

Research Highlights

Topic: Health Care

Reichard, A. H., Turnbull, R., & Turnbull, A. (2001). Perspectives of dentists, families, and case managers on dental care for individuals with developmental disabilities in Kansas. *Mental Retardation*, 39(4), 268-265.

BOTTOM LINE

The status of dental care for individuals with developmental disabilities in Kansas was examined. Dentists, family members, and case managers reported general, but partial, satisfaction with the availability, accessibility, appropriateness, and affordability of such care.

KEY FINDINGS

- Our conceptual framework consisted of the following questions: Is dental care available, accessible, affordable, appropriate and accountable for individuals with disabilities?
- 93% of case managers thought lack of funding was the biggest barriers to obtaining dental care but only 4.2% of families reported that their child lacks dental care due to little or no funding.
- 46% case managers of case managers and 24% of parents indicated a weakness among their dentists in their knowledge of individuals with developmental disabilities.
- On the other hand, 80% of families and 57% of case managers indicated that dentists were friendly with individuals who have developmental disabilities.
- Although many parents and case managers were generally please with their interactions with dentists, a few reported problems such as the following: rushing through appointments, not taking time to explain procedures to the patients, barring parents from examination room, and being generally impatient.

KEY FINDINGS

cont.

- 81% of dentists said that they had some training on developmental disabilities.
- Some dentists in the focus group indicated that seeing a patient with a disability takes more time.
- A few dentists but not the majority of the dentists reported being very uncomfortable working with children with disabilities.

METHOD

- We used surveys with both open end and closed questions to collect data for this research. The open ended questions were analyzed using standard qualitative methods.
- Participants include three constituencies: parents of children with developmental disabilities, case managers at Community Developmental Disability Organizations and dentists.
- We followed up with a questionnaire of the 335 parents who responded to our first survey with 36% responding.
- After the surveys, we conducted seven focus groups with families, case managers and dentist to discover themes and sub themes in their discussions.

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

- Davis, R. G., Fox, M., Johnston, J., Langner, B., McAdams, R., Moore, J., Redmond, T., Mc-Cunniff, M., & Williams, K. (1999.). *Status and prospects for Medicaid beneficiaries' access to dental services in Kansas*. Lawrence: University of Kansas.
- Jones, R. B. (1998). "Savage inequalities": Can public/private partnership impact oral health access in the United States? *Journal of Public Health Dentistry*, 58(1), 2-6.
- Reichard, A., Moberly, R. L., Morningstar, M. E., Turnbull, H. R., & Umbarger, G. (2001). *Transitioning adolescents supported by medical technology*. Lawrence: The University of Kansas, Beach Center on Families and Disability.
- Waldman, H. B., Perlman, S. P., & Swerdloff, M. (1999). Managed (not to) care: Medicaid and children with disabilities. *Journal of Dentistry for Children*, 66, 59-65.

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