

## **Family Medicine Education Consortium (FMEC)**

### **Bridging Gaps: Medical-Dental Integration for Veterans in Family Medicine Training**

#### **Enhancing Oral Health Care for Veterans through Family Medicine**

FMEC has launched a quality improvement and CME project to explore how primary care providers (PCPs) within the family medicine academic system manage oral health care. This initiative, which emphasizes care for veterans, is made possible by a generous grant from the CareQuest Institute for Oral Health, Inc.

#### **Project Overview**

This project aims to evaluate and enhance the approach of primary care providers (PCPs) in the academic family medicine system towards oral health care, with a specific emphasis on ensuring comprehensive access to care for veterans.

To achieve this, the project will assess family medicine residency programs through a series of surveys, interviews and other strategies at the program level. This input will help the FMEC assess and understand the current state of oral health and veteran services within these programs.

Utilizing insights from these assessments, FMEC will develop a Performance Improvement (PI) initiative, incorporating targeted training and clinical activities to foster improved medical-dental collaboration.

Ultimately, this initiative aims to equip PCPs with the knowledge and tools to better serve the oral and behavioral health needs of veterans. Moreover, FMEC will continue to disseminate the results and make any educational units developed during the project accessible to all family medicine residency programs for future use.

#### **Levels of Participation:**

1. **Membership-Wide Surveys:** FMEC will include survey questions related to this project in our monthly newsletters. Please watch for these questions and respond promptly to provide valuable insights.
2. **Targeted Interviews:** FMEC is recruiting faculty and program directors to meet one-on-one or join focus groups discussing veterans' health and oral health training in your programs. These short virtual meetings will be conducted at your convenience, and participating programs will receive an incentive. If you are available, please sign up to receive more information.
3. **Performance Improvement/Continuing Medical Education (PI/CME) Project:** FMEC is seeking 8 to 12 family medicine residency programs or family physician clinics to participate in this pilot project. The project will run for five months, from March to July 2025.

## **PI/CME) Project Benefits to Participants**

Participation in this project provides your residency program with the unique opportunity to:

- Enhance your residency curriculum with targeted oral health education
- Implement a simple veteran oral health pilot in your clinic
- Evaluate the implementation and use the learning for process improvement
- Make a significant impact on the oral and behavioral health care of our veterans
- Improve care and connect with other providers for shared learning.
- Foster meaningful partnerships with community providers and stakeholders
- Improve clinical outcomes and care for your patients
- Receive up to 20 hours of CME and Family Medicine PI Certification Credits. (Approved for up to 20.00 AAFP Prescribed credits)
- Meet ACGME (Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education) recommendations regarding residency learning networks/collaboratives

## **PI/CME Project Physician Engagement**

This PI/CME Project is tailored for family medicine physicians interested in oral health care, especially in serving veterans.

Physicians are eligible to participate in the project individually but are encouraged to invite colleagues within their clinic to join them. Additionally, Family Medicine Residency Program Faculty are encouraged to utilize this initiative to actively involve Family Medicine Residents in meaningful scholarly work and quality improvement (QI) projects.

## **PI/CME Project Learning Objectives**

After participating in the project, participants will be able to:

- Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the unique health challenges faced by veterans and the advantages, rationale, and implementation of oral health care within family medicine.
- Develop and apply veteran patient identification, screening, education, and referral for oral/behavioral health.
- Develop and apply evidence-based strategies to introduce oral health models within clinic teams and to health system leadership.
- Implement an oral health care pilot within the clinic setting and refine processes for sustained use.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the oral health care pilot and utilize findings to enhance practice improvement.

## **What's included in the structure of this PI/CME Project?**

- Two to three training webinars, no more than 60 minutes each
- Expert facilitation to implement veteran oral screenings in practice
- Support to utilize veteran and oral health education resources
- Baseline and 2 follow-up patient record data collection cycles, 8 weeks apart, using a simple spreadsheet
- Virtual meetings to discuss QI data and improvements for your practice

## **PI/CME Proposed Project Timeline**

### **February 2025**

- Project Launch, Recruitment and Preparation

### **March - April 2025**

- First project action period – FMEC-led education sessions and participant cycle one data collection

### **April - May 2025**

- Second project action period – Participant cycle two data collection

### **June 2025**

- Final data collection and reports from participating programs

### **June - July 2025**

- Collaborative Group meets to discuss outcomes

Interested parties are asked to contact Rebecca Bouck, FMEC educational projects consultant, at [rebecca.bouck@fmec.net](mailto:rebecca.bouck@fmec.net)