



# Mobile Dentistry and Teledentistry Explained



# Content

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- Understand mobile dentistry
- Understand teledentistry
- Explore the value of both
- Discuss opportunities
- Identify resources
- Discussion/Q&A

# Mobile Dentistry

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- What is mobile dentistry?
- Where does it occur?
- What services can be provided?



## What is mobile dentistry?

**Mobile dentistry** refers to dental services offered outside of the brick and mortar of a dental clinic using portable equipment.

- Care is typically provided by dental hygienists and dental assistants.
- Services can be comprehensive, but are usually preventive.
- Includes dental care provided in dental vans.

## Where does mobile dentistry occur?

**Mobile dentistry** is carried out in places where people live, are cared for, go to school, play, access social services, and receive other healthcare.

- Childcare programs and schools
- Primary care and behavioral healthcare settings
- WIC (Women, Infants, and Children program)
- Housing complexes and at-home visits
- Senior living
- Community events

## Where does mobile dentistry occur?

**Mobile dentistry** is an essential part of Oregon's dental delivery system. A significant percentage of Oregon children receive part of their dental care this way.

- In 2018, an estimated 8% of Oregon children received preventive dental services *only through a school co-located, mobile dental program*.
- Co-located, mobile dentistry is a win-win for schools, parents/caregivers, children, and providers.

<https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/201911/Downloads/CommitteeMeetingDocument/208819>

<https://oregoncf.org/Templates/media/files/reports/childrensdentalhealth.pdf>

## What services are provided with mobile dentistry?

- Availability depends on the types of providers involved and portable equipment utilized.
- Screening, preventive, and referral services are most prevalent.
- Services can be diagnostic and more comprehensive if a dentist is part of the mobile-care team.
- Mobile care provided via dental vans tends to be more comprehensive due to the presence of a dentist and more extensive equipment.

# What services are provided with mobile dentistry?

- Oral health assessments, exams\*, intra-oral images, and x-rays, diagnosis, and treatment planning
- Preventive care such as dental sealants, fluoride varnish, silver diamine fluoride, and teeth cleaning
- Anticipatory guidance and counseling on daily home care
- Referrals, appointment scheduling, and case management
- Surgical care\* such as extractions and fillings

\*These services can be provided if a dentist is part of the mobile dentistry team.

# Teledentistry

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- What is teledentistry?
- Where can it occur?
- What services can be provided?



# What is teledentistry?

**Teledentistry**, a subset of telehealth, refers to virtual technologies and tactics paired with dental services to connect a patient with their dentist.

- Direct to patient
- Dental-professional facilitated
- Real-time versus store-and-forward

## What is teledentistry?

**Direct to patient** refers to a live, two-way interaction between the dentist and the patient via (ideally) video-enabled phones.

**Dental professional facilitated** refers to when a dental professional (typically a dental hygienist) is with the patient in one location while the dentist is in a different location. The hygienist collects and transmits information, images, and video to the dentist. The dentist can view this information in real-time (live, during visit) or at a later time (store-and-forward).

## Where can teledentistry occur?

**Teledentistry** can occur or be paired with services in all of the same places as mobile dentistry **plus over the phone** (ideally video-enabled).

## What services can occur with teledentistry?

**Teledentistry** is the use of virtual tools to extend the possibilities and capabilities of mobile dentistry—it brings a dentist into the visit. Think of teledentistry as *virtual dentistry*. Services depend on:

- The people and providers involved in the visit
- The types of portable equipment being used

## What services can occur with teledentistry?

Because mobile dentistry is often limited to preventive care and assessments (due to the type of dental provider typically involved), connections with the dentist via teledentistry permit the following:

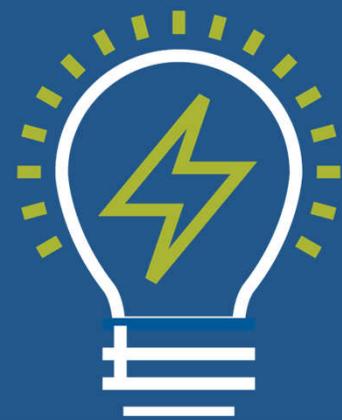
- Diagnoses of disease via the completion of exams and other diagnostic procedures
- Treatment planning

Note: If the visit is direct to the patient and by telephone only, the dentist is only able to perform an assessment or very limited exam.

# Why mobile dentistry and teledentistry?

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- Increases utilization of dental services and meets people's needs wherever they are.
- Leverages interprofessional/co-located collaboration toward a patient-centered care-delivery approach.
- Maximizes system and workforce resources.



# Increasing Utilization

- Despite collective efforts and for a variety of reasons, too many people go without needed dental care.
- Poor oral health has long-term effects that are associated with serious illnesses, which can exacerbate health consequences for:
  - Children
  - People with chronic diseases
  - People with behavior health conditions
  - Pregnant women
  - Seniors

## Increasing Utilization

- When other healthcare providers ask about, encourage, and facilitate dental care with their patients, people are more likely to follow through with accessing services.
- The convenience of co-located mobile dentistry and teledentistry increases utilization for those experiencing barriers.
- Survey data suggest that people are receptive to teledentistry and some may prefer it.

# Interprofessional Collaboration and Patient-centered Care

- Mobile dentistry and teledentistry effectively solves for some of the biggest barriers to care by enabling access where people are receiving other types of care and services.
- Co-located care increases patient satisfaction.
- Interprofessional collaboration/coordination paired with mobile dentistry/teledentistry can more effectively support people with dental anxiety and phobia.
- Teledentistry is growing as a preferred option for at-risk and/or medically fragile patients.

# Maximizing Resources

- Mobile dentistry is an efficient, effective, and economical delivery of dental care.
- Teledentistry saves time at the in-office dental appointment, allowing for more surgical procedures.
- Providing care across settings permits more focused use of dental operatories for surgical procedures.

# Maximizing Resources via the Virtual Dental Home Model

## Success of mobile dentistry aided by teledentistry:

- Beginning in 2015, an Oregon Dental Care Organization (Capitol Dental Care) deployed the **virtual dental home model using teledentistry** in three Polk County schools.
- An expanded team of practice dental hygienist/dental assistants provided preventive services and exams through teledentistry.
- This virtual dental home model kept 60% of the children healthy in the community setting; patients didn't need to step foot in a dental clinic or miss school.

# Oregonians and teledentistry

- 86% of patients would use teledentistry again
- 93% were able to “easily understand what the dentist told me about my concern.”
- 86% would recommend teledentistry to another person.
- 42% said teledentistry kept them from taking time off of work.

DentaQuest<sup>®</sup>  
Partnership  
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Communications Brief

Patients give high marks to their

**TELEDENTISTRY  
EXPERIENCE**

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[https://www.dentaquestpartnership.org/system/files/DQP\\_Teledentistry\\_Survey\\_Communications\\_Brief.pdf](https://www.dentaquestpartnership.org/system/files/DQP_Teledentistry_Survey_Communications_Brief.pdf)

# Opportunities and Interests

**Teledentistry is proving effective for increasing utilization by people with diabetes.**

- In 2019, large provider groups in the Gorge and Central Ore. piloted efforts to target persons with diabetes (a collaboration with Advantage Dental, an Oregon Dental Care Organization).
- Both regions successfully increased the dental visit rate.
- Interprofessional partnerships were critical for meeting the associated Quality Incentive Measure in each region.

**PacificSource is committed to spreading these types of partnerships across our regions.**

# Opportunities and Interests

- Increase the occurrence of teledentistry-aided dental care, co-located within physical health and behavioral healthcare settings.
- Increase integration of oral health more broadly within clinical practice.
  - Asking about oral health and referring/connecting patients to dental care
  - Adopting/using HIT and HIE tools and platforms to gain an integrated view of health records
  - As appropriate (for physicians), completing oral health assessments and other preventive oral health services within physical health appointments
  - Hosting mobile dentistry/teledentistry at your practice (as appropriate or if feasible)

**PacificSource encourages providers to consider how best to participate with oral health integration and to contact us to learn more.**

## Resources and FAQ

- Teledentistry FAQ for Physical Health and Behavioral Health Providers
- [Leveraging Teledentistry to Close Gaps in Oral Health](#)
- [Expanding Oral Health: Teledentistry](#)
- [Improve Practice Efficiency and Safety with Teledentistry](#)  
(webinar)

# Questions

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Heather Simmons, MPH

PacificSource Medicaid Dental Services Program Manager

Heather.Simmons@pacificsource.com

