



SECURE

Housing Stipends for Rural Dental Student Rotations in Health Centers

HORIZON HEALTH

ORGANIZATION

HORIZON HEALTH

LOCATION

**HOWARD,
SOUTH DAKOTA**

PATIENT

VOLUME (2022)

28,130

STATE PARTNERSHIP

State funding to support costs associated with student clinical rotations

SUCCESS FACTORS

- Human resources staff support housing coordination for students
- Experienced dentist preceptors with a desire to teach the next generation of dentists
- Dental students with housing can participate without financial barriers

POSITIVE OUTCOMES:

- Recruitment Success - Half of current staff dentists completed a clinical rotation with Horizon Health (4 of 8)
- 37% retention of out-of-state dental students practice in South Dakota after graduation

THE CHALLENGE

South Dakota does not have a dental school operating within the state thus requiring health centers to rely heavily on the recruitment of dentists and dental graduates from neighboring states to staff local dental services.

STATE POLICY/STRATEGY

Horizon Health worked to create a partnership with the state of South Dakota to support health center-based clinical rotations for students attending dental school out of state. As a win-win scenario, dental students gain experience in a health center setting and the health center enjoys this strategic recruitment strategy for South Dakota.

Since 2007, the state partnership, administered through the South Dakota Department of Health's Office of Rural Health, has provided financial support for dental rotations within South Dakota Community Health Centers, including three sites at Horizon Health. This funding is used to offset organizational loss in productivity associated with hosting clinical dental rotations and housing for students. Additional funding is provided to the University of Minnesota (UMN) to support students' pre-rotation training. Since funding for dental student clinical rotations is associated with the state tobacco tax; students are required to learn about tobacco cessation as a part of their rotation experience.

STATE POLICY/STRATEGY IN ACTION

Dental students from UMN are provided the opportunity to do clinical rotations in South Dakota through three Horizon Health sites. UMN staff notify Horizon Health's human resources when students are assigned to their clinics. Preference is given to South Dakota residents. Horizon Health's human resource staff identifies and coordinates local furnished housing for UMN dental students with funds through the state partnership. Due to variations in housing costs and inequities across student experiences, Horizon Health began to assume the role of coordinating housing and payment for all dental student rotations. Horizon Health's direct payment from the state covers up-front housing costs for UMN students, staffing to support program coordination, and some loss in productivity associated with clinical rotations.



DENTAL STUDENTS AT HORIZON HEALTH CLINIC
SOURCE: HORIZON HEALTH

Each clinical rotation program includes cohorts of up to six students who support clinical sites for four weeks. The rotation experience varies by clinic site based on facility infrastructure and staffing. Patient consent is required to receive care by a dental student. To ensure dental students are prepared for their experience at Horizon Health, they receive advanced and standardized training, provided by UMN and on-site training by Horizon Health's clinical staff who serve as adjunct faculty with the university.

THE IMPACT

Since the program's inception, Horizon Health has increased their school partnerships with four other dental schools – University of Nebraska Medical Center, University of Iowa, Creighton University and Arizona School of Dentistry and Oral health and have hosted 107 dental students for clinical rotations. The housing funding for the other rotations has come out of Horizon Health's operating budget until recently when they received a grant from the South Dakota Delta Dental Foundation. There are current discussions focused on expanding support from the South Dakota Department of Health once the grant funds run out.

Approximately 37% of students that completed a rotation in South Dakota through this program have gone on to practice within the state at some point following graduation. In fact, 12 of the students either worked or currently work at Horizon Health. In terms of Horizon Health's current dentist staffing, four of their eight staff dentists completed clinical rotations at the health center while in dental school. Horizon Health is very proud of this retention rate.

“This is a perfect example of the power of partnership and what can happen if people with a similar passion come together to solve difficult and critical issues. This strategic partnership with the State of South Dakota and UMN, along with many new partnerships with other dental schools across the nation, has been a key component of ensuring access to oral health services for rural and frontier communities across the entire state.”

MICHELLE SCHOLTZ, CHIEF DENTAL OFFICER