United Concordia Dental and Harmony Health launch a pilot program to expand access to dental care for underserved Pennsylvanians



Camp Hill, Pa. (March 12, 2025) — A pilot program launched by United Concordia Dental and Harmony Health plans to study a new technology's potential — a point-of-care saliva test and mobile health app — for expanding access to care for underserved Pennsylvanians, including individuals with Medicaid and intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

"Research has shown that some of our most vulnerable Pennsylvanians face many challenges in getting the dental care they need," said Ed Shellard, DMD, president and CEO, United Concordia Dental. "The results of this pilot program will help us in determining how effective this new technology is in addressing access to care, as well as its impact on patient engagement and lowering disease risk and care costs."

"We are thrilled to partner with United Concordia to explore innovative solutions that reduce barriers to oral health care and improve health outcomes for vulnerable populations" said Kelli Bingham, Executive Director of Harmony Health. "We believe that technology can help overcome challenges to oral health access for many Pennsylvanians, and we are excited to launch this project and learn more about how that can be accomplished."

Advancing Preventive Care with Cutting-Edge Technology
The pilot will introduce a saliva test that provides real-time insights into oral health risks, such as cavities, gum disease and diabetes. A group of about 400 patients will receive the test either chairside at participating dental offices or at home with self-guided instruction. Patients selected for in-office visits will have a positive history of keeping regular dentist appointments; those chosen for at-home testing will have a history of appointment cancellations or no shows. Both at-home and in-office methods will integrate results data with a mobile app using artificial intelligence-enabled photography for guidance and personalized wellness reports.

Key goals of the pilot include improving care access for underserved populations, and assessing the new technology's effectiveness for enhancing preventive care and ability to be used on a larger scale. In addition, the study will evaluate the role the risk assessment results play in motivating in-office dentist visits.

A Collaborative Effort for Lasting Impact
This nine-month initiative will involve dental offices, healthcare professionals and state partners. At the project's conclusion, key success metrics such as patient engagement, utilization rates and behavior changes will be reported.

"If successful, this new technology could have benefits for patients and dentists alike — increasing patient hygiene education and disease screening, while easing some of that responsibility for dental care teams," said Shellard.

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