

## Innovations in Rural Oral Health Case Recommendations

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**Case Overview:** All 17 Nevada counties have a provider shortage designation due to very high ratios of population to provider. In rural and frontier areas, travel times to a provider can be several hours, also driving the shortage designation.

- More than 1 million people live in one of Nevada's 70 Dental Care HPSAs.
- Only about 30% of this population has their dental needs being met.
- About 190 additional providers are needed to remove this designation.

It is important for the UNLV School of Dental Medicine to provide educational opportunities for its predoctoral dental students to create awareness of this need in the state.

**Ask of the Group:** What strategies can the UNLV School of Dental Medicine employ to provide educational opportunities for predoctoral dental students to create awareness of the needs of underserved and vulnerable populations?

### **Current Plan of Action:**

- Conduct a curriculum review to assess the level of knowledge offered in the dental public health curriculum.
- Subsequently offer community-based experiences to students in underserved communities in Clark County and rural areas of Nevada.

## **Recommendations**

- ▶ Create robust community partnerships to allow students to get experiences working with the community and to increase access to care. Also “think outside of the box” about community organizations with which you partner - an example would be a church that has a health ministry where students could volunteer and build trust with the community.
  - Make sure the students have space when they come back together to share what they learned so they can celebrate wins and discuss challenges.



## *Recommendations, continued*

- ▶ Partner with other universities - even regionally if you are the only dental school in the state. Explore some remote sites as a way that students could get exposure to a community remotely.
- ▶ Give both dentists and dental hygiene students rotations through FQHCs to provide an appreciation for public health that may not otherwise be achieved in the classroom.
- ▶ Screenings at Head Start centers are often completed by RDHs. Have students do these, serving the needs of the community, fulfilling the Head Start requirements, and sharing resources to help children find a dental home.
- ▶ Have students attend health fairs, marches, and other events where a table could be set up to share resources or do screenings.
- ▶ Develop a solid partnership with the Hispanic Chamber to have students engage at the community health events it hosts.
- ▶ Partner with community health workers or health navigators so that students are getting another perspective of the community and ways to get immersed in the community.
- ▶ Long-term idea: focus student recruitment in communities that need access and service so that students will return to the community and also have shared language and culture.



Project ECHO is an all-teach, all-learn telementoring model focused on building the capacity of health providers.

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