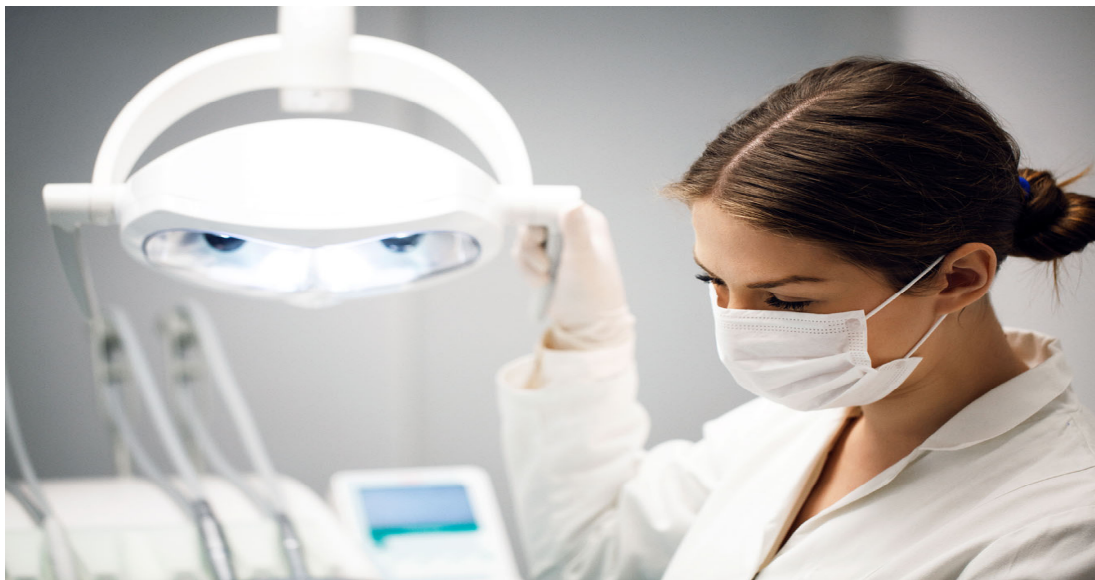


How Do We “Fill The Gaps” of Dentistry in Rural Pennsylvania?



Mouth-Health Connection

- ▶ The mouth is a window to the rest of the body.



- ▶ There are brain, cardiac, diabetes, immune system, prenatal, respiratory, cancerous and infectious diseases “connected” to poor dental health.

WHAT PROBLEMS COULD POOR DENTAL HEALTH CAUSE?



[Systemic Diseases and the Oral Microbiome - Autoimmune Connect \(drbonnie360.com\)](http://drbonnie360.com)

Oral Health Disparities for Patients with Disabilities

- ▶ “In comparison with those not in households experiencing disability, a greater proportion of those in households experiencing disability have not visited their dentist in two or more years (32.6% vs. 19.7% respectively)”.
- ▶ “Individuals in households experiencing disability report visiting the ED for dental care or pain at nearly three times the rate (9.0%) of those not in households experiencing disability (3.1%)”.

CareQuest Institute for Oral Health. *Family Affair: A Snapshot of Oral Health Disparities and Challenges in Individuals in Households Experiencing Disability*. Boston, MA; October 2022.

Oral Health Disparities for Patients with Disabilities

- ▶ “Compared with those not in households experiencing disability (36.9%), a greater proportion of individuals in households experiencing disability (52.8%) report having had experiences with discrimination in health care or oral health care setting”.
- ▶ “A greater proportion of individuals in households experiencing disability (71.8%) do not currently have dental insurance, compared with those not in households experiencing disability (64.5%)”.

CareQuest Institute for Oral Health. Family Affair: A Snapshot of Oral Health Disparities and Challenges in Individuals in Households Experiencing Disability. Boston, MA; October 2022.

Foster Medical-Dental Team

- ▶ Educate the “medical” community
- ▶ Improve the care for various patient populations through education and prevention
- ▶ Include dentistry as part of “medicine” in primary care setting and mobile units

Dental Care Providers in PA

- ▶ DMD, DDS, PHDHP, CSDH, EFDA, RDH, RDA, CDT
- ▶ Federally Qualified Health Centers
- ▶ Dental and Dental Hygiene Program Clinics
- ▶ Free and Charitable Clinics
- ▶ PA 211
- ▶ Managed Care Organizations (Medicaid Health Plans)
- ▶ PA Department of Human Services
- ▶ Pop-up Clinics and Events
- ▶ Donated Dental Services

(PA Coalition of Oral Health, paoralhealth.org)

Dental Health Professional Shortage Area DHPSAs

- ▶ **Health Professional Shortage Areas: Dental Care, by County, 2024 - Pennsylvania**
- ▶ [Map of Health Professional Shortage Areas: Dental Care, by County, 2024 - Rural Health Information Hub](#)

Increase Health Care Transportation Options in Rural Counties

- ▶ Consistently evaluate the public transportation options in each PA county, particularly to those at-risk and underserved populations.
- ▶ If transportation is limited or unreliable, you **MUST** go to the client where they are.



Support Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact for Licensing

- ▶ “The Council of State Governments (CSG) is partnering with the Department of Defense (DOD), the American Dental Association (ADA), and the American Dental Hygienists’ Association (ADHA) to support the mobility of licensed dentists and dental hygienists through the development of a new interstate compact. This compact will create reciprocity among participant states and reduce the barriers to license portability”.

[Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact \(ddhcompact.org\)](http://ddhcompact.org)

Increase Access to Care: Public Health Dental Hygiene Practitioners and Certified School Dental Hygienists

- ▶ Both professionals can educate and provide access to fluoride, dental sealants, insurance assistance, and treatment referrals.
- ▶ PHDHPs are experienced, licensed dental hygienists who have more flexibility to practice with less restrictive supervision. Local anesthesia licensed dental hygienists can assist more in mobile dental settings.
- ▶ CSDHs can “support students’ overall health and wellness by providing oral health education and dental evaluations, care, and referrals, keeping our students healthy and ready to learn”.

[DentalHygienists-Infographic \(psea.org\)](http://psea.org)

Incentivize PA Dental Professional Recruiting and Retention:

- ▶ Provide childcare tax credits or stipend for ALL Pennsylvania dental employees
- ▶ Consider dental consulting for dental hygienists
- ▶ Continue loan repayment program, but extend for ALL dental professionals in PA ***marketing***
- ▶ Allow PA tax incentives for ALL dental professionals in DHPSA counties

Increase Dental Professional Workplace Satisfaction and Retention:

- ▶ Administer yearly dental employee surveys to determine personal preferences and adjust.
- ▶ Offer employer benefit opt-in OR opt-out to maximize hourly rate.

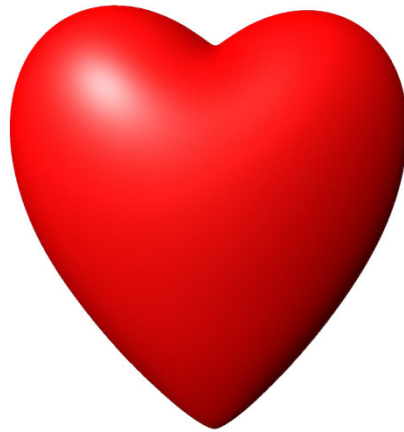
PA State Board of Dentistry and Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs (BPOA):

To solve some of Pennsylvania's workforce shortage issues:

- ▶ Develop a PA DHPSA task force
- ▶ PA DHPSA task force needs the input of each group of dental professionals
- ▶ Encourage inclusion of educators, social service, and other health care professionals to the task force



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