeting of statewide grantees in Richmond in March 2020 (date TBD) to share best practices and lessons learned, network, and learn about similar projects in different regions.
- Spend all awarded funds by September 15, 2020 and submit invoices documenting how the funds were spent.
- Develop specific action steps that can be used to transition the project from the planning stage into the implementation stage, or to continue the project’s implementation.
- Submit a final written report of the project, including the action steps, by October 31, 2020.
More Information

About Virginia Health Catalyst

Formerly the Virginia Oral Health Coalition, Virginia Health Catalyst (Catalyst) strives to ensure all Virginians have access to comprehensive health care that includes oral health. Four pillars that collectively impact health care guide Catalyst’s strategic vision: public health, clinical and community care, public awareness, and policy. Catalyst works with partners across the Commonwealth to bring about lasting changes to our healthcare system that can benefit everyone. Learn more about Catalyst here.

About United Way of South Hampton Roads (UWSHR)

UWSHR brings people and resources together to solve problems that are too big for any of us to solve alone. Established in 1923, UWHSR has built a diverse network of non-profit, corporate, municipal, and faith-based partners, each of whom are aligned around the common goal of reducing intergenerational poverty in Hampton Roads. UWSHR works intimately with community organizations throughout the region to increase educational success for students, improve health outcomes for families, and support military-connected families. Learn more about United Way of South Hampton Roads here.

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7 Food Insecurity Rate. Feeding America/GHRconnects.org. Accessed in October 2019 at http://www.ghrconnects.org/indicators/index/view?indicatorId=2107&localeTypId=2&localeFilterId=134193