

ARCORA

Foundation

Bending the Arc of Oral Health Toward Equity

Solutions Series Summary for May 21, 2025

Presenters: Chelsea Lindahl and Deborah Gurney (MultiCare)

Facilitators: Heather Wallace, Kerstin Tebbe

Host: Arcora Foundation, in collaboration with Collective Mind and community partners

Purpose of the Session

The Solutions Series launched to spotlight local initiatives improving oral health access across Washington State. This first session focused on Dental Resource Days—an innovative program delivering free, community-based dental services to uninsured and underinsured populations.

Project Overview

Dental Resource Days respond to needs identified in a 2022 community health assessment, which found low dental care access for Medicaid users. The program delivers mobile dental services in partnership with community food banks, especially targeting those already accessing social support services.

Key Partners:

- MultiCare's Center for Health Equity & Wellness
- Medical Teams International (mobile dental van)
- Sumner Community Food Bank and Nourish Pierce County
- Sea Mar Community Health Centers
- DentistLink (referral system)
- Lindquist Dental
- Local volunteers and interpreters

How It Works

- Clinics are hosted at food banks (Sumner and soon, Nourish).
- Appointments are scheduled in advance and supported with reminders to reduce no-show rates.
- Onsite volunteers assist with intake, blood pressure checks, and referrals.
- Patients are registered with DentistLink to help establish ongoing care.
- Pediatric clinics are also being added in the summer to increase access for children.

Lessons Learned

Success Factors:

- High demand, low no-show rates, strong partner collaboration, on-site language support

Challenges:

- Scheduling coordination with small nonprofits, need for extensive outreach and promotion, ensuring culturally appropriate and linguistically accessible services

Adaptations:

- Expanded volunteer roles, site visits for better planning, improved follow-up and intake systems, and consideration of evaluation strategies to measure long-term outcomes

Group Sensemaking Highlights

Participants used GroupMap to reflect and prioritize key takeaways, identifying:

- Partnerships & collaboration
- Reducing barriers to care
- Language accessibility
- Adaptive planning processes
- Importance of trust and community-embedded service delivery

Next Steps

- Future clinics scheduled through summer 2025 with plans to expand pediatric services.
- Continued refinement of coordination and evaluation methods.
- Ongoing invitation for others to present in future Solutions Series sessions.