

Community Dental Care Strategic Plan

2016 –2021

Final Draft Approved by the Board of Directors on October 21, 2016



VISION

Our vision is that all people will have access to high quality, affordable dental care to improve their overall health in a convenient, caring, and respectful environment.

MISSION

Our mission is to provide culturally sensitive community oral health care, preventive education and professional training, and to advocate for access to all.

VALUES

- **Community** – We work in partnership to improve the quality of life for the communities we serve through preventive education and oral health care.
- **Compassion** – We are committed to helping and advocating for those who cannot help themselves and providing an environment that values the dignity of all.
- **Integrity** – We strive to do what is morally and ethically right, acting with fairness, honesty, and respect.
- **Professionalism** - We hold ourselves to the highest standard of excellence and ensure that the needs of our patients always come first.
- **Quality** – We are committed to rigorous evaluation, accountability, and continuous improvement for the good of our patients.
- **Diversity** – We believe diversity and inclusivity strengthens and enriches every aspect of our organization and our community.
- **Valued Employees** – We value our employees and empower them to best serve our patients.

Who We Are:

Founded by Drs. Vacharee and Andrew Peterson, Community Dental Care was one of the first private clinics in the Twin Cities that focused primarily on serving low-income and minority patients. To ensure continued access to high quality dental care for the large number of our patients enrolled in public programs, the clinic was incorporated into a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in August 2004 and began serving patients as a nonprofit in 2005.

Community Dental Care has expanded rapidly in recent years, and currently operates four dental clinics in the following communities: St. Paul, Maplewood, Rochester, and Robbinsdale. Our motivated, professional, friendly, and compassionate staff works as a team to provide quality, culturally competent patient care in a clean and safe environment.

In addition to providing culturally sensitive oral health care, Community Dental Care empowers people through preventive education, trains and broadens the perspectives of dental professionals, and provides advocacy and access for the underserved.

Community Dental Care welcomes and provides excellent care to the full spectrum of patients, ranging from individuals with full private insurance to those with no insurance.

Purpose of This Document:

This document is intended to be a living tool to help guide our organization toward more closely achieving its mission. There are many individual projects and strategies currently underway or in development that are not specifically mentioned in this document, but are none-the-less very important to the overall success of our organization. Likewise, there are unique strategies and goals within the different clinics and programs that contribute to the whole. The focus of this plan is to provide overall strategies and actions wherever possible that can guide our work going forward.

This Strategic Plan has been developed to be read and understood by a variety of audiences. Although specific goals and strategies are named, a fundamental goal is to articulate a vision and direction for Community Dental Care that can be infused into any particular strategy or action. Over time, it is anticipated that some of the strategies in this document will be modified to reflect changing dynamics that cannot be foreseen today. The expectation is that this Strategic Plan will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis to ensure that it will continue to lead Community Dental Care on the path toward more fully achieving its mission.

Background and Drivers of Change:

Minnesota currently ranks last – 50th of the 50 states – in Medicaid state reimbursement rates for pediatric dental services and 46th in funding rates for adult dental care services, as a percentage of commercial insurance rates. Because of the low rates, many private dental clinics do not serve low-income patients, resulting in a crisis of access where low-income patients with serious dental problems cannot get the treatment they need.

Dental care issues particularly impact immigrants, as these individuals may not have a cultural awareness of the importance of dental hygiene, may be ineligible for Medical Assistance, and may experience significant and long-standing oral health issues. Access to care may be further complicated when English is not the primary language spoken.

Community Dental Care functions as a safety net clinic for individuals who would not otherwise have access to dental care. However, the organization itself faces many financial challenges, including low Medical Assistance insurance reimbursement levels, threats to Critical Access funding, and competition for funding and grants. Staffing is threatened by competition for highly qualified dental professionals, amidst staffing shortages statewide for licensed dental assistants and dentists. Meanwhile, new and changing laws, State of Minnesota priorities, and the need to keep up with technological innovations keep a pressure on the organization to stay current.

Community Dental Care's employees work on a more challenging and complex patient population than comparable employees at for-profit dental clinics. This complexity adds to the cost of care for the organization. Recent rapid expansion has had some side effects – some clinics experience issues with equipment, some staff sense a change in culture, and all clinics struggle with staffing levels in the midst of a statewide shortage of licensed dental assistants. Patient failure rates, higher than industry average, contribute to increased costs.

Our Partners:

Community Dental Care works with a wide range of key partners including: our patients, their families and friends; interpreters; foundations; state and local government officials and agencies; policy advocates; private and nonprofit dental clinics; provider training programs; school-based education programs; and hospitals and clinics, among others.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The following list of goals and strategies will be studied and evaluated for potential implementation. Some strategies are ongoing; some are completely new. Some strategies, after careful evaluation of costs and benefits, may be dropped from the list while others may be added to reflect new opportunities currently unforeseen.

Goal A: Expand dental care services to meet the growing needs of low-income and minority populations.

Strategies:

1. Offer specialty dental services to more patients, including but not limited to: restorative treatment services for all patients; general sedation services; and oral surgery and orthodontics.
2. Implement clinic expansion in ways that will serve to strengthen the overall organization and will be financed without major interruption of operations so as to minimize potential impacts on existing clinics and services.
3. Partner with other health care providers to offer dental services at their locations, including teledentistry modalities.

Measures of Success:

- Increased number of patients served by Community Dental Care
- Increased number of services provided by Community Dental Care
- Clinic operations without major interruption

Goal B: Expand Community Dental Care's preventive education and outreach programs.

Strategies:

1. Partner in the clinic and in the community with school-based and community-based preventive services, community outreach, and train-the-trainer initiatives.
2. Extend outreach to physicians and dentists so that they educate and apply varnish to their patients' teeth as part of their routine care.
3. Support internal capacity to expand in-clinic preventive education, outreach, and educational activities.

Measures of Success:

- Decreased risk of dental disease as measured by the Caries Risk Assessment and Periodontal Disease Assessment
- Increased number of partner organizations
- Increased number of people served by partner organizations

Goal C: Expand training of dental professionals to provide quality dental care and preventive services to underserved and multicultural communities.

Strategies:

1. Partner with dental education programs to train oral health dental professionals.
2. Expand capacity to offer service-learning opportunities for dental professional students.
3. Increase funding opportunities to expand training programs for dental professional students.
4. Offer training programs to help dental professionals learn how to serve a more diverse population, including children. Play a leading role in the development of a training program that would be part of defining best practices for community oral health.
5. Develop a business model for training other dental clinics and organizations in Minnesota and nationally on how to create and operate quality based, culturally sensitive, financially feasible, community dental care services.

Measures of Success:

- Increased number of dental professionals trained to provide culturally competent care
- Increased number of communities with knowledge about how to work with new refugees and their dental needs
- Financially-viable program developed for training other dental clinics and organizations about how to provide culturally competent dental care

Goal D: Strategically participate in the development of public policy targeted to improve the oral health of the state's underserved populations.

Strategies:

1. Facilitate collaboration among dental providers, administrators and patient advocates to develop dental policies.
2. Strive to achieve adequate funding, simplify administration, and maintain an appropriate dental benefit set for Minnesota's underserved by advocating at the local and state levels.

Measure of Success:

- Strong, respected voice among dental advocates and policy makers for the improvement of Minnesotan's oral health

Goal E: Develop a comprehensive marketing and public relations strategy.

Strategies:

1. Develop internal capacity for marketing and public relations. Hire consultants or employees to bring this expertise to the organization.
2. Increase participation in community events and outreach. Sponsor events in tandem with larger initiatives that will bolster community participation and media coverage.
3. Speak regularly to student groups and other groups to share Community Dental Care's story.
4. Increase efforts to cultivate the buy-in and support of the community leaders of underserved populations in the areas where clinics are located.
5. Present at medical/dental conferences and events to colleagues in Minnesota and nationally.
6. Develop a marketing strategy focused on increasing number of patients.

Measures of Success:

- Comprehensive marketing and public relations strategy developed and implemented
- Higher levels of participation in outreach events and conferences
- Strong relationships with local community leaders
- Increased number of patients served

Goal F: Ensure adequate and diversified financial resources to sustain a healthy organization.

Strategies:

1. Develop foundation partners early in the planning for large requests. Cultivate new foundation partners, including educational foundations.
2. Systematically engage corporate and individual donors.
3. Develop relationships with community leadership to increase funding sources.
4. Pursue new sources of government grants, including MDH grants for training dentists. Look for opportunities for funding and coordinating care in a broader inter-professional way.
5. Proactively write grants for equipment.
6. Further research the impact of dental care on overall health and wellbeing so that future funders can understand this return on investment.
7. Recruit Board members to help with fundraising.
8. Pursue other potential earned revenue streams, such as income-generating seminars.
9. Maintain ongoing development and implementation of financial targets for reserves, debt management, investments, and other guidelines for sound financial management.
10. Increase and manage volunteer resources to leverage existing staffing.

Measures of Success:

- Increased fundraising levels from all sources
- Higher proportion of funds from individual donors
- Increased levels of earned income

Goal G: Maintain and increase organizational strength, capacity, and clinical integrity.

Strategies:

1. Continue to engage in a comprehensive succession planning process.
2. Sustain, strengthen, and diversify Community Dental Care's Board of Directors.
3. Continue to unify clinic protocols and systems while encouraging practice that meets the patient's individual needs.
4. Create facility design standards for existing and new clinics.
5. Identify and prioritize a maintenance schedule for facilities and equipment.
6. Improve systems and automation, including scheduling, intake, pre-service quotes, complaint resolution, and service reminders.
7. Decrease the number of patient failures.
8. Develop standards for clinical skills evaluation. Implement ongoing coaching processes.
9. Continue to focus on and increase training and cross training for staff.
10. Address clinic capacity issues and their effects on client privacy, scheduling and parking.
11. Continue to implement the annual Clinical Quality Assurance/Quality Control Audit program, including quality assurance policies, outside auditing, and Peer Review.

Measures of Success:

- Improved job performance through quality evaluation
- Streamlined and standardized systems and automation
- Decreased patient failures
- Increased patient and staff satisfaction with clinic facilities and parking capacity
- Compliance with accepted nonprofit standards

Goal H: Continue to identify and meet the specific needs of multicultural and underserved patients.

Strategies:

1. Maintain and promote the hiring of staff who are respectful and inclusive.
2. Create culturally specific training components for staff cultural competency.
3. Continue to foster interpreter feedback and relationship building.
4. Educate patients about their role in oral health so that they become partners in enhancing their health.
5. Develop tools for patients and interpreters that may include simple checklists for next steps and explanations of common dental procedures and terminology.
6. Assist patients with transportation issues, including helping interpreters in setting up medical rides for their patients.
7. Streamline interpreter-related processes: in-clinic appointment setting; communication regarding appointment confirmations; and client-insurance issues.

Measures of Success:

- Leadership in multicultural dental care
- Patients' increasing role in managing their oral health
- Patients' and interpreters' high satisfaction with clinic processes and access to care, including transportation

Goal I: Encourage staff engagement and retention.**Strategies:**

1. Increase efforts to promote employee engagement and focus on the mission.
2. Engage staff in the overall financial health of the organization by creating a formula that rewards staff when the organization is successful.
3. Promote communication opportunities between management and staff and between clinics.
4. Develop processes for staff appreciation and recognition, and encourage the development of peer-to-peer professional relationships.
5. Promote team engagement and collaboration so that every patient is every employee's responsibility.
6. Continue to develop and support opportunities for staff continuing education.

Measures of Success:

- Development and implementation of a mechanism for rewarding staff for organizational success
- High levels of employee satisfaction
- Increased employee retention levels across all positions