Oral Health Workforce for Low Income Children

National Health Policy Forum
April 20, 2007

Shelly Gehshan, Senior Program Director
National Academy for State Health Policy
Dentists’ and physicians’ practice patterns differ

- 90% dentists are in private practice
- 76% dentists are solo practitioners
- 80% are general practice dentists
- Ave. net income $125K for general dentists, $192 for specialists
- 33.3 hours/week treating patients

- 50% physicians are in private practice
- 25% are solo practitioners
- 30% are primary care practitioners
- Ave. net income $164K for primary care, range is $120K - $205K for specialists
- 51.6 hours/week treating patients
Factors Limiting Participation in Medicaid/SCHIP

- Average debt for graduating dentists: $119,000 in ‘03
- Cost to lease equipment $150,000/year; costs for space, staff $200,000/year
- Dental services: 57% inflation since 1997

- Average debt for graduating physicians: $104,000 in ‘03
- Most physicians practice without expensive equipment
- Physician services: 36% inflation since 1997
Dental practice Income

• About 45% of patient visits are for hygiene services
• About half from insurance, half cash
• Very sensitive to downturns in the economy
• Overhead averages about $.60-$-.65 of each dollar earned
Is there a shortage?
Active dentists per 100,000 population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>50.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas, 2004

Is there a shortage of hygienists?

Bureau of Labor Statistics reports:

• 158,000 hygienists in 2004
• Expected to grow much faster than average (>27%) by 2014
• ADHA says that, due to supervision requirements in many states, hygienists must locate where dentists are, so they are “maldistributed” as well
Pediatric Providers...

- See children 13 times before age 5 (AAP)
- Can do: oral health evaluation, apply fluoride varnish, educate patients and parents, dispense oral health supplies, prescribe antimicrobials, do limited cleanings, refer to dentists
- Can be reimbursed by Medicaid in several states
Practice laws on medical providers

- 32 states allow MDs, and 4 states allow RNs, to provide preventive oral health services
- 13 states allow MDs to provide limited oral health services (emergency, institutions)
- 4 states allow registered nurse anesthetists to provide anesthesia for dental care
Supervision of hygienists

• Dental hygienists may...
  • be supervised for appropriate services by physicians
  • perform procedures without the physical presence of the supervising dentist in CHCs, RHCs, clinics, schools, nursing homes and practices that serve large numbers of low income patients
Supervision and Payment for Hygienists

- General supervision in 45 states in dental office or some settings
- Direct access to patients in some settings in 20 states (AZ, CA, CO, CT, IA, KS, ME, MI, MN, MO, MT, NH, NM, NV, NY, OK, OR, RI, TX, WA)
- Medicaid can reimburse hygienists directly in 12 states (CA, CO, CT, ME, MN, MO, MT, NM, NV, OR, WA, WI)
Mid-levels in dentistry

• ADHA model — Advanced dental hygiene practitioner
• Dental health aid therapist (Alaska), dental nurse, New Zealand model
• ADA model — Community Dental Health Coordinator
Dental therapists

- 8 practicing in Alaska on reservations
- Prevention: fluoride treatments, sealants
- Treatment: x-rays, prophylaxis, gingival scaling
- Restoration: simple restorations, stainless steel crowns, extractions
- Supervision: general supervision under standing orders, dentists review x-rays and treatment plans electronically
Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner—ADHA

• Prevention: comprehensive services
• Treatment: manage periodontal care, prophylaxis
• Restoration: simple restorations, extractions
• Supervision: unsupervised or general supervision, collaborative practice with dentist, physician, clinic manager
Community Dental Health Coordinator—ADA

- Prevention: education, fluorides, sealants
- Treatment: gingival scaling, polishing
- Restoration: none
- Supervision: direct or indirect for patient care, general supervision for education