



State Innovation Model (SIM)

August 24, 2015

Minnesota awards the third, and final, round of grants to test how emerging professionals impact health care teams

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) awarded five \$30,000 grants to test the potential for emerging professionals to strengthen health care teams and improve access to care. This is the third, and final, round of grant funding awarded for the [Emerging Professions Integration Grant Program](#) through Minnesota's \$45 million State Innovation Model (SIM) testing grant. The first round of grants was awarded to five organizations in June 2014 and the second round was awarded to four organizations in October 2014. MDH and the Department of Human Services (DHS) jointly received the federal SIM grant in 2013 and are using the funds to help implement the [Minnesota Accountable Health Model](#). The model helps providers and communities work together to reduce costs by supporting community and provider partnerships, team-based models of care, care coordination, Accountable Care Organizations, payment reform, and health information technology investments.

The Minnesota Accountable Health Model also seeks to improve care by supporting a team approach. In this context, SIM Minnesota is testing the effectiveness of community health workers, community paramedics, and **dental therapist/advanced dental therapists in helping organizations achieve Minnesota's goals related to health system transformation**. The initiative chose to focus on these providers because they have the potential to increase access for low income and underserved populations and to help fill current gaps in primary health care and dental care.

As part of the SIM grant, MDH and DHS will evaluate how integrating emerging professions into a team **environment changes the team's overall capacity and the patient's outcomes**. For example, does bringing on a dental therapist to the dental team free up time for the dentist to work on more complicated dental issues (e.g. root canals) or does a community paramedic help to prevent hospital readmissions with the hospital discharge follow-up services they provide.

The following organizations were awarded 12 months of start-up funding for round three. Each organization is also contributing funds toward the emerging professional they plan to hire.

- Community Dental Care, Maplewood (serving Robbinsdale Clinic) - Advanced Dental Therapist
- Hennepin County Public Health Department, Minneapolis - Community Health Worker
- North Memorial Health Care, Golden Valley (serving Crow Wing County) - Community Paramedic
- Northwest Indian Opportunity Industrial Center, Bemidji - Community Health Worker
- Open Door Health Center, Mankato (serving Marshall, Gaylord, Dodge Center, and Worthington) - Community Health Worker

Federal funds of \$148,060.82 accounted for about 60 percent of this \$244,568.64 project. Non-governmental sources accounted for 39 percent of the project.

More about emerging professionals

Community Health Workers are frontline public health workers who are trusted members of the community or often have a close understanding of their community. This relationship enables them to serve as a liaison or intermediary between health care, social services and the community to increase cultural competence, improve access to health care for racial and ethnic minorities, improve the quality of care for chronically ill people, promote healthy communities, and educate clients and others about access to and use of health care resources.

Community Paramedics are advanced paramedics that work to increase access to primary and preventive care and decrease use of emergency departments, which in turn decreases health care costs. Among other things, Community Paramedics may play a key role in providing follow-up services after a hospital discharge to prevent hospital readmission. Community Paramedics can provide health assessments, chronic disease monitoring and education, medication management, immunizations and vaccinations, laboratory specimen collection, hospital

discharge follow-up care and minor medical procedures. Community Paramedics work under the direction of an Ambulance Medical Director.

Dental Therapists are mid-level practitioners licensed by the Board of Dentistry, who are members of an oral health care team and provide evaluative, preventive, restorative, and minor surgical dental care within their scope of practice. Dental Therapists (DT) work under the direction of a Dentist. Advanced Dental Therapists (ADT) are certified by the Board of Dentistry and, with their advanced training and clinical practice, are able to provide all the services that a Dental Therapist provides plus additional dental services such as oral evaluation and assessment, treatment plan formulation, non-surgical **extraction of certain diseased teeth, and more. ADT's also** practice under the supervision of a dentist, but the dentist does not need to see the patient prior to receiving care or be on site during a procedure. Minnesota is the first state to authorize the licensing of Dental Therapists and certification of Advanced Dental Therapists. Dental Therapists and Advanced Dental Therapists play a key role in increasing access to dental care and preventing emergency room visits for dental related problems.

For more information about the Emerging Professions Integration Grant Program and the State Innovations Model testing grant please visit the [Office of Rural Health and Primary Care](#) (ORHPC) or contact Kay Herzfeld, Emerging Professions Coordinator in the Office of Rural Health and Primary Care, at (651) 201-3846.



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