

SCOPE 2020-21: Virtual Community Outreach Amidst a Global Pandemic

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Introduction

Poor oral health and oral health literacy continue to serve as national symbols of social inequality in the United States. Poor oral health is more common amongst people who are low-income, uninsured, and/or members of racial/ethnic minority, immigrant, or rural populations with suboptimal access to oral health care. Children from low-income families have three times as many untreated cavities compared with children from higher-income households, and over 40% of low-income and non-Hispanic Black working-age US adults have untreated tooth decay, which leads to lost school and work hours, productivity, and job opportunities. To reduce these trends and negative impacts, there is a critical need for intervention at multiple levels to improve access to oral health care and oral health education. The Student Community Outreach for Public Education (SCOPE) program is University of the Pacific School of Dentistry's student-run, volunteer community service organization that serves the oral health needs of the underserved members of the Bay Area while fostering professional growth amongst students. SCOPE officers lead community health projects and encourage participation in service by the UOP student body. However, when the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic put an unprecedented halt to in-person community oral health events, SCOPE officers pivoted to using virtual platforms to continue providing oral health education to communities in need. Since populations that were disproportionately affected by COVID-19 are also at higher risk for oral diseases and experiencing oral health disparities, SCOPE's objective this year was to provide programming aimed at improving oral health and oral health literacy in underserved populations as well as opportunities for officers and students to develop professionally.

Methods

Due to pandemic restrictions, most SCOPE events were transformed into virtual projects. In past years, one of SCOPE's largest events is the Chinatown health care where volunteers provide dental screenings and oral health education to the public; this year, SCOPE found creative ways to continue the 25th annual Chinatown Health Fair virtually: SCOPE volunteers and faculty supported members of the Chinatown community by providing adult and child oral health workshops, followed by "Q/A with the dentist." SCOPE officers attended a collaborative event with UOP Pharmacy students where they shadowed telehealth appointments learned about Medicare, diabetes and oral health, xerostomia and medications, sleep apnea, and clenching and grinding. Furthermore, several officers helped plan and volunteer at the UOP COVID-19 vaccine clinics, one of the first in California to offer the vaccine to the community. In addition, one SCOPE officer conducted a literature review, gathering data about health literacy, oral health literacy, and low health literacy among older adults. Another officer served on a high school student panel with other dental professionals to introduce at-risk students to a career in dentistry. SCOPE also collaborated with UOP Club Medicine in Motion to raise awareness for special needs via a Halloween "Boo Gram" fundraiser.

SCOPE officers also contributed to SCOPE's legacy by updating SCOPE's online presence and branding. Officers updated the SCOPE Landing Canvas portal where all information about events are organized, updated the official logo, and dramatically increased SCOPE's presence on social media via Instagram.

Once allowed, SCOPE hosted their first official in-person event of the year at a local private elementary school, where volunteers discussed oral health education to first through eighth grade through games and simulations. Seventeen volunteers were divided into six classrooms to give a powerpoint presentation on "What to Expect at the Dentist," followed by activities including "Dissolving Tooth (Chalk Experiment)," "Sugar Bugs Magnet Game," "Dress Like a Dentist," and "Tooth Goop Flossing Game."

Results



Image 1: Connie Cheng, RDH at the 25th Annual Virtual Chinatown Health Fair



Image 4: SCOPE Chinatown Health Fair Animated Flyer (distributed via hard copy and social media)



Image 6: Dr. Tim Verceles, SCOPE volunteers, and UCSF volunteers at Dentist Day Elementary Education Event at SF City Impact Academy



Image 9: SCOPE volunteer Nicole Vega Valbuena demonstrating Tooth Goop at Dentist Day
 Image 10: 2nd Grader sorting "good vs bad" foods
 Image 11: SCOPE officer Rupinder Brar giving an interactive oral health presentation



Image 2: SCOPE Officer Roster 2020-2021

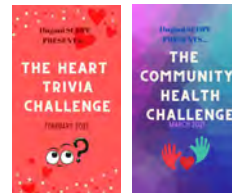


Image 3: Oral-health related trivia shared on SCOPE Instagram



Image 5: SCOPE officers volunteering at the UOP COVID-19 vaccine clinic for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities held March 27th, 2021



Image 7: SCOPE volunteers Philip Stahl, Victoria Phen, and Darius Tenorio presenting oral health education to 1st Grade class at SF City Impact Academy



Image 8: Dentist Day Elementary Education Event animated flyer



Image 12: SCOPE logo prior to 2021



Image 13: New SCOPE logos designed & implemented 2021

Serving Bay Area's Most Underserved: Senior Population, Special Needs Population, and Chinatown Community

SCOPE officers created new projects in order to continue to serve the populations of our largest historic events, including senior citizens, SF residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and Chinatown residents. The 25th Annual (Virtual) Chinatown Health Fair served over 50 residents through oral health instruction and awareness. Over \$200 in collaborative donations was raised with Club Medicine in Motion to support future Special Smiles events. Finally, one SCOPE officer began a literature review gathering data about health literacy, oral health literacy, and addressing low health literacy to create direction for future events.

COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic

SCOPE members helped screen, direct and lead the UOP COVID-19 vaccine clinics, which helped to successfully vaccinated more than 90% of the staff and students. This opportunity allowed officers to positively impact several of their target populations to serve, including the elderly community, residents of San Francisco, healthcare workers, disabled individuals, and children.

Improved Social Media for Increased Student Engagement

Officers increased SCOPE's media presence on Instagram from a post rate of 2-3x a year to 1-2x a month, successfully interacting with more students and potential volunteers. Social media following more than tripled in the past year. New logos were curated, voted on by all officers, and officially approved by Dugoni Publicity.

Dentist Day: Bridging the Gap Between Virtual and In-Person Education

72 children grades K-8 at a private-school in the Tenderloin district received interactive oral hygiene instruction including a dental presentation, oral health demonstration, and dental games such as "dress like a dentist, tooth goop, sugar bugs magnet game, and dissolving tooth. 80 oral hygiene goodie bags including toothbrushes, toothpaste, timers, and floss were distributed to children and teachers.

Conclusion and Future Directions

The SCOPE Program at University of the Pacific Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry is a student-run volunteer community service organization with the mission to develop dental professionals committed to improving the health of all people. When SCOPE community events could not be held in their normal form during the COVID-19 pandemic, officers continued this mission through a creative mix of virtual and safe in-person service. SCOPE's activities for the 2020-21 school year allowed for continued support for the communities we normally serve as well as successful outreach into new groups through the power of teledentistry. Next year, we hope to both capitalize on these new opportunities and resume more in-person events as allowed in order to increase access to oral health care and improve oral health literacy in underserved communities.

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