

Model 2: Integrated Preventive Oral Health Services

Detailed Steps for Workflow

1. WIC clients checked in and attended appointments. WIC staff used oral health questions in a questionnaire as an opportunity to introduce and refer clients to a dental hygienist who was on site. The WIC appointment was completed prior to handoff to the dental hygienist or public health nurse. The public health nurse can apply fluoride varnish, so in some programs the public health nurse was on site at the clinic in lieu of a dental hygienist.
2. The dental hygienist (or public health nurse) had designated space at the clinic to meet with clients. This space was in close proximity to the office where clients were meeting with WIC staff so the warm handoff was convenient.
3. The dental hygienist (or public health nurse) met with the client to offer oral health education, referral to a dental clinic and apply fluoride varnish. The dental hygienist could bill through their organization for fluoride varnish and refer back if within driving distance for client.

Change package: Strategies that were tested

The following strategies were tested and have initially been successful in increasing the percentage of pregnant women and young children in WIC/ PNCC programs that received preventive dental care (fluoride varnish) during a WIC clinic visit.

1. Professional on-site to deliver direct preventive oral health services

- The outreach director at a local Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) partnered to have a dental hygienist on-site to provide services. Dental hygienists can bill Medicaid for these services so there is a financial benefit for the health center.
- The local public health department partnered to have a public health nurse on-site to provide services. Public health nurses can bill Medicaid through the health department so there is a financial benefit for the health department.
- The WIC manager and FQHC outreach director communicated to identify WIC clinic dates for the dental hygienist to be on-site. This was done one month in advance. Benefit issuance days or high-volume clinic dates were ideal for the dental hygienist/public health nurse to attend.
- Staff designated an area (exam room, office, etc.) for the dental hygienist/public health nurse to work. They placed chairs outside of the identified space for clients to wait (if needed) and to create visibility of oral health services available.



2. Inter-professional partnership

- The WIC clinic dates that the dental hygienist or public health nurse was on site was scheduled one month in advance and shared with WIC staff.
- The dental hygienist or public health nurse was integrated into the WIC visit and felt like part of the WIC team. One WIC staff member was designated to provide the WIC schedule to the dental hygienist at the start of the clinic and ensured space was available.
- At the end of the clinic, WIC staff and the dental hygienist huddled to review fluoride varnish data and discuss any changes or improvement ideas.

3. Promotion of oral health services to WIC Clients

- Oral health slides were included on the health education Power Point that was looping on the TV screen in the waiting room.
- The On-Call text and voice reminder system included that the dental hygienist would be on-site. The message was customized for both pickup or scheduled appointment reminders so families could plan for dental services.
- Information about the dental hygienist and fluoride varnish was included in a flyer that was mailed out with appointment reminders.
- An “RDH is here today!” stand-up banner was placed in the lobby.
- The WIC clerk provided legal guardians with fluoride varnish application and release forms when they checked in for their WIC appointment. Guardians filled out the paperwork prior to their WIC appointment.
- WIC staff completed a warm handoff to the dental hygienist or public health nurse. Scripting was used to encourage clients to work with the dental hygienist. Scripting includes:

“The dental hygienist is here today visiting with our families. They will give you a free toothbrush and let you know about dental services in our area.”
- Chairs were placed outside of the dental hygienist room to create visibility.



4. Oral health knowledge of families

- A flyer was created to provide information on fluoride varnish, including how often children can receive fluoride varnish, what fluoride varnish does and the cost is free.
- Families learned that fluoride varnish can be applied up to four times per year. They made a behavior change to ensure children received more than one application.

5. Oral health knowledge of WIC staff

- WIC staff and dental clinic front desk staff were trained using the HSMB online oral health training.
- The FQHC outreach director provided fluoride varnish training to WIC staff on an annual basis.
- WIC staff learned how fluoride varnish works and the evidence base on the number of applications required to protect teeth. This resulted in more consistent communication and encouragement for families to see the dental hygienist or public health nurse.
- WIC staff include oral health topics at each staff meeting.

Eau Claire Impactful Tests:

Eau Claire tested a 'rooming in' process where the WIC client stayed in one room and the providers rotated in and out. The dental hygienist was one of the providers who rotated into the room to see the client. This system was discontinued due to clinic flow. Next, they tried blocking off half of the waiting room to make a separate area for the dental hygienist that was close to the WIC clinic. The area had an exit door that the families could leave from when finished with the hygienist. This made it convenient and easy to incorporate the hygienist as part of the WIC clinic flow.

Creating a routine process for WIC staff to handoff clients to the dental hygienist was key to increase the clients who took advantage of meeting with the dental hygienist. It was identified early on that WIC staff needed consistent messaging to promote clients utilizing the dental hygienist. WIC staff tested different scripted messages. The most effective message was, "The dental hygienist is here today visiting with our families. They will give you a free toothbrush and let you know about dental services in our area."



St. Croix Impactful Test:

A variety of methods were used to inform WIC families that fluoride varnish would be available at the WIC clinic. A fluoride varnish information sheet was included with the appointment reminder that was mailed to families (with scheduled appointments), One-Call electronic messages (voice and text) were used to let families know fluoride varnish would be available at upcoming benefit issuance days. WIC clerks gave the fluoride varnish paperwork/release to clients at check-in.

A specific test was done where the dental hygienist asked families where they heard about the availability of fluoride varnish. Thirty-one participants said they heard about fluoride varnish from the WIC clerk at check-in, two said the flyer in the mail and none mentioned One-Call. Clients seemed to report the last place they heard about the availability of fluoride varnish, which is primarily from the clerk when arriving at appointments. This is not to say that One-Call did not assist in getting them to the clinic, but a successful way to measure wasn't identified.

Oconto Impactful Tests:

Oconto County tested strategies to increase the number of children who received more than one fluoride varnish application. They identified benefit issuance days at the target to schedule follow-up fluoride varnish application and tested two approaches.

Reminder calls

- Public Health Support Staff (PHSS) used a fluoride varnish tracking database to identify children who had fluoride varnish three months ago—meaning they would be coming back to WIC for their benefit issuance appointment in the upcoming month. PHSS used scripting to remind families to bring their child to benefit issuance day to receive their second (third or fourth) fluoride varnish. In January 2019, seven families were called by the PHSS to bring their child in. Four families did and received the next fluoride varnish application.

Scheduled prior to leaving

- When WIC clients agreed to receive fluoride varnish, WIC staff would recommend scheduling the second application at their three month benefit issuance appointment. WIC staff would schedule the appointment prior to the client leaving and put a note in the Rosie system. PHSS checked with WIC staff prior to making calls to see if any families had fluoride varnish appointments scheduled. This influenced what script she used when making reminder calls.