Health Center Dentistry: A Highly Rewarding Career Opportunity
Recruitment and Retention Tips for Human Resources & Dental Directors

Workforce issues remain a top concern for Health Center oral health programs struggling with issues of recruitment, retention, training, salary, and turnover rates. In response, NNOHA has compiled recruitment and retention tips for programs attempting to build a strong, high-quality, dental workforce.

Characteristics of Providers who are Likely to Stay:

- Feel a mission to serve the dentally underserved population
- Have a history of being previously employed by Health Centers
- Have 5 to 10 years of experience in dentistry
- Feel they have full practice autonomy
- Feel they have sufficient administrative and clerical support
- Dental Director reports to CEO / Executive Director directly

Benefits of Working for a Health Center:

- Working in a community-based care setting
- Scholarship and Loan Repayment Programs
- Continuing Education Allowance
- Flexible work hours
- Paid sick leave and vacation time
- Malpractice coverage (FTCA)

Potential Candidates – Where can we focus our recruitment efforts?

- Private Practice: The majority of dentists and dental hygienists currently working in Health Center practice are more experienced and come from private practice settings. More recruiting efforts could be directed to popular professional journals or other venues that private practice dentists and dental hygienists are exposed to on a regular basis.

- Dental / Dental Hygiene Students: Students exposed to the Health Center world through residency or student rotation are more likely to choose a career in service for the underserved. Most schools have alumni departments and job placement or posting services for their outgoing students and alumni.

- New Dentists: Dentists who have been practicing five years or less and trying to start their own private practices, can benefit from working at Health Centers part-time. In addition to the additional income and being able to qualify for the part-time loan repayment option, such providers can gain experience in dentistry and learn valuable skills.

“According to NNOHA’s Survey of Health Center Oral Health Providers: Dental Salaries, Provider Satisfaction, and Recruitment and Retention Strategies (2010), 80% of dentists and 93% of dental hygienists indicated intent to remain in Health Center practices. This shows a remarkably high job satisfaction rate among the Health Center oral health providers.”

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• Uniform Service and IHS: Some Health Center dentists and Dental Directors were previously Commissioned Officers in the military or Public Health Service or were employed by the Indian Health Service (IHS).

• Retired dentists: A number of Health Centers utilize both the full- and part-time services of local retired private practitioners as staff dentists and Dental Directors.

Recruitment Tools


• NNOHA Job Bank: [http://www.nnoha.org/resources/jobbank/](http://www.nnoha.org/resources/jobbank/)


• Primary Care Associations (PCAs): [http://bphc.hrsa.gov/qualityimprovement/strategicpartnerships/ncapcaassociations.html](http://bphc.hrsa.gov/qualityimprovement/strategicpartnerships/ncapcaassociations.html)

• National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) Job Board: [http://nachc.org/job-board/](http://nachc.org/job-board/)

• National Rural Recruitment and Retention Network (3RNet): [https://www.3rnet.org/default.aspx](https://www.3rnet.org/default.aspx)

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