

## **Concept Clearance**

### **Planning and Pilot Grants to Reduce Oral Health Disparities**

#### **Clinical, Epidemiology & Behavioral Research Branch Division of Population & Health Promotion Sciences**

##### **Objective**

This initiative is designed to support planning and pilot grants aimed at addressing determinants, prevention/reduction, or impacts of oral health disparities for specific populations where oral health disparities exist. Specifically this initiative will focus on populations and areas that are not fully addressed in the current National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR) portfolio, but that are highlighted in the NIDCR strategic plan to eliminate craniofacial, oral and dental health disparities. The NIDCR and the National Center for Minority Health and Health Disparities (NCMHD) will co-fund this initiative.

##### **Description**

Oral and craniofacial diseases and disorders are among the most common health problems affecting the people of the United States. As was highlighted in the U.S. Surgeon General's Report *Oral Health in America*, disproportionately higher burdens of disease and disorders occur in particular population subgroups. These findings led the NIDCR to develop a plan for action and focus resources on the elimination of disparities in craniofacial, oral and dental health amongst diverse U.S. populations. Further information on the Institute's, *Plan to Eliminate Craniofacial, Oral & Dental Health Disparities* is available at

<http://www.nidcr.nih.gov>, the NIDCR website. The NIDCR definition of what constitutes health disparities is consistent with that of the NIH and is found at the end of this concept clearance document <sup>(1)</sup> and in the *Plan to Eliminate Craniofacial, Oral & Dental Health Disparities*.

The funding of Centers for Research to Reduce Oral Health Disparities by the NIDCR in affiliation with the National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities is one of the action steps in the Plan. This initiative is designed to augment the current NIDCR health disparities portfolio by fostering research across a full array of subpopulations. This will be accomplished through assisting institutions to increase their capacity to conduct research by providing support for planning and pilot studies. Emphasis will be given to studies that are designed to address health disparities in populations that have minimal or no representation in NIDCR's current health disparities research portfolio. These populations include low-income rural populations, special needs populations including those with neurodevelopmental disorders, and Hispanic (Central American, Cuban-American, Puerto Rican, and other) Native American/Alaskan Indian, an Asian-Pacific Islander populations with oral health disparities.

The specific needs and determinants of oral health associated with subpopulations will drive the research areas of emphasis. In particular, this initiative will encourage research to develop, test and evaluate unusual approaches such as the use of non-traditional providers, methods and delivery

sites; research to elucidate and address social, cultural and environmental factors; the application of methods such as molecular epidemiology and other methods to eliminate oral health disparities are encouraged.

### **Funding Mechanism**

Two RFAs will be issued, one to support planning of research and another to conduct pilot projects. The proposed maximum interval of support for the planning RFA will be two years and the proposed maximum interval of support for the pilot projects will be for up to three years. The R-21 mechanism will be used with funding up to \$125,000 in direct costs per year available for each grant. Support for five planning grants and five to seven pilot grants is planned. Ultimately the product emanating from these grants should lead to the submission and successful award of RO1s and IRPGs.

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<sup>(1)</sup> Health disparities are defined as diminished health status of population groups defined by demographic factors such as age and socioeconomic status, geography, disability status, and behavioral lifestyles. These factors in turn reflect the diversity of the U.S. population as defined by gender, age, racial or ethnic identity, educational attainment and income.