

The Virtual Dental Home, Polk County, OR

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Background

The majority of underserved populations with the majority of dental disease do not take advantage of the traditional delivery system.¹ The most recent survey found that only 34% of Polk County students have had a dental visit in the last 12 months.² Long wait time for appointments and transportation issues are the most frequently cited barriers.

¹IOM report June 2011

²Oregon Healthy Teens Survey 2007-2008

The Virtual Dental Home



Project description

The virtual dental home is a community-based oral health delivery system in which people receive dental diagnostic, preventive and early intervention services in community settings. It uses telehealth technology to link dental hygienists in the community with dentists in dental offices, facilitating access to the full dental team and comprehensive dental care.

Project aim

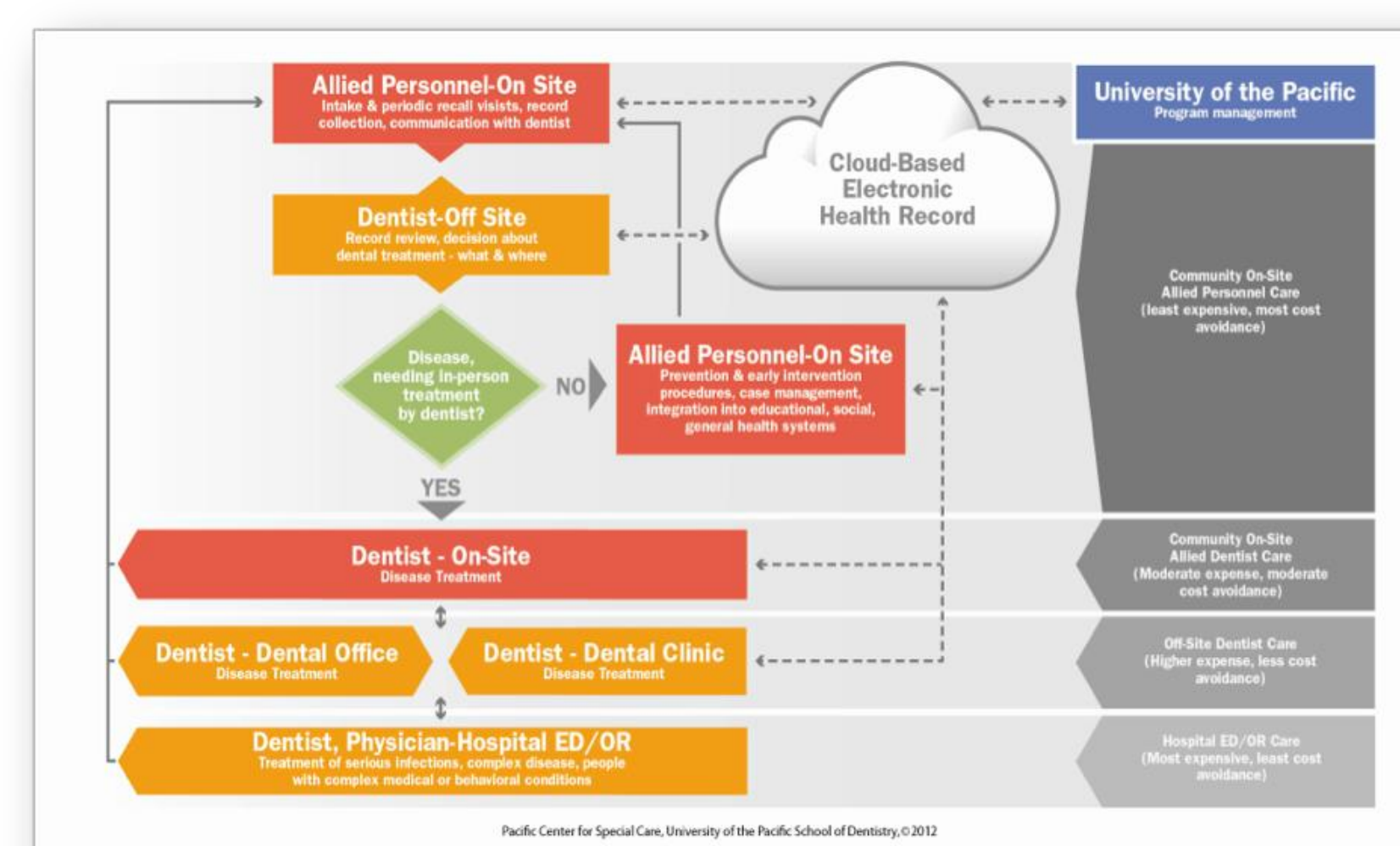
To demonstrate the feasibility and value of onsite dental services supported by tele-dentistry for underserved children in a school setting.

Objective

By June 2016 provide diagnostic, preventive, and early intervention services through the virtual dental home for 70% of children enrolled in K-2nd grade in the Central School District and two Head Start programs in Polk County.

Measures

- Distribution and collection of consent forms. Target 70% or 1,050 children.
- Percent of children who receive prevention services in the school setting. Target 75% or 787 children.
- By June 2016, 60% (472) of children receiving tele-dentistry services maintain oral health in their school setting.
- Demonstrate the viability of this method of providing care. Target date: 2016.



Progress to date

After months of preparation, services have begun at the first targeted elementary school. Initial findings suggest the project aim will be met. Parent and provider feedback has been positive. Equipment has been reliable and easy to use. Response to first round of consent forms was near 60% so second attempts will be distributed. School district superintendent support has been key to acceptance by school staff.



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