

ADEA ISSUE BRIEF #11
Competency Domains for Oral Health Professionals
in Emerging Workforce Models

PREAMBLE

A second ADEA Invitational Summit on Allied Dental Education took place in Broomfield, Colorado, on June 10-11, 2010. This Summit focused on emerging oral health care workforce models, the education needed, and a set of principles to guide the development of educational programs to prepare these oral health care professionals in emerging workforce models.

The final Summit report outlined nine areas to be considered for competency domains for emerging workforce models, with a specific emphasis on providing care for the underserved populations of the United States. This charge was delegated to the ADEA CADPD Task Force on Collaboration, Innovation, and Differentiation (ADEA CID) for completion.

The purpose of competency domains is to provide general descriptions of the types of competencies oral health care professionals should have to provide quality care to the populations they serve. Task Force members reviewed the educational domains identified by Summit participants to effectively prepare students to meet the diverse oral health needs of underserved populations. There was agreement among Task Force members that these domains were applicable across all allied dental professionals, though the specific competencies and mastery levels within each domain would vary based on the specific workforce position as well as the level and type of supervision deemed necessary.

DOMAINS

Communication: Demonstrates effective and professional verbal, non-verbal, written, and electronic communication skills in interactions with patients, colleagues, supervisors, and interdisciplinary health care providers.

Culture and Diversity: Respectfully engages and interacts with individuals and groups, regardless of geographic location, ethnic, social, economic, linguistic, or cultural background to impact health and health seeking behaviors.

Evidence Based Patient Care: Utilizes critical thinking, evidence-based decision making, and appropriate technology following an established process of care, including appropriate referral, to meet the needs of the patient within a defined scope of practice.

Health Policy and Advocacy: Demonstrates knowledge of health care policy and financing systems for optimal promotion of health; demonstrates ability to serve as a patient advocate, assisting patients with navigating the oral health care system, and accessing resources on the patient's behalf.

Health Promotion and Disease Prevention: Demonstrates knowledge of wellness, health determinants, and characteristics of various population groups in the development of programs for individuals and/or communities; promotes preventive health policies through the legislative process.

Professionalism and Ethics: Demonstrates a commitment to the highest standards of competence, ethics, integrity, responsibility, and accountability in all professional endeavors; demonstrates self-assessment skills and a commitment to lifelong learning for continued professional growth and development.

Systems Thinking and Financial Management: Assists or coordinates oral health care strategies within health care systems to enhance the delivery of preventive, therapeutic, educational, and social interventions promoting behavioral change; demonstrates an understanding of reimbursement processes and technology to enhance and maintain an efficient and financially sustainable program(s).