

Improving Oral Health Prevention

What's The Issue?

In FY 24 (the FY 24 OHPP (Oral Health Prevention Program) Grant was only 3 quarters long, so they could align with the IDPH fiscal year of July 1- June 30), four (4) out of the 126 (3%) pregnant/parenting clients who received information about oral health through the OHPP scheduled an appointment with a dental provider.

Why It's Important

According the CDC, women during pregnancy may be more prone to gum disease and cavities. Periodontitis has also been associated with poor pregnancy outcomes, including preterm birth and low birth weight. One (1) in four (4) women of childbearing age have untreated cavities. Children of mothers who have high levels of untreated cavities or tooth loss are more than three (3) times as likely to have cavities.

<https://www.cdc.gov/oral-health/hcp/conversation-tips/talking-to-pregnant-women-about-oral-health.html>

What We Did

The QI Team reviewed the current Oral Health Survey data in Qualtrics to establish a baseline and to assess reasons why clients were not scheduling dental appointments. A **Pareto Chart** was later used to compare the number of referrals made to the oral health program with the number of those referrals who actually scheduled a dental appointment

- Reviewed Oral Health Survey to ensure fewer/specific questions were being asked, built an automated follow up survey process in Qualtrics to identify barriers to accessing dental care.
- Work with Quality and Data team to monitor number of clients who schedule a dental appointment.
- QI team member assisted the Oral Health Case Manager with follow-up calls.
- Monitor reasons clients gave for not scheduling a dental appointment
- Use language line to assist in communicating in multiple languages

Lessons Learned

Clients gave common reasons for not scheduling a dental appointment which included:

- Language barrier
- Transportation
- Did not see importance of oral health prevention (would call dentist when problem arises)

Results

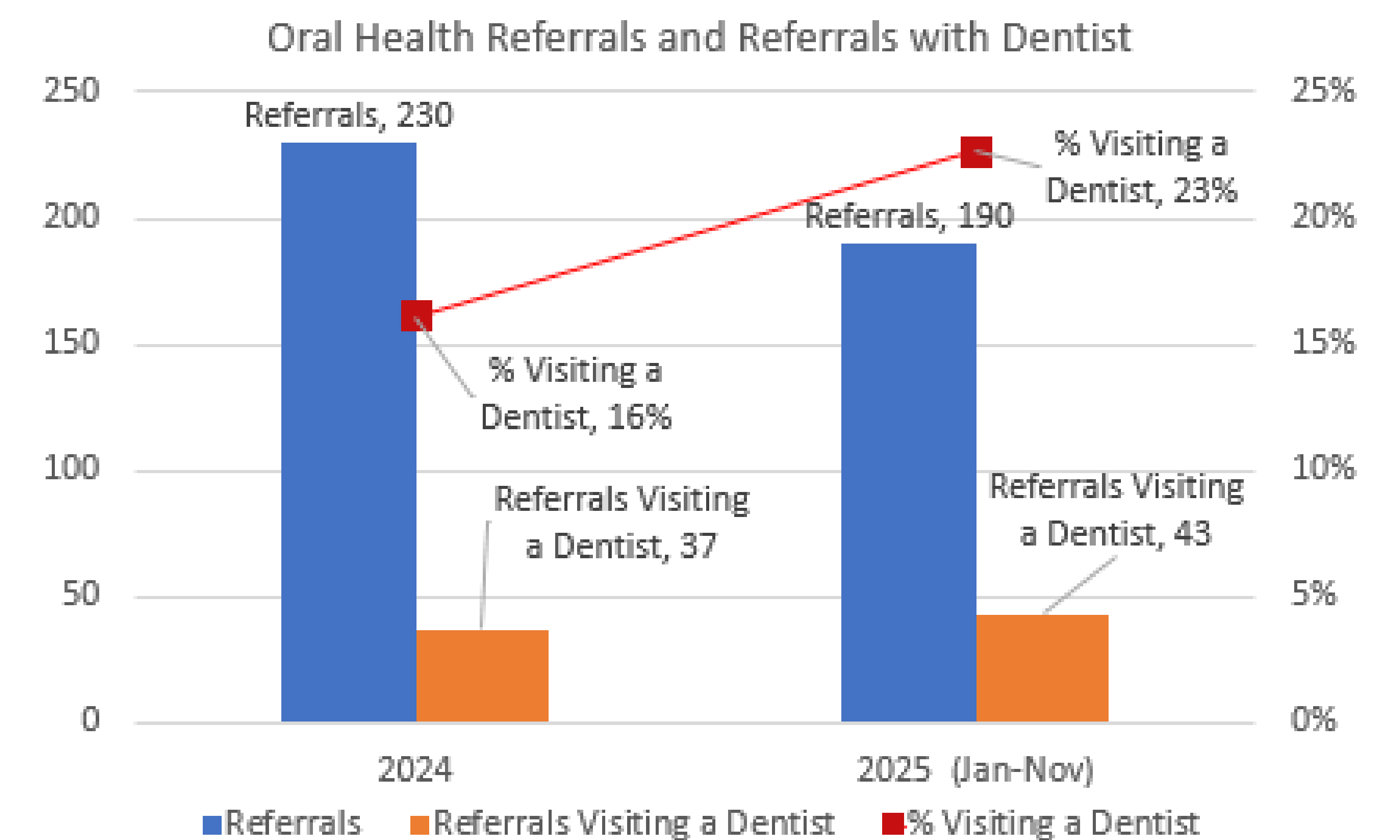
- Streamlining the Oral Health Survey made the process quicker and easier for the WIC Staff to incorporate into their office visit.
- From January to November 2025, 190 families agreed to participate in the Oral Health Program.
- The number of families accessing dental care services increased from 37 in 2024 to 43 in 2025 (January to November), showing a 7% increase.

Next Steps

- This QI Project will be continue in 2026 for closer monitoring
- Educational material will be updated and provided in multiple languages
- Provide information on Medicaid transportation

Team Members

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