

# Dental Health Pilot Program

## Improving Dental Health for Long-term Care Residents

### Help improve the health of your residents by participating in a dental health pilot program!

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services Office of Dental Health (ODH) has developed a pilot program to deliver on-site interventional care to long-term care residents to reduce adverse health risks to residents in a cost-effective manner. Oral infections in older adults significantly increase the risk of pneumonia, acute diabetic problems, cardiovascular events and acute rheumatic arthritis episodes. This highlights the need for good oral health care for long-term care facilities (LTCF) residents.

In this pilot program, telehealth methodologies can be used to allow dental hygienists and dental assistant teams to be extended into LTCFs to deliver on-site care to residents and still collaborate with dentists.

### Benefits to participate in the pilot program:

- **Increased access to oral health care** for LTCF residents without increasing the care burden on existing LTCF staff. Telehealth mediated supervision will allow some hygienists and assistants to be extended to LTCFs without requiring dentists to be physically present also.
- **Hygienist-assistant teams will gather data** for the supervising dentist. The dentist will review the data, diagnose and provide a written treatment plan, including a 'disease control phase'.
- **Delivery of 'disease control' treatment** addressing infections and arresting decay, intended to reduce the risk of exacerbating medical conditions caused by co-morbid relationships with oral infections.
- **On-site care**, many times relieving the need for LTCFs to transport patients to a dental office.
- **Faster response for urgent care:** The ability to send hygienist/assistant teams to the facility without waiting for a dentist to find time will improve response times for urgent care issues.
- **More effective and accurate oral assessments** of patients performed by oral health care professionals using portable oral healthcare equipment.
- **More effective and accurate ongoing oral assessments** of patients performed by oral health care professionals.
- **Available training for LTCF staff** in oral hygiene techniques and recommended adjuncts and products.
- **Participation in a clinical study** that will measure the positive impact of disease control oral healthcare on overall patient health metrics.

### Date of pilot program:

The pilot program is currently in process, but will end in August 2026. Currently, this care program is only available through the ODH pilot program and can easily complement any existing arrangements LTCFs have for oral health care. It provides quick access for emergent care, reduced need to transport residents for emergent care and will not increase care burden on LTCF staff. If it is deemed successful, the Missouri Dental Board has agreed to consider modifying the existing rules to make this mode of care available to all LTCF's in Missouri.

### Contact to participate or for more information:

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