

## **Building the Florida Oral Health Alliance to Improve Oral Health Equity**

The Florida Institute for Health Innovation (FIHI) Collective Impact for Healthier Communities Center of Excellence has developed an approach using the principles of Collective Impact, Results Based Leadership and Results Based Accountability™ to support leaders working collaboratively to improve the health of their communities.

The Institute will leverage our neutrality and expertise to provide the coordination, facilitation and leadership needed to build and strengthen a Florida oral health change agent network to accelerate collective action. We will form and provide backbone support to the Florida Oral Health Alliance (Florida Alliance), a statewide Oral Health Collaborative comprised of a group of broad-based multi-sector stakeholders with the insight, influence, resources and ability to achieve collective impact and create statewide systems change.

The purpose of the Florida Alliance will be to build viable support for policies and programs that aim to end inequity and improve oral health. We will begin to do this by addressing access to and utilization and provision of dental services for Medicaid-eligible children. Medicaid provides health insurance for 41.7 percent of Florida's children, totaling 1.28 million. We believe that substantial improvement in this system is a formidable first step toward achieving equity for our most vulnerable children.

FIHI will anchor the Florida Alliance through the establishment of a common agenda (i.e. a result), establishing a shared vision for change. Within the first 12 months, we will facilitate the Florida Alliance using a collaborative decision making process to establish a result for the year, to identify indicators of success and to design strategies for change. Using the principles of collective leadership, this process will use resources to build relationships and encourage trust, to provide coaching and support and to work through conflicts to reach common ground.

The Florida Oral Health Alliance will provide a space for maximizing existing connections, leveraging existing resources and developing the influence of consumer/community members and groups. Using a collaborative mindset, we will connect individuals from the neighborhood level with those at decision and policy making levels. This will insure that we are building our vision and strategy based on the experiences of those most affected by oral health disparity.

In addition to providing the Florida Oral Health Alliance with backbone support to coordinate efforts, facilitate joint action and disseminate knowledge and resources, FIHI will provide the Alliance with a choice of online platforms through which to communicate. FIHI will build a social media network of oral health enthusiasts from which we will facilitate bi-directional communication, host virtual gatherings and promote the exchange of innovative ideas. In addition, we will leverage the DentaQuest Foundation's Basecamp, building a page for the Florida Oral Health Alliance and connecting Florida stakeholders to regional and national oral health networks.

In order to insure that community needs and barriers are being addressed, a key component of this expansion will be the formation of a statewide community advisory council to include community members who have experienced disparity. The community voice will drive this initiative.

Collaborative leadership dictates that it is the group that ultimately chooses, crafts and approves the intended overall result, areas of focus, indicators of success and specific strategies. Through frequent face to face contact and master facilitation, FIHI will use a data-driven, results-based framework that has helped large-scale groups move from talk to action in order to achieve authentic collective impact.

In our state, the use of a health equity lens to define issues and design strategies for health systems change has not yet been implemented. Florida's current Medicaid and oral health environments make this the ideal time to bring the issue of oral health equity to the forefront of systems change.