Cowlitz Family Health Center

CFHC

COWLITZ FAMILY HEALTH CENTER

About Cowlitz Family Health Center (CFHC)

- CFHC was established in 1970, providing family planning and health services in the National Guard Armory and was staffed by volunteers.
- Our Dental Clinics provide comprehensive and emergency services.
- Our primary payor in 2025 is Medicaid.
- Cowlitz Family Health Center's Mission is to provide comprehensive health services to all in need.
  - CFHC offers primary and preventative medical care, chronic disease management, family planning, behavioral health, dental, WIC, maternal support services/infant case management, and inpatient and outpatient substance use disorder treatment.

Counties we serve

- **Cowlitz**
  - Two clinics; Longview and Woodland
- **Pacific**
  - Our Mobile Unit operates two times per month
  - Clinic closed 12/31/23
- **Wahkiakum**
  - Our Mobile Unit operates time per month

Dental Assistant Training Program

- Due to staffing challenges, CFHC implemented a Training Program in 2022.
  - Staff hired did not have a WA Dental Assistant Registration or any post-secondary education in a Dental Assisting program at the time of job offer.
  - Open positions were posted internally and externally.
    - Candidates were selected for interviews based on reason for interest and length of time in previous roles if applicable.

New hires were required to apply for and obtain a WA Dental Assistant Registration upon acceptance.

Dental Assistant Training Program Cont.

- The program was designed to take approximately one year.
  - Completion was based on each individuals determination and progress.
  - A Skills Checklist was completed with each individual
    - There was no book work or quizzes; hands on training only
  - The wage started at 92% of what a new Dental Assistant would make, with one wage bump up to 96% before final completion.

Successes

- Increased staffing ratio
- Training was specific to CFHC
- Retainment rate of 50% -
  4 of 8 completed the program and are currently employed in a Dental Assisting role at CFHC

Challenges

- Wages and role in clinic
- Retainment rate and time spent hiring/training those who did not complete the program
- Pass/Fail progress tracking
- Timeline for training
  - Difficult to manage specific training while actively seeing patients

What happened next?

- After review of the initial training program, CFHC decided to work directly with InReach Career Pathways to incorporate a more structured training.
  - One candidate was selected to participate.
  - The program was designed to take approximately one year.
  - Training required approximately 10 hours of on-line learning courses; outside of the scheduled work day and was not paid. CFHC covered the registration fee and provided a coach during the term of the program.

Successes and Challenges

- School work allowed for additional training and a more structured timeline
- Trainee was not used to fill an open role and required a coach to be with them full time while working
- Tracking of progress; including assignments and quiz scores
- Limited detail in progress reports
- School was work at your own pace and could be difficult to navigate where the employee was to incorporate training specific to what employee was learning in school
- Cost

2025 Training Program

- Starting in January 2025, CFHC took what was learned from each Training Program and combined textbook learning, hands-on training, and real-world experience to develop the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in dental care.
  - Three candidates were selected to participate.
- Textbook learning is provided based on Edition 14 of Modern Dental Assisting.
  - Each Trainee receives a Student Workbook and a Coach.
  - Quizzes are completed based from Evolve Student Resources.
  - Quizzes are eligible to be taken up to three (3) times and require a passing grade of 80% or higher to move on.

2025 Training Program Cont.

- This program is designed to take approximately 10 months.
- The curriculum includes:
  - Infection control and sterilization techniques
  - Chairside assisting and operatory setup
  - Dental anatomy, terminology, and radiography
  - Patient communication and customer service
  - Instrument identification and tray setups
  - Specialized procedures, including restorative and surgical dentistry

Completion of Training Program

- Trainees must apply for an open position if available upon completion and are not guaranteed a position.
- Trainees complete the program with an active WA Dental Assistant Registration, receive a Certificate of Completion, and will be eligible to apply for any Dental Assistant role in Washington State.

Things to consider

- Continuance of Training Program once fully staffed
- Time commitment and dedication from staff training
- Cost associated with training for those who may not complete the program

Questions?