

Abstract

Background: Care coordination has been found to improve health outcomes and efficiency of health care systems. Well-designed, targeted care coordination that is delivered to the right people can improve outcomes for everyone: patients, providers, and payers. We aim to determine the efficacy of care coordination in dental settings and present it as a solution to ameliorate barriers to access to dental care.

Method: Scientific literature was reviewed regarding the use and application of care coordination in dental settings specifically to determine the viability of this approach from the lens of its sustainability and benefits in the State of New York. We utilized PubMed, Scopus, Google Scholar, CINAHL, and Embase as empirical databases to conduct the literature search.

Results: Care coordination was found to be a valuable tool that could be used to improve the quality, efficiency, and accessibility of dental care. The focus of all care coordination programs should be on improving communication and collaboration between providers, reducing duplication of services, ensuring timely and appropriate care for patients, and assisting patients in navigating the complex healthcare system. It can be implemented in a variety of ways. The best approach varies depending on the specific needs of the patient population and the resources available. Based on the findings, recommendations were put forth to inform policy and promote the use of care coordination in dental settings. The recommendations focused on addressing policy and regulatory gaps. These recommendations possibly could support consideration for reimbursement of care coordination in dental settings by Medicaid in New York State.

Conclusion: Dental care coordination is a crucial strategy to address the burden of oral diseases in the State of New York. By adopting and implementing the proposed recommendations, the dental industry can better serve the needs of vulnerable populations, reduce the economic impact of oral diseases, and improve overall patient health and well-being.

Background

Care coordination entails purposefully arranging patient care tasks and exchanging information among all individuals involved in a patient's treatment to enhance safety and effectiveness in healthcare.

Care Coordination remains underutilized, but it holds potential to bridge access gaps. Helps to reduce the risk of dental complications in patients undergoing certain medical procedures, such as chemotherapy or radiation therapy.

Data from the National Survey of Children's Health (2020-2021) were analyzed. The study found that "The children who received coordinated care had significantly higher odds of not having cavities, having one or more preventive dental visits in the past 12 months, and having excellent/very good condition of teeth, compared to children who did not receive coordinated care."

{Ref: Chakraborty, B et.al. *Effectiveness of Care Coordination on Oral Health Indicators in Children* (Unpublished)}

Methods

We reviewed scientific studies on the use of care coordination in dental settings, specifically to assess its viability in New York State in terms of sustainability and benefits.

We extracted the findings from eight studies using a standardized protocol for relevance of the topic (Care Coordination and Dental Health). We summarized the results based on our evaluation of the topic.

Figure 1: Dental Clinic Care Coordination Flowchart

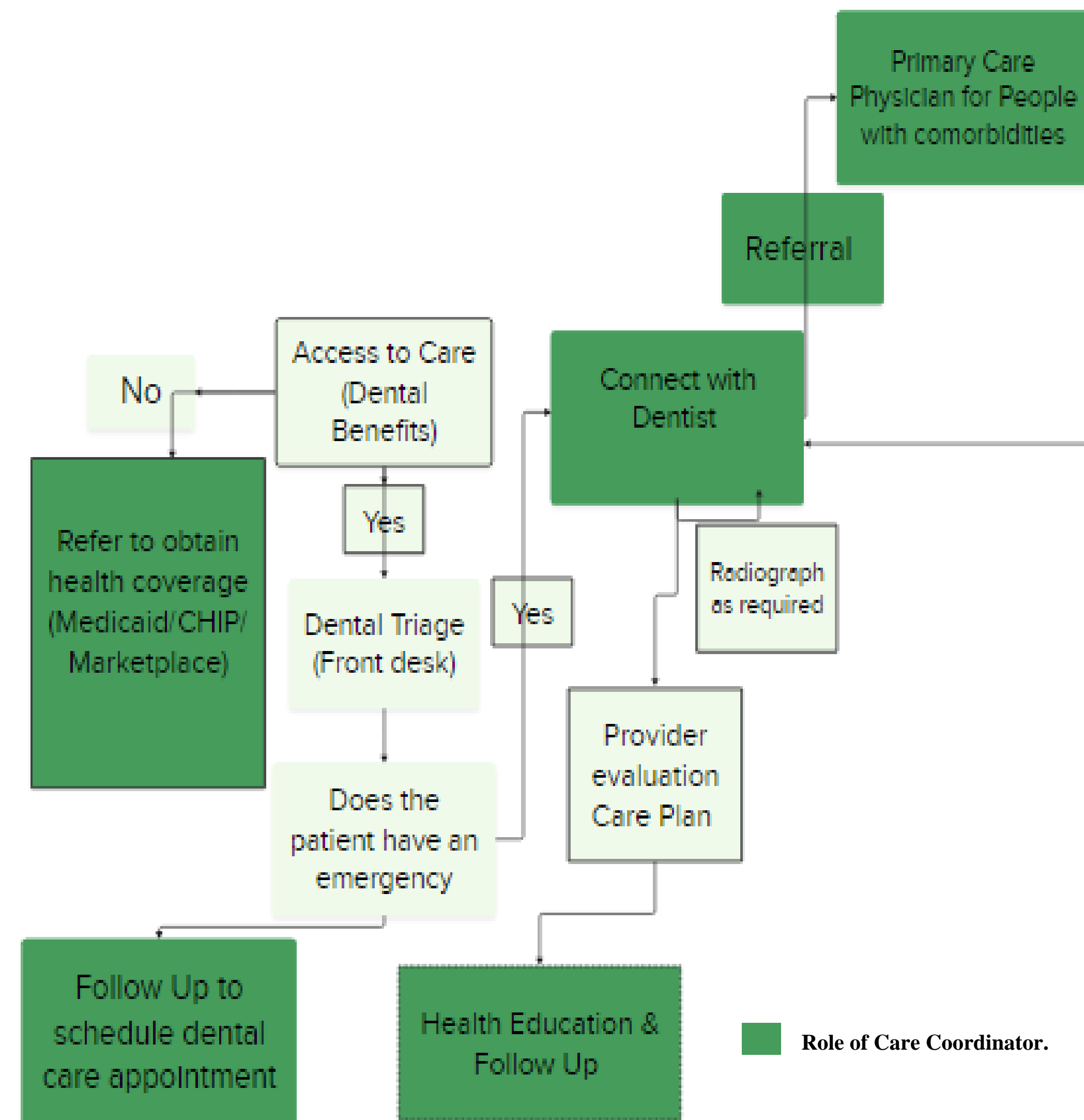


Table 1: How care coordination can be implemented in dentistry

Example	Description
1. Dentist & Primary Care Physician Collaboration	Care Coordination can be used to facilitate referrals from the dentist to the primary care physician and vice versa.
2. Dental staff & Social Worker Collaboration	Coordinate with a social worker to assist patients in finding financial assistance for dental care.
3. Dental Office Care Coordinator	Use a dedicated care coordinator to schedule appointments and follow up with patients post-treatment.
4. Dental School & Community Clinic Partnership	Collaborate with a local community clinic to offer care coordination services to underserved patients.

Results

Care coordination is a vital component of value-based care models, with a strong focus on improving patient outcomes while reducing healthcare costs.

Among children, care coordination plays a pivotal role in ensuring that children receive comprehensive and well-managed oral health services.

Well-designed, targeted care coordination that is delivered to the right people can improve outcomes for everyone: Patients, providers, and payers.

Individual components of Care Coordination include:

- Family gets help with coordinating the child's healthcare among those who need the services.
- Another team member is added to coordinate health care, including dental care.
- Improved communication between the dentist and other health care providers
- Helping with financial assistance and connecting with appropriate insurance agencies .

Conclusion

With its growing popularity, care coordination aids in meeting patient's needs and preferences to deliver high-quality, high-value healthcare.

Although access to care has improved dramatically over the years, promoting effective communication and coordinating care can help to create a more organized healthcare delivery system for everyone.

References

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