

APR 6 2010

**DENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SHORTAGE
AREA TELEPHONE SURVEY –
METHODOLOGY**

April 2010

**Submitted to:
Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Family and Community Health Bureau
Montana Primary Care Office
Cogswell Building - 1400 Broadway
P.O. Box 202951
Helena, Montana 59620-2951**

**Submitted by:
Northwest Resource Consultants
2021 Eleventh Avenue, Suite 16
Helena, Montana 59601**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. METHODOLOGY.....	2
A. Questionnaire Design	2
B. Sample Design	2
C. Field Testing and Interviewer Training	2
D. Survey Administration and Follow-up Procedures.....	3
E. Non-response Rate	3
III. RECOMMENDATIONS	5
A. Survey Instrument	5
B. Survey Process	6

**APPENDIX A: DENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SHORTAGE AREA
SURVEY INSTRUMENT**

APPENDIX B: SURVEY INTRODUCTION

APPENDIX C: INFORMATION ABOUT SURVEY

APPENDIX D: LIST OF NON-RESPONDENTS

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table</u>		<u>Page</u>
1	FINAL CALL DISPOSITIONS OF DENTISTS NOT PARTICIPATING IN THE TELEPHONE SURVEY (2010)	4

I. INTRODUCTION

Northwest Resource Consultants (NRC), under contract with the Montana Primary Care Office of the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS), conducted a telephone survey of Montana dentists during February and March 2010. The information gathered during the survey will be used for the possible designation of a Dental Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA). This report presents the methodology used in conducting the study and provides recommendations about the survey process.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Questionnaire Design

DPHHS staff initially designed the questionnaire as a web survey to gather the necessary information. The final survey questionnaire consisted of 14 questions (see Appendix A) and covered the following major topics:

- *General information about the business and dentists.
- *Type of new patients being accepted by dental practice.
- *Current “payor” mix of dental practice.
- *Number of hours worked by dentists, dental assistants, and dental hygienists.

Survey questions were primarily closed-ended (i.e., multiple choice answers).

B. Sample Design

DPHHS provided NRC with a list of 600 dentists developed using the following resources: Montana Dental Association and the Healthcare Licensing Bureau of the Montana Department of Labor and Industry. Excluded from the list were dentists who had completed the survey on the web page. All dental practices remaining on the list were contacted during the survey.

C. Field Testing and Interviewer Training

DPHHS determined that field testing would not be a necessary task in the survey process since the questionnaire was limited only to questions that would provide the required information for the dental professional shortage paperwork. The survey had been initially programmed by DPHHS staff using The Survey Monkey, software designed to collect survey data via the internet.

The interviewers working on the study attended a training session. The training familiarized the interviewers with the survey instrument and other pertinent matters associated with the survey prior to conducting interviews.

D. Survey Administration and Follow-up Procedures

Telephone interviews with the dentists or dental staff were conducted during daytime hours between February 23 and March 30, 2010. Using a telephone script, interviewers introduced themselves to the receptionist, briefly told the reason for the telephone call, and asked to speak with the person who could answer general questions about the dental practice (see Appendix B). When telephone numbers were disconnected, the Supervisor tried to locate a new number through checking health-related resources, telephone directories, and various internet sites.

Interviewers made at least 10 call attempts before coding the dental practice out as a final attempt. In addition, upon request, surveys were faxed or e-mailed to dental offices so that the dentists could review the survey form before they responded. Information concerning the study was also sent with the questionnaire (see Appendix C).

E. Non-response Rate

Interviews were conducted with 76 percent, or 457 of the 600 listed dentists, while 24 percent (143 dentists) did not participate (see Appendix D). Of the 143 who did not participate in the survey, one-third were “retired,” 25 percent were “unable to respond during the interviewing period,” and 19 percent were “unable to be located” (Table 1). Three percent “refused” to participate in the survey.

TABLE 1**FINAL CALL DISPOSITIONS OF DENTISTS NOT PARTICIPATING IN THE TELEPHONE SURVEY (2010)**

Last Disposition	Number of Dispositions	Percent of Total (600)	Percent of Non-Response (143)
Completions	457	76.2%	Not Applicable
<u>Non-Response (Calls Not Resulting in Completions)</u>	143	23.8%	100.0%
Unable to respond during the interviewing period	35	5.8%	24.5%
No Longer in Practice	9	1.5%	6.3%
Final Refusal	5	0.8%	3.5%
Retired	47	7.8%	32.9%
Unable to Locate	28	4.7%	19.6%
Deceased	1	0.2%	0.7%
Moved Out-of-State	18	3.0%	12.6%
TOTAL	600	100.0%	100.0%

Start Date: February 23, 2010

End Date: March 30, 2010

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

The interviewers who worked on the study attended a "debriefing" session after completion of the telephone interviews. The debriefing session served as a time to evaluate the questionnaire design and survey process and for the interviewers to provide feedback they had received from the interviewed respondents. The following sections highlight the results of the debriefing session.

A. Survey Instrument

The survey introduction should include a question about the names of dentists in the dental practice. Early on in the survey process, interviewers asked only for the dentist on their list, but later had to re-call the same practice to gather information on other dentists who also worked there.

Respondents had difficulty with Question 3 (What type of provider are you?). Since many respondents answered "general dentist" (which, for the most part were "private providers)," it is suggested that the answer category of private provider be changed to reflect both private provider/general dentistry, especially if the survey is to be completed without the assistance of an interviewer. Or, a short description of the type of providers may also help the respondents make the correct choice to this question.

It was recommended that the ordering of the survey questions 5 through 11 be changed as follows:

Q5: Age of the Dentist

- Q6. Number of hours per week Dentist spends seeing patients (chair-side)
- Q7. Number of hours per week Dentist spends doing administrative tasks
(Interviewers noted that respondents at times were unsure how to answer this question---hours of the dentist or the dental practice?)
- Q8. Total number of Dental Hygienists employed in the practice
- Q9. Numbers of hours per week Dental Hygienists spend seeing patients (chair-side)
- Q10. Total number of Dental Assistants employed in the practice
- Q11. Numbers of hours per week Dental Assistants spend seeing patients (chair-side)

Question 13 asks if the dental practices were accepting new Medicare patients. Respondents commented that new laws concerning Medicare patients made this answer category” not applicable.” Respondents were often unsure how to answer the “payor mix” of the dental practice; in fact, some noted it was their “best guess-estimate.”

B. Survey Process

Pre-survey notification to the dental practices prior to calling may assist interviewers in gaining cooperation to participate in the survey. Some respondents indicated that they felt uncomfortable in answering the questions because they had not received permission from “those in charge” to do so.

APPENDIX A

**DENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SHORTAGE AREA
SURVEY INSTRUMENT - 2010**

PCO-Dentists

[Exit this survey](#)

1. Default Section

All of the information collected is required for the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, Montana Primary Care Office, to complete Montana Dental Health Professional Shortage Area (D-HPSA) Designations. The questions in this survey should be answered by a dentist or by the designated staff at the dental practice. All information submitted is confidential and will be used only for shortage area analysis.

1. Please give us your first and last name (used to follow-up with those who don't respond):

First name

Last name

2. What is your practice status? (select one response)

Active

Inactive

Semi-retired

Other (please specify)

3. What type of provider are you? (select all that apply)

NHSC Provider

JI Provider

I.H.S. Provider

Federal Employee

FQHC (CHC) Provider

Locum Tenens

Private Provider

Other

(please specify)

4. What is your current practice address? (actual practice location, not mailing address)

Address:

Address 2:

City/Town:

State:

PCO-Dentists

[Exit this survey](#)

2.

The following questions refer to the dental resources in your practice.

5. Number of hours per week you see patients:

6. Number of hours of administrative time:

7. Your age (in years)

8. Total number of dental assistants employed in your practice (full- and part-time):

9. Total number of dental hygienists employed in your practice (full- and part-time):

10. Total dental assistant hours per week spent seeing patients (chair side):

(The total number of hours includes all dental assistants. Example: 2 dental assistants work in the practice. One works 20 hours per week and the second works 32 hours per week. The total dental assistant hours would be 52 hours).

11. Total dental hygienist hours per week spent seeing patients (chair side):

(The total number of hours includes all dental hygienists. Example: 2 dental hygienists work in the practice. One works 20 hours per week and the second works 32 hours per week. The total dental hygienist hours would be 52 hours).

[Prev](#)

[Next](#)

PCO-Dentists

[Exit this survey](#)

3.

12. Do you have a posted formal sliding fee scale? (select one response)

Yes

No

Unknown

13. Are you currently accepting new patients in the following categories?

Yes No

Medicaid patients

Private insurance patients

Medicare patients

14. What is the current "payor mix" in your practice? (The payor mix is the current percent of each of the following types of patients seen in your practice. The total should add up to 100.)

Medicaid

Medicare

Sliding fee schedule

Private insurance

Charity care

Other

You have completed the survey. Thank you for your time. Your responses will help the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, Montana Primary Care Office, complete Shortage Designations in Montana. For more information or questions please contact:

John Schroeck, M.Ed.,
Montana Primary Care Office,
1218 East 6th Ave,
Helena, MT 59620-2951
e-mail: jschroeck@mt.gov
Phone 406-444-3934

Web site: <http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/PHSD/Primary-Care/primary-care-index.shtml>

APPENDIX B

SURVEY INTRODUCTION

DENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SHORTAGE AREA (HPSA) - 2010

Hello, this is _____ calling for the Montana Primary Care Office of the Department of Public Health and Human Services in Helena. We are calling dental offices to update some general information about the practice so we may determine the availability of dental care throughout Montana.

May I speak with the office manager? OR, is someone in Human Resources or Personnel available who could answer a few general questions about the practice?

Already on the Phone:

The data that we collect will be used for the possible designation of a Dental Health Professional Shortage Area, or more commonly called HPSA (*pronounced hip-saw*). Areas that qualify for HPSA would have Federal and State resources available to help maintain and expand the area's primary care infrastructure. Would this be a good time to ask you a few general questions about the dental practice where you work? It would take between 3 and 5 minutes.

Appropriate Person Comes to the Phone:

Hello, this is _____ calling for the Montana Primary Care Office of the Department of Public Health and Human Services in Helena. We are calling dental offices to update some general information about the practice so we may determine the availability of dental care throughout Montana.

The data that we collect will be used for the possible designation of a Dental Health Professional Shortage Area, or more commonly called HPSA (*pronounced hip-saw*). Areas that qualify for HPSA would have Federal and State resources available to help maintain and expand the area's primary care infrastructure. Would this be a good time to ask you a few general questions about the dental practice where you work? It would take between 3 and 5 minutes.

APPENDIX C

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SURVEY

DENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SHORTAGE AREA (HPSA) - 2010

Who is Conducting the Survey: The Montana Primary Care Office of the State Department of Health and Human Services (DPHHS) contracted with Northwest Resource Consultants of Helena to conduct the survey.

Reason for the Survey: We are collecting data from dental offices to update some general information about the practice so DPHHS may determine the availability of dental care throughout Montana.

What will be done with the Data: The data that we collect will be used for the possible designation of a Dental Health Professional Shortage Area, or more commonly called HPSA. Areas that qualify for HPSA would have Federal and State resources available to help maintain and expand the area's primary care infrastructure.

DENTAL SURVEY DEFINITIONS – QUESTION 3

NHSC Provider: “National Health Service Corps” helps HPSAs get medical, dental, and mental health providers to meet the local healthcare demand of their areas.

J1 Provider: A J-1 Provider is a licensed dentist, who has been recruited by an area to practice. The J-1 is a non-native American; in other words, he/she is from a foreign country and has completed the lengthy, paperwork intensive process through the PCO to be allowed to practice in the USA with a J-1 Visa Waiver.

IHS Provider: Indian Health Service. Federal healthcare program for American Indians and Native Alaskans.

Federal Employee: Healthcare provider who works for the Federal government.

FQHC (CHC) Provider: “Federally Qualified Health Center.....Community Health Center (CHC) qualifies for federal funding to provide healthcare for their area.

Locum Tenums: Temporary or permanent placement for people, such as physicians, nurses, or physician assistants, in the healthcare field.

Private Provider: Dentists in business for themselves.