INTRODUCTION

The Harvard School of Dental Medicine (HSDM) is fortunate to have committed partners with whom we strive to transform dentistry and fully integrate oral health into health care education, delivery and financing to promote population health and well-being. Together, we launched the Initiative to Integrate Oral Health and Medicine in the fall of 2015 to engage in research and demonstration projects that contribute to the advancement of medical/dental integration. We are pioneering new models for teaching health professionals, providing team-based care, financing comprehensive care, evaluating the health and economic outcomes of integration, and advocating for a comprehensive approach to disease management.

New Oral Health Summit

In June of 2019, the Initiative to Integrate Oral Health and Medicine and the Center for Integration of Primary Care and Oral Health (CIPCOH) partnered to create a learning collaborative with attendees providing tools and technical assistance to promote medical-dental integration. The summit, titled Interprofessional Education to Practice, was held in Boston and focused on a practical approach to clinical integration of primary care and oral health and launching a peer-to-peer learning community. Speakers, panel discussions, and interactive case studies brought a dynamic approach to integrating interprofessional education in a practical and clinical setting. The collaborative work continues with our community of partners.

Integration Fellow: John Ahern

John Ahern, MD, DMD, MPH, PhD, has returned to HSDM to work with the Initiative to Integrate Oral Health and Medicine. Ahern will serve as an Integration Fellow through the summer of 2020.

He is working with the data repository and with colleagues at the Harvard’s T.H. Chan School of Public Health on integration issues and team-based care.
Presentations

The Initiative to Integrate Oral Health and Medicine and the Center for Integration of Primary Care and Oral Health presented at or visited:

- The Harkin Institute
- American Dental Education Association
- International Association of Dental Research
- Health Services Research Association Conference
- National Rural Health Association Conference
- Society for Medical Decision Making
- American Student Dental Association (ASDA) National Leadership Conference
- Academy Health Annual Meeting
- American Association of Public Health Dentistry
- The Santa Fe Group Annual Meeting

Integration Fellow: Lisa Simon

Lisa Simon, DMD, continues to serve as an Integration Fellow with the Initiative and will continue her work upon her graduation from Harvard Medical School this spring. Her focus is investigating cost effectiveness as well as how disparities in care impact oral and overall health.

Visits and Collaborations

In May 2019, Dean Donoff and Associate Dean Jane Barrow traveled to ProHealth to meet with leadership and discuss integration of medical and dental care. The Initiative, ProHealth and ProHealth Dental are partnering to measure and improve primary care patients’ oral health literacy.

In June 2019, Dean Donoff, Associate Dean Jane Barrow, and Drs. Riedy, Ticku and Brennan traveled to California to meet with executives at CareMore. CareMore is a Medicare Advantage plan piloting the integration of dental care for diabetic patients. The Initiative is exploring research and demonstration project partnerships with CareMore. Sachin H. Jain, CEO of CareMore, will be speaking at the 2020 Leadership Forum.

Initiative leadership and HSDM global health faculty members attended a special United Nations oral health event hosted by New York University focusing on universal health care.

The Initiative is currently collaborating with the HMS Center for Primary Care and HMS Biomedical Informatics Department to develop a data repository for research on medical-dental integration.
The Initiative Welcomes New Board Members

The Initiative proudly welcomed the following board members over the last year: Nick Alexos (Dentsply Sirona), Terri Dolan (Dentsply Sirona), Myechia Minter-Jordan (DentaQuest), Norton Travis (ProHEALTH Dental), Colleen Van Ham (UnitedHealthcare Dental), and Robert Zou (Arrail Group).

Supporters

We would like to thank the members of the Initiative for their generous support and continued collaboration in this important work.

Arrail Group  Pacific Dental Services
Blue Cross Blue Shield Massachusetts  Philips Oral Healthcare
Colgate Palmolive Company  ProHEALTH Dental
DentaQuest  United Concordia Companies
Dentsply Sirona  UnitedHealthcare
Henry Schein, Inc.  Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health
Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Northwest  Harvard Medical School
Life and Specialty Ventures, LLC  Harvard School of Dental Medicine

Visits and Collaborations (continued)

In December of 2019, Christine Riedy, PhD, MPH, and Jane Barrow, MS, attended the National Oral Health Value-based Care Convening in Orlando, Florida. The event was sponsored by DentaQuest and covered why moving toward value-based care in oral health is important, as well as the current and desired states of oral health care and reimbursement.

Executives from Anthem visited HSDM to explore research collaborations and a new partnership to further develop the evidence base for medical dental integration.

Research, Grants, and Policy

- Launched Phase Two of the Nurse Practitioner and Dentist Model for Primary Care, funded by a grant from DentaQuest
- Recruited new collaborators
- Created a policy brief based on our research for members of Congress interested in healthcare issues
- Assisted in drafting several sections of the 2020 Surgeon General’s Report on Oral Health, including the sections on the environment, integrated care, geriatrics, interprofessional education, and technology
- Developed new pilot programs for 2020
- Published papers in dental, medical and nursing journals
- Increased circulation of quarterly newsletter

Oral Medicine Fellowship

Alessandro Villa, DDS, PhD, MPH, assistant professor of oral medicine, infection and immunity, received a grant from DentaQuest to support the second year of the Fellowship in Oral Medicine and Oral Oncology. Paolo Fantozzi, DDS, has been appointed the first Oral Oncology Fellow.

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Publications


About

The Initiative to Integrate Oral Health and Medicine convenes academics, students and leaders from the business and healthcare communities to advance innovative ideas around the integration of oral health and primary care — a core academic mission of Harvard School of Dental Medicine. Research demonstrates that the benefits of providing oral health care include improved quality of life and a reduction of overall healthcare costs. Initiative Board Members provide informed guidance and serve as vital allies on issues related to the integration of oral health and primary care.