



NETWORKS AS A SOLUTION TO SYSTEMIC PROBLEMS

Over the last decade, the Oral Health Progress and Equity Network (OPEN) has emerged from a nationwide conversation among policymakers, providers, public health activists, and grassroots organizers who acknowledge that the system of healthcare we have in place today is not working for people's overall health and wellbeing, and that it's time to work together to build a new reality. The network enables agents of change to come together to create the changes needed to advance our shared oral health goals. Together, we work towards specific and measureable targets to hit by the year 2020.

Changing systems is incredibly hard work. Systems are often difficult to

make visible, let alone to alter. They are collections of individual elements, linked together through multiple relationships that form an overarching purpose that neither those observing the system, or those within it, create with intention.

Systems change requires the engagement of multiple stakeholders with diverse perspectives to develop the appropriate strategies to make change. OPEN has taken a network building approach to changing the oral health system by engaging health equity advocates, community-based organizations, providers, clinicians, policy makers, and health justice organizers to build alignment and coordinate efforts toward realizing a shared vision, as well as achieving articulated goals and targets.

***"If you want to go quickly, go alone.
If you want to go far, go together."***

-African proverb



HOW THE NETWORK FUNCTIONS

OPEN operates with an awareness of the complex relationships of its members, and works to foster opportunities to grow and deepen the connections and enhance the coordination of efforts across every level: grassroots, grassmiddles, and grasstops. OPEN is supported and managed by a network infrastructure, including members from all levels of the network, responsible for seeking out new members and for cultivating the existing network. This is accomplished through a range of activities such as: keeping members informed of network activities and progress, weaving existing members together, providing technical assistance and resources, and responding to emergent needs. Members stay personally and virtually connected through a system of continuous communication, which includes the use of an online, collaborative platform (Socius), in-person and virtual meetings (at local, state, regional, and national levels) and other frequent interactions to build and strengthen

authentic relationships. Network activities are driven by its members, and because of this collective empowerment, individual network members are better equipped to create large scale change. Individually, we can make progress; together we transform the world.

BE A PART OF OPEN

Join this diverse network of individuals and organizations to ensure policy, financing, care and community are aligned to promote oral health as an essential part of overall health and wellbeing.

- Connect with a network member in your community or state
- Register for our virtual community at www.oralhealth.network
- Join us at our next meeting

The diversity of experiences, knowledge, and skills of network members, coupled with a shared vision and purpose, create the opportunity for greater collective impact. Only by working together in this way can we take on America's oral health challenges so that everyone has an equitable chance to thrive.

OPEN is putting the power for change into the hands of people who share the same set of beliefs about every person's right to a healthy life.
