August 24, 2016 – CDC announced today that it is providing $3 million in grants over the next two years to six state health departments to strengthen intra-department collaboration between their chronic disease and oral health programs. Funded under Models of Collaboration for State Chronic Disease and Oral Health Programs, these states will each receive $250,000 a year over the next two years to involve the state oral health program in developing and implementing pilot projects to improve the oral health of state residents while preventing and controlling chronic diseases, such as high blood pressure (hypertension) and diabetes, and related risk factors such as tobacco use and obesity.

The six states — Alaska, Colorado, Georgia, Maryland, Minnesota, and New York — will test innovative approaches to building communication between state chronic disease and oral health program staff; incorporating oral health into chronic disease management systems such as those developed to manage diabetes and hypertension; increasing collaboration between state safety net medical and dental programs; and fostering participation of oral health staff in the development of state chronic disease prevention plans.

“Through these programs, we will facilitate close collaborative relationships that lead to integration between the state oral health programs and state chronic disease programs around common risk factors for oral and chronic diseases,” says Casey Hannan, MPH, Acting Director, Division of Oral Health, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. “The ultimate goal of these projects is to improve the public’s health by, for example, improving prevention and control of severe gum disease and oral cancers, encouraging people to quit smoking, and improving prevention and management of high blood pressure and diabetes.”

Funding has been provided for the following initiatives:

- The Oral Health Program and the Obesity Prevention and Control Program in the Alaska Division of Public Health will collaborate to train dental professionals and tribal dental providers to educate and counsel children and child caregivers to reduce child consumption of sugared beverages and promote increased consumption of water, including fluoridated water where available. The program will also seek to increase awareness and promote behavior change through public service announcements on this issue.

- The Oral Health Unit and the Diabetes and Cardiovascular Disease Unit of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment will develop and implement an enhanced model of care in which oral health and primary care providers collaborate to deliver comprehensive, patient-centered diabetes prevention and management in community health clinic settings. The program will promote bi-directional identification of pre-diabetic and diabetic patients by oral
health providers, bi-directional referrals between oral health and primary care providers, and care coordination to ensure at-risk patients receive appropriate oral health and medical care.

- The Oral Health Program and the Chronic Disease Prevention Section in the Georgia Department of Public Health will develop a toolkit for dental professionals to promote referrals to the Georgia Tobacco Quit Line for young women at high risk for tobacco use during pregnancy. The state will also develop and run targeted, culturally relevant messages for reaching these women in their communities.

- The Office of Oral Health and the Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Control in the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene will engage dental professionals to provide blood pressure screenings during routine dental visits and to counsel and refer patients with previously undiagnosed high blood pressure (hypertension) to medical providers for further evaluation.

- The Oral Health Program and the Cardiovascular Health Unit of the Minnesota Department of Health will test a program to encourage bi-directional referrals by dentists and medical providers to increase access to dental and medical screenings for periodontal (severe gum) disease and hypertension. They will provide tools for primary care providers to screen patients for periodontal disease and provide referrals to dental clinics for patients with possible periodontal disease who have not been to the dentist in the past year. In turn, dental professionals will monitor patients’ blood pressure to identify patients with hypertension and refer those with hypertension for further assessment by a medical provider.

- The Oral Health Program and the Chronic Disease Program of the New York State Department of Health will develop a healthy beverage media campaign targeting African American and Hispanic teenage boys in Western New York. Using a social media approach, messages will focus on the contribution of sugar sweetened beverages to chronic diseases such as obesity and tooth decay to encourage changes in beverage choices. Messages will also address how oral health is connected to overall health.

CDC works to improve the oral health of the nation by strengthening the capacity of states to monitor the presence of oral diseases and extending the use of proven prevention strategies, such as water fluoridation and dental sealants. For more information on oral health, visit the CDC website at [http://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/](http://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/).

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