**Oral Health in Primary Care\_Common Risk Factor Study**

**Funded by the DentaQuest Foundation**

The need for the incorporation of caries-risk assessment (CRA) as a component in oral health promotion in primary care is widely recognized throughout the network as an important activity to combat oral disease. At the same time, many are frustrated by the relatively low participation of primary care providers in this activity, as outlined in the environmental analysis. This project, by relating caries risk to activities that have been well established in primary care will bring a new and effective methodology to the table to enable a wider range or providers to offer this service.

The project builds on relationships established during year one, emphasizing inter-disciplinary collaboration that has historically been absent from CRA approaches. It employs inevitable next generation electronic technologies and advances quality and outcomes measures proposed by national agencies. To ensure that the project outcomes are consistent across the healthcare spectrum, the AAPD will engage a multidisciplinary advisory group to provide direction and input for the duration of the project.

Input from the multi-disciplinary advisory group, focus group and practice observation data from year one have been analyzed and integrated into the process and expected outcomes for the proposed project. An expanded group of stakeholders will be incorporated into the advisory group, building on current partnerships with the long-term goal of strengthening oral health and health care policy, broadening access to quality care and prevention, and expanding the integration of oral health into community-based systems.

Outcomes include:

* An evidence-based and standardized CRA mechanism based on input from medical and dental associations
* Identification of global, non-dental factors that correlate to caries risk
* Feasibility study of integration of CRA into the EHR

Nationwide Children’s Hospital (Columbus, OH) has an EPIC EHR system that fully integrates dental with general pediatrics and pediatric specialties. The availability of this data offers the unique opportunity to identify and evaluate relationships across the span of medical, dental and social services provided to children. The identification of global factors that earmark at risk children for multiple problems, including dental caries, through the analysis of electronic data variables has the potential to transform the CRA process.

Year one findings strongly suggest that simplification of the CRA process will facilitate consistent integration of oral health in well child visits and lead to improved inter-professional collaboration. Using factors already identified in well-child visits that do not require a tangential “dental” arm of the visit will enable primary care providers to incorporate oral health more easily into the practice work flow. Doing so within the EHR will enable providers to:

* seamlessly identify the individual caries risk of patients,
* access clinical and home care recommendations through automated decision support within the EHR
* produce individualized oral health information specific to the child’s risk and protective factors for after-visit instruction (AVI)
* track outcomes and incorporate oral health activities into quality improvement efforts

This will be an interprofessional effort leading to improved health outcomes for children, consistent with DentaQuest funding priorities. The advisory group will serve as the “brain trust” for the project and their input will be incorporated into protocols, all developed materials and products.