

ODA Today

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Case Western Reserve University, The Ohio State University team up with Medicaid to create tobacco cessation resource for dental offices

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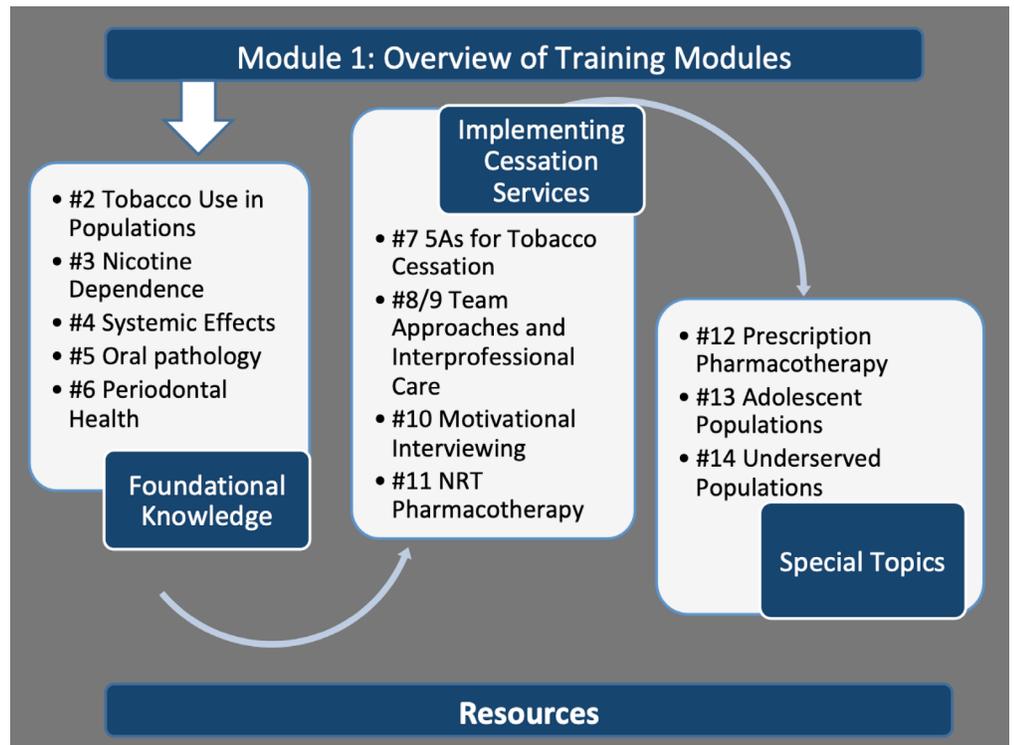
Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine and The Ohio State University College of Dentistry have teamed up to create online tobacco cessation continuing education modules for dentists and their team members in conjunction with the Ohio Department of Medicaid and the Ohio Colleges of Medicine Government Resource Center (GRC).

The project was initiated by the Ohio Department of Medicaid and its Medicaid Technical Assistance & Policy Program (MEDTAPP) after Medicaid began reimbursing dentists for providing tobacco cessation services to Medicaid patients in January of 2018.

"The tobacco cessation project is focused on improving the quality of care and health outcomes for Ohioans covered by Medicaid," said Don Sabol, Medicaid health system administrator with the Ohio Department of Medicaid. "As providers feel more confident and have a better understanding of tobacco issues and health concerns, they will be better able to help patients to try to reduce or eliminate tobacco usage. The fact that CE credit is available is a nice extra."

The Department of Medicaid started the project by reaching out to the Ohio Colleges of Medicine Government Resource Center to discuss ways to better engage dental providers in addressing tobacco use, said Heather Robinson, associate director of the organization. GRC works with all academic health centers and health science colleges in Ohio to partner them with state health and human services policy makers to better achieve their goals.

The Ohio Colleges of Medicine Government Resource Center then connected with Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine and The Ohio State University College of Dentistry to create a package of online modules and tobacco cessation resources for



dental providers. Continuing Education (CE) credit is available for these modules.

On the team, Lewis Claman, DDS, MS, from The Ohio State University College of Dentistry, and Catherine Demko, PhD, from Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine, serve as principal investigators with Denise Kissell, BSDH, EFDA, MPH from The Ohio State University College of Dentistry serving as the co-principal investigator. Together they proposed topics to cover in the modules and identified experts from both universities to present information.

The topics are broken down into three categories: foundational knowledge, which includes information about tobacco usage in Ohio and basic facts about the harmful oral and systemic effects of tobacco usage; implementing cessation services, which includes information about communication and how to

incorporate tobacco cessation into a dental practice as well as information about pharmacotherapy; and special topics, which includes information about special populations such as adolescents and underserved populations. Additionally, special topics also includes information about prescription medications written by dentists.

The CE modules include some patient scenario videos with mock interviews to help dental professionals to better understand effective communication techniques for talking to patients about tobacco cessation.

"Using the communication techniques and ideas that are provided in the modules could help make them more effective in tobacco cessation discussions with patients," Demko said. "Patients are more likely to be engaged in a technique that's not so directive, but is more of a dialogue that hears their perspec-

tive. The modules are an opportunity to refresh or upgrade dental professionals' skills around this topic. Dental practices can make a real difference in helping patients quit tobacco."

Kissell agreed, and said that the modules can help dental offices find ways to weave these conversations into things they're already doing, such as oral cancer screenings or when looking at radiographs and seeing bone loss.

The pharmacotherapy modules are another area that dentists may find particularly helpful, Demko said.

Kissell said the modules provide information about writing prescriptions for tobacco cessation products as well as clear directions about how each product should be used.

To create the modules, the team collaborated with dental professionals in the areas of community dentistry, dental hygiene, general dentistry, oral pathology, pediatric dentistry and periodontics. Health professionals provided insights in the fields of public health epidemiology, family medicine, social work, psychology, pharmacy and oncology.

The team developed 14 modules, each of which are about 30 minutes and qualify for 0.5 CE credits. The modules are designed so they can be watched in their entirety, individually or in any order, depending on the needs of the dental practice.

Claman said that the CE modules will help dental providers to be more informed on tobacco harm and methods of tobacco cessation. The website also has resources and information they can give to patients so the conversation can be more than just telling the patient to stop smoking.

"Our hope is the dental professional spends a little bit more time and is much better informed about getting patients resources," he said.

Moving forward, the universities will reach out to local clinics and Medicaid providers to provide information about the modules and tobacco cessation resources, Claman said.

Kissell said viewing the modules together as a team would be beneficial for dental offices. She said having a team-based approach where

everyone in the office is involved will be the most successful way to help patients.

"In a busy dental practice, dental hygienists will play critical roles," Claman said. "They see patients on a regular basis. Part of their major overall charge and directive is patient education, so this is an important aspect."

Demko said that dental providers in a community health clinic also have the opportunity to engage with other providers in the clinic for a comprehensive approach to tobacco cessation with patients.

While the modules are aimed at Medicaid providers, any dentist or dental team member can access the modules and receive free continuing education credit. The modules can be accessed at www.ohpenup.com/tobacco-cessation.html. Once providers have registered through the site, a code will be emailed within 48 hours to provide access to the modules.

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