

# The Oral Health Forum



## Illinois Dental Workforce Census Report 2015

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### INTRODUCTION

In 2001, Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), Division of Oral Health developed the Illinois Oral Health Plan. Through a series of community meetings and wide-ranging input, the plan outlined recommendations/strategies to be used by communities to improve the oral health status of residents of Illinois. One of the major goals of this plan was to understand dental workforce issues operating in Illinois and monitor and effect changes to the oral health workforce over time. As an outcome of the Illinois Oral Health Plan, the first Illinois Dental Workforce Census Report was made available in the year 2004 and it was followed by another report in 2006.

It is important for policy makers, communities, education institutions and the health care systems to have current data and periodic updates on the oral health professional workforce. These reports provide important snapshots of the dental workforce capacity in Illinois. Changes in population size, age distribution shifting increasing proportion of older adults, longer lifespans and increased population's understanding of the importance of oral health have increase the demand and need for oral health services. Additional Demographic changes include the aging of dental workforce, the increase number of people with limited abilities, and the increase of diversity in the population. All of these population level changes will require a clinically competent, culturally diverse and sufficient numbers of dental professionals who can address the health care needs of Illinoisans.

### PROJECT OBJECTIVE

The Oral Health Forum (OHF) led an effort to continue the process of data collection initiated by IDPH in 2004 to monitor statewide oral health workforce census. In addition, OHF included additional survey questions to begin to determine diversity in providers and in understanding characteristics of the current dental workforce. Collecting and analyzing this data will help policy experts; IDPH, professional organizations and academic institutions consider potential impact of trends, develop appropriate program strategies and most importantly, support potential workforce policies that support the oral health needs of all Illinoisans.

### PROJECT METHODS

OHF collaborated with IDPH, Illinois State Dental Society, and Illinois Dental Hygiene Association in updating the workforce surveys for licensed dentists and dental hygienists. Dental professional license renewals for dentists and dental hygienists occur on a three-year basis with the majority of these licenses renewing on-line through the Illinois Department of Financial and Professionals Regulations (IDFPR) webpage. IDFPR webpage hosted the survey links for dentist and dental hygienist license renewals during the 2015 license renewal period (June to September 2015). The appropriate workforce survey links was available to all dentists and dental hygienists whose licenses were expiring on September 30, 2015. Completion of the survey was not mandatory for license renewal. IDFPR provided general demographic data on all renewed licenses during the 2015 renewal period.

General demographic elements as well as additional provider characteristics such as specialty, participation Medicaid program, level of degree attained (if applicable), clinical hours per week, practice type, bilingual or multilingual services available and language type (s), number of volunteer hours provided in the last year, the county they are currently practicing and other provider data were gathered from both professions. Data analysis was completed by OHF's team in Chicago.

### ILLINOIS FINDINGS

#### Characteristics of Illinois Dentists:

- 9,329 dentists renewed their license during this time period and, of those, 1,207 returned the survey, for a response rate of 13%
- Of the 1207 who returned the survey, 1135 (94%) indicated that they are currently working in oral health
  - Male (71%), Non-Hispanic or Latino (97%), White (81%), providing direct patient care in Illinois (85%), graduates of in-state dental school (70%), work more than 25 hours a week (68%), plans to stop practicing within next ten years (58%), and in

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## Characteristics of Illinois Dentists (continued):

bilingual or multilingual work setting (28%).

- General practice (88%), private or group practice (88%), provided volunteer work more than 25 hours in the last year (18%).
- Dental setting not accepting Medicaid (72%), highest number of dentists practicing in any Illinois county – Cook County (46%), Spanish language spoken by almost 35% of the bilingual or multilingual dentists, private practice/ group practice tops the list in both primary and secondary work setting with 86% and 64% respectively.

## Characteristics of Illinois Dental Hygienists:

- 7,779 dental hygienists renewed their license during this time period and of those, 2,059 returned the survey, for a response rate of 26%
- Of the 2,059 who returned the survey, 1946 (95%) indicated that they are currently working in the field of oral health
  - Female (99%), White (94%), Non-Hispanic or Latino (95%), providing direct patient care in Illinois (89%), graduates of in-state dental hygiene program (85%), attained an Associate's degree (68%), work more than 25 hours a week (46%), plans to stop practicing within next ten years (65%), mono-lingual (85%), remaining 15% speak 18 different languages, with Spanish as most common (49%).
  - Private or group practice (88%), provided volunteer work more than 25 hours in the last year (4%), dental setting not accepting Medicaid (86%), highest number of dental hygienists practicing in any Illinois county – Cook County (33%), private practice/ group practice tops the list in both primary and secondary work setting with 88% and 73% respectively.

## Comparative Analysis of Illinois Dental Workforce in the Past Decade: 2004-2015

- A 9% increase in the number of licensed dentists in Illinois and a 10% increase in the number of female dentists from 2004 to 2015.
- A 46% increase in the number of licensed dental hygienists with the gender workforce census remaining consistent for the period of 2004 to 2015.
- During this time, there was a 182% and 161% increase in the number of Black/African American dentists and dental hygienists respectively.
- During this time, there was a 245% increase in licensed Hispanic or Latino dentists and dental hygienists, respectively.
- Population adjusted provider ratios below indicate that there are increasing numbers of licensed dental providers in Illinois.
- A modest increase in the number of dentist in the last decade was observed state-wide compare to a more steady increase in the number of dental hygienist.

Year	Number of Total Licenses Renewed		Population Adjusted Dental Provider Ratio	
	Dentists	Dental Hygienist	Dentists	Dental Hygienist
2004	8575	5329	1,468:1	2,362:1
2006	9470	6689	1,334:1	1,889:1
2015	9329	7779	1,378:1	1,653:1

## DATA LIMITATIONS

The Illinois Dental Practice Act does not mandate the completion of workforce survey and by the time it was realized that there was no plan to conduct the 2015 Workforce Survey for Dentists and Dental Hygienists, it was too late to add other outreach efforts to ensure good response rate. Additionally, some dental providers such as newly graduated dentists in 2015, are not part of the 2015 license renewal cycle, thus their workplace, practice setting and demographics are not included in this report. Data in the report are subject to limitations associated with the use of electronic collection of survey data and self-reporting.

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