Oral Health Workforce:
Productivity Standards and Equipment/Staffing Ratios to Fulfill YOUR Mission

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Part of NNOHA’s developing Practice Management Resources

Current chapters in development for the Operations Manual for Health Center Oral Health Programs include:

- Health Center Fundamentals – Published!
- Leadership – Published!
- Financials – Published!
- Risk Management – Published!
- Workforce and Staffing – Coming Soon!
- Quality – Coming Soon!
Staffing Requirements

• One size does NOT fit all. HRSA guidelines are just that – guidelines. They are good ones though.

• Consider:
  ▪ Mission, vision and values of the program
  ▪ Service area and demographic knowledge
  ▪ Growth expectations
  ▪ Scope of services
  ▪ State practice regulations and flexibility of dental workforce
  ▪ Quality management
Dental Assistant-to-Dentist Ratio:

- For Health Centers, NNOHA recommends **2.0 or more full-time dental assistants per 1 full-time dentist** for optimum service.
  - This ratio usually can provide between 2,500 and 3,000 visits annually.

- Some practice experts even recommend a minimum of **3.0 full-time dental assistants for 1 full-time dentist**, especially when the state practice act allows the use of EFDAs.
Dental Hygienists

- Preferably, **dental hygienists should have a separate and dedicated operatory.**
  - One dental hygienist generally can provide 1,300 to 1,500 visits annually.
- Dental hygienists are best added after a practice develops a sufficient recall list for preventive services, typically after the first 6 to 12 months of operation.
Equipment Ratios

- Consider this Health Center formula for equipment:
  - Minimum of 2 dental operatories per FTE dentist.
  - 3 operatories per full-time dentist enables the program to function at peak efficiency.
  - If expanded functions and EFDA restorative services are available in the program, a minimum of 3 chairs should be available per 1 full-time dentist.
Equipment Ratios (Cont’d)

- Dental hygienists greatly improve their efficiency and are able to see more patients if a dedicated dental assistant plus another operatory chair are added
  - i.e., two operatories per full-time dental hygienist.
Encounter Rates & Productivity Standards

- Factors to consider:
  - Scope of service allowed in each state
  - The number of support staff
  - Equipment
  - Patient mix
  - Patient needs
Encounter Rates & Productivity Standards (Cont’d)

- There are different benchmarks:
  - 2010 Uniform Data System (UDS)
    - The average annual visit rates are 2,672 per dentist and 1,338 for dental hygienists
  - Some Health Centers use the RVU system as a standard for productivity, as it enables a director to quantify the output of services performed by the provider.
  - Some Health Centers use the dollar value system.

- More on productivity standards:
  [http://www.dentalclinicmanual.com/docs/Productivity_measures.pdf](http://www.dentalclinicmanual.com/docs/Productivity_measures.pdf)
For More Information...

- Look for the release of the “Workforce and Staffing” chapter toward the end of 2011!
- Order a printed copy or download the PDF version of “Survey of Health Center Oral Health Providers: Dental Salaries, Provider Satisfaction, and Recruitment and Retention Strategies”: http://www.nnoha.org/generalpage.html
QUESTIONS?
THANK YOU

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