The NNOHA Survey Of Health Center Dental Salaries: Trends And Analysis

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2008 Health Center Dental Data

- **1,080** Health Center Program Grantees
- Over **850** Health Centers (80%) offered on-site dental services
- **2,299** Dentists and **892** Dental Hygienists in Health Centers
- **3.07 Million** Dental Patients Served
- **7.35 Million** Dental Visits
- **2,672** Encounters per Dentist
- **1,351** Encounters per Dental Hygienist
- Dental Team Productivity: **2,677**

*Calculated as encounters for dentists + hygienists in the numerator, with the denominator being dentist FTEs + 50% hygienist FTEs.*
Workforce: A Challenge for Health Center Oral Health Programs

- A recent report by the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC)
  - 48% of Health Centers reported at least one dentist vacancy
  - Almost half of all rural Health Centers have had a vacant dentist position for 7 months or more.

- Nationwide in 2006 there were 169,895 professionally active dentists but only 1% (1,691) dedicated their career to serve Health Center patients.

- Nationwide there is a growing shortage of dentists, with more dentists retiring or leaving the profession than graduate each year.
Survey Of Health Center Dental Salaries

- NNOHA obtained funds for survey through the HRSA National Cooperative Agreement
- NNOHA worked with Baylor College of Dentistry and Dr. Kenneth A. Bolin in 2009 to develop and administer the survey
- “The purpose of the survey was to provide information and analysis on dental salaries, provider satisfaction, and recruitment and retention strategies at Health Centers throughout the country.”
- Final Report to be published soon!
Survey Design

- Dental Director and Executive Director listing obtained from HRSA
- Survey questions based on a survey published in February 2005 JADA
- Input on questions from NNOHA Workforce Committee
- Survey approved by Texas A & M Baylor College of Dentistry IRB
Responses

- Responses from all 10 HRSA Regions
- Survey completed by:
  - 578 dentists (including 317 dental directors)
  - 120 dental hygienists
  - 338 executive directors.
- The unduplicated response rate for the dental providers was 51.4% (406/790) and 43.1% (338/784) for the executive directors.
Provider Survey

Dentists & Dental Hygienists
Overview of Respondents

- **Gender**
  - DDS: 53.3% Male / 46.7% Female
  - RDH: 4.2% Male / 95.8% Female

- **Years of Practice**
  - 59.8% of the dentists and 52.5% of the dental hygienists have been actively practicing for **10 years or longer**
  - Median number of years: 5 years for dentists and 4 years for dental hygienists

- **Lengths of Career at Health Centers**
  - 63.1% of the dentists and 83.9% of the dental hygienists reported that their current position was their **first and only clinical/dental position held at Health Centers**
## Career Prior to Health Centers: Dentists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dentist</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private practice owner/partner/associate</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>31.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental student</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private practice employed dentist</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local, state, public health agency/other community dental center</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grad dental program/specialty program</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commissioned Officer PHS/Military</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>561</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data Source: NNÖHA, National Network for Oral Health Access*
**Career prior to Health Centers: Dental Hygienists**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dental Hygienist</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private practice associate or employee</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>70.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental hygiene student</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local, state, public health agency/other community dental center</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>118</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Top 3 Reasons for Choosing a Health Center Career

• Dentists:
  ▪ 39.1% - Felt a mission to the dentally underserved population
  ▪ 13.6% - Loan repayment was available in Community Health Center practice
  ▪ 12.4% - Attracted by work schedule/leave policies/fringe benefits of Community Health Center practice

• Dental Hygienists:
  ▪ 42.3% - Felt a mission to the dentally underserved population
  ▪ 28.8% - Attracted by work schedule/leave policies/fringe benefits of Community Health Center practice
  ▪ 14.4% - Wished to practice dentistry/dental hygiene in a community-based setting

*One answer per respondent.*
Perception of Limited Autonomy

Recognizing the sometimes limited fiscal and human resources of a CHC, respondents were asked to what extent they felt limited in their professional practice autonomy.

- Dentists:
  - 57.3% - Felt limited to some degree in terms of practice autonomy

- Dental Hygienists:
  - 52.9% - Felt limited to some degree in terms of practice autonomy.
## Perception of Limited Autonomy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason Cited</th>
<th>%DDS</th>
<th>%RDH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree of patient compliance with treatment plans/appointment attendance</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited access to specialists</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrictive Medicaid policies/requirements</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited scope of services due to budget constraints</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited ability to provide comprehensive care due to budgetary issues</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited treatment offered at my Health Center</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited input into policy and budget decisions regarding dental services</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited patient population served at my Health Center</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of guidance in exercising professional judgment in treatment of patients</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The category of $95,000-$110,000 had the highest percentage of respondents at 27%.
Dental Salaries (Cont’d)

- The $50,001-$60,000 category (36%) was the largest category chosen by respondents.
Dental Salaries (Cont’d)

- Non-salaried or part-time dentists reported a mean hourly wage of $63.17 with a median of $60/hour.
- Dental hygienists reported a mean hourly wage of $29.64 with a median of $30/hour.
Comparison of Dental Salaries

- For Dental Directors, the category of $110,001–$125,000 was the highest, followed by >$140,000.
Benefits and Work Environment

- Continuing education (CE) allowances were offered to 93% of dentists and to 87% of dental hygienists with a median number of 5 days allowed for both groups.
- A median of $2,000 of CE expense was reimbursed for dentists and a median of $800 of CE expense was reimbursed for dental hygienists.
- The median number of days offered for vacation and sick leave combined was 26 days for dentists and 24 days for dental hygienists.
Benefits and Work Environment

- Respondents answering yes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>%Dentist</th>
<th>%RDH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continuing Education Allowance</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary Incentive Plan Offered</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>403b or Similar Plan Offered</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>403b or Similar Plan Match</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate Insurance Coverage</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate Amount of Leave Time</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Dues Reimbursed</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Benefits and Work Environment

- Respondents answering yes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>%Dentist</th>
<th>%RDH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adequate Number of Dental Assistants</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate Quality of Dental Assistants</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate Clerical Support</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate Administrative Support</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate Number of Dentists</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate Number of Dental Hygienists</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building and Appearance – <strong>Very Good or Good</strong></td>
<td>71</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment and Supplies – <strong>Very Good or Good</strong></td>
<td>69</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Benefits and Work Environment

- Dental Director administrative time and reporting structure.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean clinical hours for Dental Director</td>
<td>31.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean administrative hours for Dental Director</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental Directors reporting <strong>adequate administrative hours</strong></td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental Directors reporting to CEO’s</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental Directors reporting to CMO/ Medical Director</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental Directors reporting to COO/ Director of Operations</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Job Satisfaction and Career Longevity

- **80%** of dentists and **93%** of dental hygienists indicated intent to remain in Health Center practices.

- For those dentists who intended to leave Health Center practice, **61%** planned to do so in the next 2–5 years, **29%** within one year, and **10%** planned to leave as soon as possible.
## Reasons Given for Intent to Leave Health Center Practice: Dentists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enter private practice</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need to increase salary</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase scope of practice</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire more autonomy</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need a change in work hours</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan on retiring</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Reasons Given for Intent to Leave Health Center Practice: Dental Hygienists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Need to increase salary</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need a change in work hours</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase scope of practice</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enter private practice</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire more autonomy</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan on retiring</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: NNOHA (National Network for Oral Health Access)*
Executive Director Survey
Number of Dentists and Dental Hygienists

- The mean number of full time dentists employed was 2.7, and the mean full time dentists’ positions budgeted were 3.4.

- Correspondingly, the mean number of full time dental hygienists employed was 1.3, with the mean number of positions budgeted being 1.6.
Dental Vacancies

- Of the 338 executive directors surveyed, 132 (39%) reported having at least one dentist vacancy, and of those vacancies, over half (52%) were of greater than six months duration.
- In contrast, only 47 executive directors (14%) reported at least one dental hygienist vacancy, and of those vacancies, 40% were of greater than six months duration at the time of the survey.
- An additional 12 executive directors (4%) reported more than one vacancy in the dental component of their Health Centers.
Recruitment Methods

- The most commonly used method indicated by executive directors for recruiting dentists was “Working with the NHSC” (28%).
- The most commonly used method for recruiting dental hygienists was “Newspaper advertisement” (10%).
- Other cited methods were “Networking with Primary Care Associations”, and “Community Health Center web postings”. 
Salaries & Benefits of Dental Staff

- Budgeted salary for a dentist with 10+ years of experience
  - Mean: $145,015
  - Median: $120,000
  - The highest paid dentist on staff earning a mean of $124,765 and median of $122,209.

- Budgeted salary for a dental hygienist with 10+ years of experience
  - Mean: $58,357
  - Median: $61,046
  - The highest paid hygienists’ salaries reported had a mean of $57,533 and a median of $58,120.
Salaries & Benefits of Dental Staff (Cont’d)

- Contract dentists were used in 20% of Health Centers (64/315). The lowest median hourly wage reported was $68.00 and the highest median hourly wage was $75.00.
- In contrast only 5% (14/309) of the executive directors reported using contract hygienists who were not employees. The lowest and highest median hourly wage was $30.00.
Analysis and Discussion
No Significant Association Between...

- Intention to leave Health Center practices and:
  - HRSA region
  - The population of the location in which the center was located
  - The dentist’s position in the Health Center
  - Salary reported (for either dentists or dental hygienists)
  - Perception of on-call responsibilities
  - Number/experience/quality of dental assistants
  - Number of dental hygienists employed
Significant associations were found between intent to leave the Health Center practice and the following variables:

- **Gender**
  - Males are more likely to leave than females

- **Years of Health Center practice and total experience**
  - Providers planning to stay in Health Center practice had a mean experience of 8.12 years and those planning to leave had a mean experience of 4.65 years

- **Level of autonomy in practice**
- **Receiving state loan assistance**
Statistical Associations (Cont’d)

- **Pre-existing altruistic motivation**
  - Those not indicating a pre-existing altruistic motivation were more likely to indicate intent to leave the Health Center practice than those who did indicate such a motivation

- **Pre-existing value placed on loan repayment**
  - Those selecting loan repayment as their first ranked reason for choosing the Health Center practice were more likely to indicate an intention to leave

- **Adequacy of Support**
  - Those who perceived that the administrative support available was adequate in the Health Center practice were more likely to indicate an intention to remain in that practice than those who perceived administrative support as inadequate

- **Type (title) of supervisor to which the dental director directly reported**
  - Dental directors who reported to a CMO/Medical Director were 2.2 times more likely to indicate intent to leave than those dental directors who reported to a CEO/Executive Director
Putting It All Together...

- **Characteristics of satisfied providers**
  - **Females** reported an intent to leave less than males, more experienced providers and providers who had been employed by the Health Center longer indicated less of an intention to leave.
  - Providers that came to Health Centers because they felt a sense of mission, who reported directly to the CEO of the Center instead of a Medical Director, felt they had sufficient administrative, clerical support and adequate facilities and equipment were more likely to indicate they wanted to stay.
  - Finally, those providers who indicated they came to the Health Center mainly for loan repayment were less likely to want to stay at the Health Center.
Implications and Strategies

• The results should not be generalized!
  ▪ Does not mean that you can paint a broad brush and assume that every male, inexperienced dentist who joined a Health Center because of loan repayment will intend to leave your Health Center in the near future. What it means is that you should take into consideration other factors besides salary when you are trying to retain quality employees.

• Satisfaction was measured by the intention to leave Health Center practice.

• Salary alone is not the main reason that dental health care providers choose to leave or remain in Health Center practices.
Implications and Strategies (Cont’d)

• The NACHC report suggests: Evolution in dental education to involve a more diverse student body, greater attention to public health, and collaboration with other oral health providers as well as primary care providers will help improve access to oral health care in the long term.

• According to the 2009 NNOHA Salary and Retention Survey, 4 in 10 responding executive directors are reporting at least one dentist vacancy.
  - Majority of dental providers currently working in Health Center practices are more experienced and came from private practice settings.
  - Recruitment efforts should be aimed at that labor source rather than simply working with the NHSC, PCAs, and dental school/dental hygiene school postings.
Questions?
Thank You

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