



# Prepare to Care

## ••• Mouth Care Matters •••

Oral Health Education for Direct Care Professionals



### What is the Mouth Care Matters Project?

Mouth Care Matters is one of three major initiatives of the Lifelong Smiles Coalition supported by the Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation (DDIAF), and administered by Iowa CareGivers. <http://www.lifelongsmilescoalition.com/initiatives.php> The overarching goal of the Lifelong Smiles Coalition initiatives is to increase access to oral health for older Iowans who are homebound or living in a nursing home. During the first two years of the Mouth Care Matters project, an oral health specialty curriculum was developed by the University of Iowa Colleges of Dentistry and Nursing as the first specialty under the state-recognized, competency-based Prepare to Care curriculum which is tailored to the direct care workforce. The curriculum was tested with 97 direct care professionals, taught by dental hygienists trained as instructors of this curriculum. Early evaluation results show a gain in knowledge by those who completed the training. Other funders of Mouth Care Matters include Mid-Iowa Health Foundation (MIHF) and the Iowa Department of Public Health through a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Cooperative Agreement (#DP13-1307). The additional two Lifelong Smiles Coalition initiatives are the I-Smile Silver program and the Office of Education and Training at the University of Iowa College of Dentistry.

### Why Does Oral Health Care Matter?

The mouth is the portal of entry to the rest of the body. “There is no health without oral health!” (Surgeon General, Report on Oral Health, 2000.) Oral Health can affect general health in very direct ways.

- » Oral health problems can cause pain and suffering as well as difficulty in speaking, chewing, and swallowing.
- » Loss of teeth is associated with loss of self-esteem.
- » Poor oral health has been linked to many health problems, including stroke, heart attack, diabetes, and the number one cause of death in nursing homes: pneumonia.
- » Poor oral health can cause oral cancer, which results in nearly 8,000 deaths each year. More than half of these deaths occur among persons 65 years of age and older.

### What is Prepare to Care Oral Health Specialty?

The Oral Health Specialty Training is the first specialty under Prepare to Care, Iowa's Direct Care and Support Curriculum.

Through both classroom instruction and hands-on practice DCPs will learn:

- » The value of good oral health for the people you serve
- » To identify normal hard and soft tissue anatomy of the oral cavity
- » To identify common oral health problems
- » Observations to be documented and/or reported
- » Basic oral care, including brushing and positioning, for persons with and without teeth
- » To identify pharmaceutical side effects and medical conditions that impact oral health
- » How to use equipment, products, and a variety of approaches to support the independence of the person served
- » How to use equipment, products, and a variety of approaches to support the dependent person served
- » Techniques to use when dealing with challenging behaviors.

“Staff have been thrilled with the opportunity to attend and about how much they learned, especially how important good oral health is to overall health. With this increased knowledge they are placing more emphasis on oral care. They want to share what they learned with other staff.”

## How the Oral Health Specialty Training Benefits Employers of Direct Care Professionals (DCPs)

Help to set your organization apart with a new Prepare to Care Oral Health Specialty Training by:

- » Being a leader in the industry by participating in the pilot project and being among the first to receive the training
- » Using this training as part of your Quality Assurance Performance Improvement Process
- » Demonstrating commitment to providing excellent oral health care
- » Reducing costs associated with dental care
- » Reducing costs associated with hospitalization due to pneumonia
- » Receiving free training for your DCPs from experts skilled in oral care, not just brushing teeth
- » Providing better client care, including skills to deliver care in challenging situations during oral care
- » Reducing time spent and costs associated with repetitive training
- » Gaining knowledge of oral implants and equipment
- » Providing indirect benefit to “everyone’s” mouth care through shared knowledge
- » Keeping consumers and clients healthier overall – “there is no health without oral health”
- » Enhancing engagement of staff due to increased training
- » Gaining more specialized and trained staff
- » Ensuring staff are safe and knowledgeable while performing duties
- » Increasing efficiency and ease time constraints for those providing direct care
- » Reducing staff turnover by providing specialized, sought-after expertise

## Mouth Care Matters in the Future

With two additional years of funding awarded by DDIAF and additional support from MIHF, the focus will be on:

- » Providing additional training opportunities through more community college sites and to staff at the case study sites
- » Training for in-home care providers
- » Working with other Lifelong Smiles Coalition grant initiatives and stakeholders to develop and test oral health best practices (protocols) for use by direct care professionals.
- » Working with partners on sustainability and institutionalization of the Prepare to Care and Mouth Care Matters trainings into the overall infrastructure to support the effort.

The Oral Health Specialty Training can be taken by individuals who have already completed the Prepare to Care Core training, which is available free of charge both online and in-person through June 30, 2017.

## How Can Your Organization Participate in Mouth Care Matters Oral Health Specialty Training?

- » Direct Care Professionals (DCPs) must first complete the Prepare to Care 6-hour Core training before enrolling in a Mouth Care Matters class. Watch for upcoming face-to-face Core classes, or check out the free online Core training at <https://directcare.training-source.org/>
- » If you are interested in enrolling staff, please contact Mary Ann Young at Iowa CareGivers: [maryann@iowacaregivers.org](mailto:maryann@iowacaregivers.org) or call 515 223-2805. Visit [www.iowacaregivers.org](http://www.iowacaregivers.org) regularly as more information becomes available.

**Supported by the Lifelong Smiles Coalition**

<http://www.lifelongsmilescoalition.com/>

**To learn more about Prepare to Care, visit:**

<http://www.iowapreparetocare.com/>



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## Who are Direct Care Professionals?

Direct Care Professional (DCP) is an umbrella name for the 78,000-strong workforce in Iowa. Direct care professionals are defined as individuals who provide supportive services and care to people experiencing health conditions, illnesses, or disabilities and receive compensation for such services. They may work in home-based, community-based, or facility settings. They may have job titles such as direct support professional, supported community living worker, home health aide, direct care worker, and universal worker. The umbrella term also includes other job titles like hospice aide, personal assistant, and certified nursing assistant.