

Minnesota's Dental Hygienist Workforce, 2014-2015

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2014-2015 DENTAL HYGIENIST WORKFORCE SURVEYⁱ

Overall

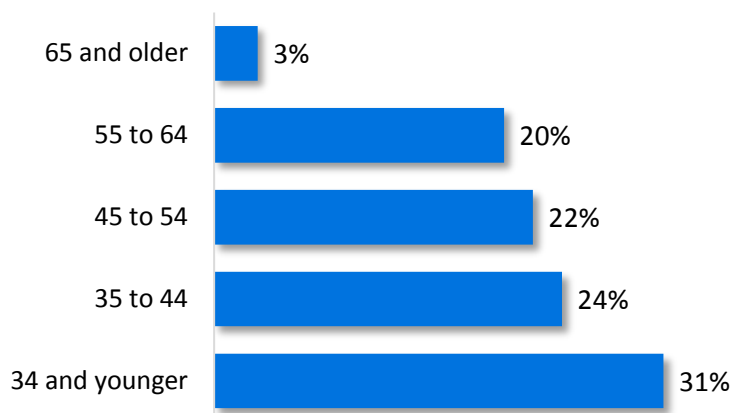
According to the Minnesota Board of Dentistry, there were **5,625** actively licensed dental hygienists as of December 2015.ⁱⁱ Dental Hygienists renew their licenses over a two-year period. The workforce survey was completed by dental hygienists during the 2014-2015 license renewal time period.

Demographics

Sex. In general, healthcare professions tend to be female-dominated. Almost all (99 percent) Minnesota dental hygienists are female.

Age. Over half of dental hygienists are 44 or younger, with few licensed dental hygienists 65 or older. The median age of dental hygienists is 42.

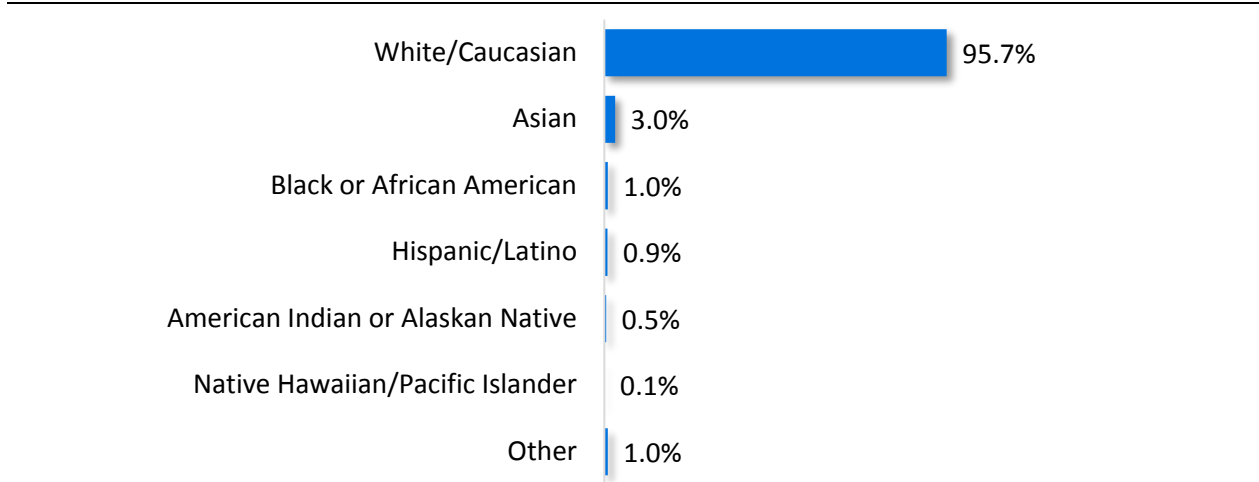
Age of Minnesota Dental Hygienists



Source: Minnesota Board of Dentistry, December 2015. Analysis done by MDH. Percentages are based on 5,617 Minnesota licensed physicians who provided valid birth dates to the Board.

Race. Typical of racial patterns among most health care professionals, the majority (96 percent) of dental hygienists indicated they were white. The second most common race for dental hygienists was Asian (3 percent).

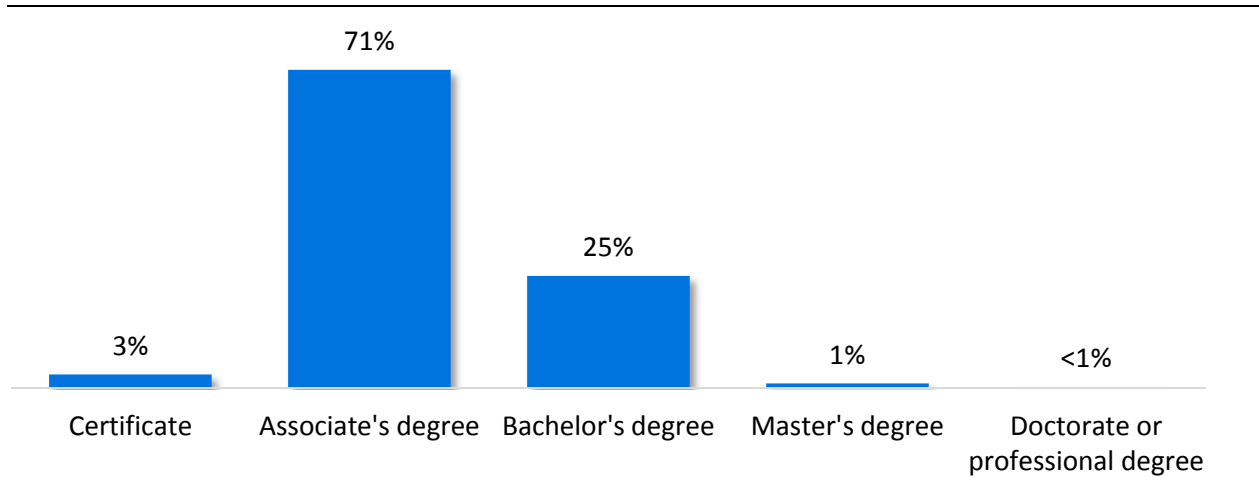
Race of Minnesota Dental Hygienists



Source: MDH Dental Hygienist Workforce Questionnaire, 2014-2015. Respondents could select as many races as applicable.

Education. The majority of dental hygienists have an Associate’s degree (71 percent) and 25 percent of dental hygienists have a Bachelor’s degree. Notably, a higher percentage of younger dental hygienists have a Bachelor’s degree. Thirty-three percent of those younger than 35 have a Bachelor’s compared with 19 percent of those 55 to 64 years old (data not shown). Since the mid-1990s, more Minnesota academic programs offer Bachelor’s degrees or Bachelor’s degree completion options. A Bachelor’s degree serves as a career ladder to other health professions, including dental therapy.

Education of Dental Hygienists



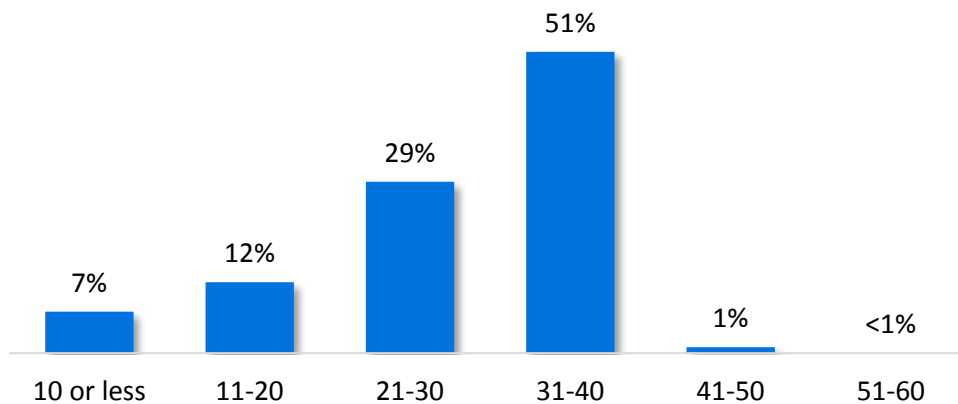
Source: MDH Dental Hygienist Workforce Questionnaire, 2014-2015. The chart is based on 3,119 survey responses.

Employment

Share of Dental Hygienists Employed. Eighty-seven percent of Minnesota licensed dental hygienists reported on the MDH questionnaire that they were working in a paid position. 5 percent of dental hygienists were not seeking work in the field, 5 percent were not working at all, and 3 percent were seeking work in the field.

Hours Worked. In the oral health field, a typical full time work week is slightly less than 40 hours. The median work week was 32 hours, with half of all dental hygienists working between 31 and 40 hours per week. Eighty percent worked between 21 and 40 hours per week.

Hours Worked in a Typical Week

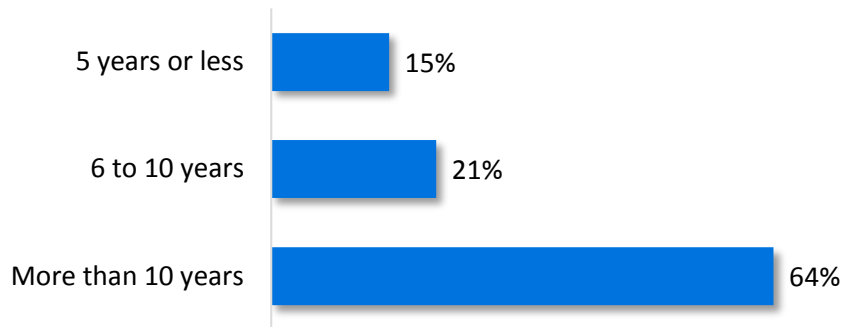


Source: MDH Dental Hygienist Workforce Questionnaire, 2014-2015. The chart is based on 2,655 survey responses.

Future Plans. Just over two-thirds of those responding to the survey plan to work as a dental hygienist for more than 10 years. Fifteen percent of dental hygienists plan to practice five years or less and of those, 78 percent planned to retire. In comparison, 24 percent of dentists, who are a demographically older group, plan to work five years or less. As dental hygienists must work under supervision (or collaborative agreement) of a dentist, the intended retirement of nearly a quarter of the dentists has potential implications for the dental hygienist labor market, and access to oral health services.

Dental hygienists were also asked if they plan to become dental therapists. Two percent responded that they planned to become dental therapists and another 23 percent say they don't know if they will pursue the additional degree.

“How many more years do you plan to practice in Minnesota?”



Source: MDH Dental Hygienist Workforce Questionnaire, 2014-2015. The chart is based on 2,412 survey responses.

Work Setting. The questionnaire asked dental hygienists to identify their primary work setting. Approximately forty percent each reported working at a small group private practice or a solo private practice. Fifteen percent reported working at more than one location.

Dental Hygienists’ Work Setting

| Primary Work Setting | Share of Dental Hygienists Working in this Setting |
|---|--|
| Small group private practice (2-4 dentists) | 39.9% |
| Solo private practice | 39.8% |
| Large group private practice (5+ dentists) | 11.4% |
| Community or medical clinic | 3.0% |
| College or university | 1.9% |
| Hospital | 0.4% |
| School clinic | 0.2% |
| Long-term care facility | 0.2% |
| Institution(e.g. group home or prison) | 0.2% |
| Other | 3.2% |

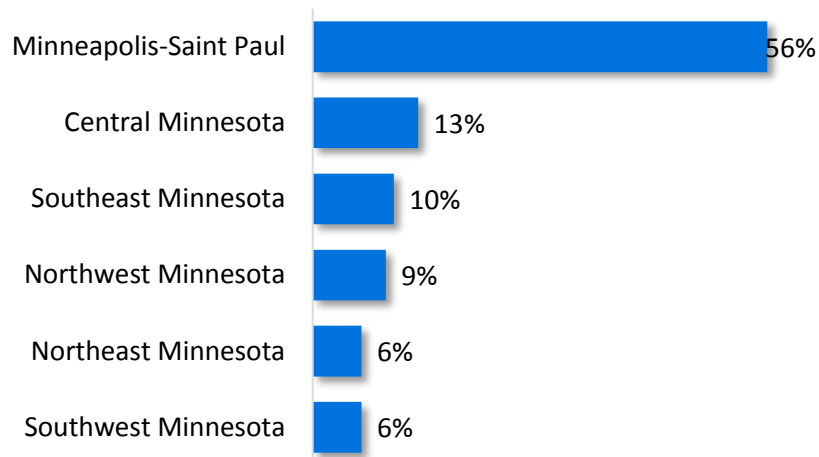
Source: MDH Dental Hygienist Workforce Questionnaire, 2014-2015. The chart is based on 2,502 survey responses.

Geographic Distribution

To get a sense of the accessibility of services around the state, the next two charts provide two different views of the geographic distribution of dental hygienists. These analyses are based on geocoded practice addresses that are supplied to the Board of Dentistry.ⁱⁱⁱ

Distribution by Region. The first chart shows the distribution of dental hygienists across the six planning areas around Minnesota. As shown, slightly over half of dental hygienists (56 percent) are practicing in the Twin Cities metro area, with another 13 percent in Central Minnesota. The remainder of the state is home to smaller shares of dental hygienists. For reference, the Twin Cities metro area houses approximately 54 percent of the state’s population, with all other regions housing between 7 and 13 percent of Minnesotans. This suggests that the location of dental hygienists is somewhat similar to the population distribution in Minnesota.

Dental Hygienists by Minnesota Region



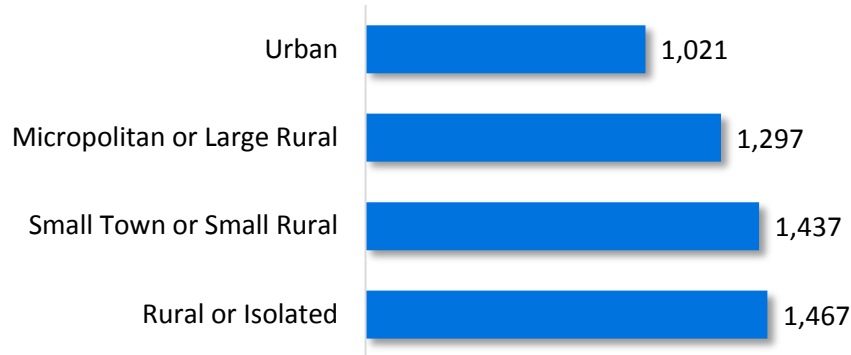
Source: Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) geocoding and analysis of December, 2015 Minnesota Board of Dentistry address data. Percentages above are based on 4,826 valid Minnesota addresses.

Distribution across urban and rural areas. The chart below provides another view of the geographic distribution of dental hygienists, showing the size of the population for every one dental hygienist in urban, large rural, small town, and rural areas. While the population-to-hygienist ratio is lower in urban areas indicating better coverage, there isn’t as large a difference between urban and rural areas as with some other health care professionals. For example there are 3,938 people per dentist in rural isolated areas while dental hygienists ratio is less than half of that, which indicates more availability of dental hygienists.

Age and work setting differ by rural and urban location. In isolated areas, more dental hygienists were under age 35 (37 percent) compared to other areas of Minnesota where about a quarter were in that same age range.

Looking at work settings, more rural dental hygienists work in solo private dental practices compared to urban dental hygienists. In isolated areas, 51 percent worked in solo private practices while just 5 percent of hygienists worked in large group practices. In the metro area there was the highest percent of dental hygienists in large group practices (14 percent) and lowest percent in solo private practice (36 percent) compared to other areas of the state (data not shown).

Minnesota Population-to-Dental Hygienist Ratio



Source: Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) geocoding and analysis of December, 2015 Minnesota Board of Dentistry address data. Percentages above are based on 4,826 valid Minnesota addresses.

For more information about survey methods and regional breakouts used in this fact sheet:
<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/orhpc/workforce/method.html>

Visit our website at <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/orhpc/workforce/reports.html> to learn about the Minnesota healthcare workforce. County-level data for this profession is available at <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/orhpc/workforce/database/>.

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ⁱ The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), in cooperation with the Minnesota Board of Dentistry, collected information on demographics, education, career and future plans of physicians during a workforce questionnaire in 2014 and 2015. Unless noted, all data are based on information collected from that survey. The response rate for the survey was 56 percent.

ⁱⁱⁱ Of the total licensed professionals, 792 listed a practice address outside of Minnesota; 7 did not provide a practice address, and based on survey responses, 13% of the total licensees are not currently practicing as a dental hygienist. Thus, not all actively licensed dental hygienists are part of the Minnesota physician workforce.

ⁱⁱⁱ Addresses are a mix of practice and home addresses. Additionally, approximately 14.2 percent of dental hygienists reported either an out-of-state address (14.1 percent) or no address (0.1 percent) to the Board; these professionals may or may not be providing services in Minnesota, but in any case, they could not be geocoded.