



The State Office of Rural Health

For Immediate Release

Contact: Bridgette Olson, Outreach Program Manager

303-832-7493 or bo@coruralhealth.org

Colorado Rural Health Center and DentaQuest Institute, Inc. Partner to Explore Integration of Oral Health into Rural Primary Care

Denver, Colo – The Colorado Rural Health Center (CRHC) is excited to announce a new partnership with DentaQuest Institute, Inc. to explore promising practices and approaches to integrate oral health into rural primary care.

“Rural populations face many barriers accessing oral health services,” explains Michelle Mills, CRHC’s CEO, “from low levels of water fluoridation, fewer dentists per population – to the significantly greater distances residents must travel to access care compared to urban populations. Together with DentaQuest Institute and other state partners, we believe we can advance oral health services available in rural areas, while working together to implement and evaluate best practice models.”

Through this partnership, up to five certified rural health clinics in Colorado will participate in a learning collaborative addressing the particular challenges and barriers facing rural residents access to oral healthcare.

Specifically, the clinics will actively engage in the MORE Care Phase 2 Pilot project. MORE Care (Medical Oral Expanded Care) is a recent initiative of the DentaQuest Institute that focuses on the integration of oral health into primary care. Phase 1 of the project launched in 2015, as a collaborative between the South Carolina Office of Rural Health, the Medical University of South Carolina, and six rural primary care practices.

“We are excited to expand the MORE Care Collaborative to Colorado,” says Dr. Rob Compton, President of the DentaQuest Institute. “The DentaQuest Institute is committed to improving the oral health of all and, through programs like MORE Care, we are working with a wide array of stakeholders to develop and implement innovative programs to reduce disparities and transform the systems of care, community, finance, and policy.”

This initiative focuses on action items like training primary care providers on oral health competencies, which will allow them to provide primary and secondary oral health prevention. The initiative will also examine and track the implementation of these

trainings and practices to develop and deliver a sustainable model that supports oral healthcare delivery and coordination with dental providers.

Over the next year, CRHC will lead the learning collaborative, including several learning sessions and monthly action calls – while also providing technical assistance to participating rural health clinic teams. The clinics will be responsible for establishing project teams, implementing changes, collecting required measurements, and sharing their experiences and resources with other clinic teams.

When asked about the expected outcomes, Mills supported the project design, citing the need for solutions that address rural disparities and lack of access to basic oral healthcare. “Rural areas require innovative solutions that meet their specific needs. We’ve partnered with DentaQuest in a way that allows for great flexibility and resources,” says Mills.

To learn more about DentaQuest Institute visit <https://www.dentaquestinstitute.org/>. For information about the Colorado project, contact CRHC at 303.832.7493.

About The Colorado Rural Health Center

The Colorado Rural Health Center was established in 1991 as Colorado's State Office of Rural Health. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, CRHC serves dual roles as the State Office of Rural Health with the mission of assisting rural communities in addressing healthcare issues; and as the State Rural Health Association, advocating for policy change to ensure that rural Coloradans have access to comprehensive, affordable healthcare services of the highest quality. For more information visit www.coruralhealth.org, call 303-832-7493, or call toll free 800-851-6782 from rural Colorado.

About The DentaQuest Institute

The DentaQuest Institute (dentaquestinstitute.org) is a not-for-profit organization committed to promoting optimal oral through efficient, effective, and high-quality care. Through its work to align clinical practice with evidence-based research, the DentaQuest Institute is helping oral health professionals find new ways to partner with patients to prevent and manage oral diseases. To learn more about the DentaQuest Institute, visit: <http://www.dentaquestinstitute.org/>

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