



Five Regional Dental Organizations First in Nation to Publicly Report Quality Indicators

WCHQ Members Commit to Transparency, Quality Improvement, Collaboration

MADISON (October 29, 2020) --- Five regional Wisconsin Collaborative for Healthcare Quality (WCHQ) members became the first dental practices in the country to publicly report oral health quality measures to the WCHQ reporting website, WCHQ.org.

The five organizations are founding members of the WCHQ Oral Health Collaborative and include: ForwardDental; Marshfield Clinic Health System; Dental Associates; HealthPartners (MN); and Children's Wisconsin. The practices serve a diverse demographic and geographic range of pediatric and adult patients in rural and urban communities throughout Wisconsin and Minnesota.

The first publicly reported measures are: caries risk assessment in children; ongoing care in adults with periodontitis; and, topical fluoride application in high risk children. The three oral health measures are commonly found in family practice settings that care for children and adults.

The WCHQ acquires and analyzes the quality measures from de-identified data submitted by the dental organizations. Measure specifications along with the individual organization reports are available to the public on the [WCHQ](http://wchq.org) website.

“WCHQ has proven that ‘what gets measured and reported publicly, improves faster,’” according to Chris Queram, President/CEO, WCHQ. “It has been exciting to see dentists work with our organization and join physicians and health systems to work toward setting a new standard of overall, holistic care. Our goal is to see a closer alignment between oral and medical providers in our region because a number of serious health issues must be managed in both settings.”

ForwardDental was the first dental organization to join WCHQ. Jesley Ruff, DDS, MPH, found the wealth of experience among the members of the collaborative valuable to his organization.

“This endeavor gave us the opportunity to collaborate with peers to improve oral health by publicly reporting information that is meaningful to clinical teams with a mission of better informing and benefiting the overall health of people living in communities we are privileged to serve,” according to Dr. Ruff.

For Children's Wisconsin, children's oral health is essential to ensuring good overall health.

“Children deserve great dental care and good health starts with a healthy mouth,” according to Lori Barbeau, DDS with Children’s Wisconsin. “The ability to collaborate with four dental organizations focused on improving dental care through measurement, public reporting and sharing best practices will help ensure that children receive the best care possible everywhere in the state.”

The integration of oral and medical health delivery is a goal at the Marshfield Clinic Health System, which has dental and medical clinics in central and northern Wisconsin. As Executive Director of the Marshfield Research Institute, Amit Acharya, BDS, MS, PhD, has developed dashboards that help dentists and physicians jointly monitor conditions that have an impact on overall health.

“Our goal is to improve the health of people in our communities. It is extremely helpful working with the members of the oral health collaborative to develop measures where we can compare our results to one another, network to share common practice issues, and improve our performance through collaboration,” according to Dr. Acharya.

David Gesko, DDS, is dental director and senior vice president with HealthPartners, a health system based in Bloomington, Minnesota. [WalletHub](#) recently ranked Wisconsin first and Minnesota third best in the country based on dental health scores across several indicators.

“Minnesota and Wisconsin are both known for delivering high quality health and dental care. As an integrated health system with dental offices in multiple states, we were excited to join the WCHQ Oral Health Collaborative to help develop and now publicly report our results on a starter set of dental quality indicators,” Gesko said. “It is a step in the right direction at a time when our patients need us to provide more information to them about the quality of care they receive and the value they derive from our services.”

Thomas Manos, DDS, MS, is owner and CEO of Dental Associates. Collecting data and using it to improve quality is not new to Dental Associates. A data-driven and patient-centric practice, Dr. Manos said they are looking forward to working with WCHQ as a partner to continue to develop quality metrics related to oral health.

“There is a critical link between oral health and general health and well-being. We know poor dental hygiene is linked to an increase in chronic and acute diseases,” according to Dr. Manos. “We are looking forward to working with our colleagues in both the medical and oral health communities to improve the overall health of the people we all serve.”

The WCHQ Oral Health Collaborative is working on its next set of metrics with a goal to help practitioners better manage patients with chronic medical conditions using the results of measures that incorporate medical and dental data.

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Established in 2003, the Wisconsin Collaborative for Healthcare Quality is a voluntary, non-profit consortium of organizations committed to publicly reporting comparative measures of performance to catalyze improvements in the quality and affordability of health and dental care in Wisconsin.