

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
SPECIAL COMMISSION ON ORAL HEALTH MEETING  
WORKFORCE SUBCOMMITTEE

Thursday, January 16, 2025  
Via Microsoft Teams  
12:30 PM  
General (Open Session) Meeting Minutes

Commission Members

Present: 8

1. Chair: Abdullaibrahim Abdulwaheed
2. Hussam Batal
3. Alec Eidelman
4. Marcy Foreman
5. Catherine Hayes
6. Emma Lawson
7. Nithya Ramesh at 12:35 PM
8. Catherine Nwachukwu

Commission Members

Not Present: 2

1. Michelle Henshaw
2. Barbara Young

Staff Present:

1. Matthew Horan

**I. Welcome**

**II. Call to Order | Determination of Quorum**

Time and call to order (12:33 PM by Abdullaibrahim Abdulwaheed)

#Present: 7

1. Chair: Abdullaibrahim Abdulwaheed
2. Hussam Batal
3. Alec Eidelman
4. Marcy Foreman
5. Catherine Hayes
6. Emma Lawson
7. Catherine Nwachukwu

# Absent: 3

1. Michelle Henshaw

2. Barbara Young
3. Nithya Ramesh

# Recused: 0

# Abstained:0

### **III. Approval of Agenda**

#### DISCUSSION

Review posted agenda, no changes

#### ACTION

Motion by Alec Eidelman to approve the agenda, second Emma Lawson, and unanimously approved by a roll call vote as follows:

#Present: 7

1. Chair: Abdullaibrahim Abdulwaheed
2. Hussam Batal
3. Alec Eidelman
4. Marcy Foreman
5. Catherine Hayes
6. Emma Lawson
7. Catherine Nwachukwu

# Absent: 3

1. Michelle Henshaw
2. Barbara Young
3. Nithya Ramesh

# Recused: 0

# Abstained:0

Members who join late:

- Nithya Ramesh at 12:35 PM

### **IV. Work on the Plan for Developing an Oral Health Needs Assessment**

#### DISCUSSION

- Group member introductions including their unique skills and passions for the dental workforce
- Discussion of the worksheet assigned

- Reviewed HPI (health policy institute: <https://www.ada.org/resources/research/health-policy-institute> ) website – verbally referenced data from 2022
  - Shortage of DA (dental assistants) and RDHs (registered dental hygienists)
- A need to review the workforce available based on Medicaid data and other data
- A need to look at geographical data by provider specialty, then license types
- Where certain CPT (Current Procedural Terminology) codes (not CDT (Current Dental Terminology)) are being performed by geography
- Map of dental CHC (Community Health Center) Clinics to ACO (Accountable Care Organizations) was discussed
  - A map of MassHealth dentists by practice type – specialty
- A need to create a distribution map of providers
  - By specialty
  - By provider race
- A new workforce model was discussed “Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner”
  - RDH training plus 15-18 months focused mainly on restorative care
  - Similar to nurse practitioner
  - Concept of where they might be able to practice mattering
- Need to review and separate which providers MassHealth patients under 21 versus those that serve adults (21+ patients), an emphasis on the need for adults was made
- Dental therapist role discussed and as a solution for working in existing dental offices to create more capacity
- Needing to streamline the BORID (Board of Registration in Dentistry) process of becoming a PHDH (Public Health Dental Hygienist) was reviewed
- The reasons why RDHs were leaving dentistry were discussed from HPI data
  - Childcare, treatment by peers, burnout, risks
- Limited license dentist data is needed – numbers of providers, where they work, and to use that to inform scope and places of need
- Data about patient needs were requested – where are the foster kids living, individuals with special healthcare needs
- Supply and demand discussed
  - A suggestion to look at capacity
  - Is demand part of this group's work?
    - HPC (Health Policy Commission) ED (emergency department) data around where needs exist
  - Other states' workforce models – per capita dentists or other workforce folks
- 2024 Office of Oral Health Update slides were requested to be sent to the subcommittee
- A request for the HPC methodology for ED visits to be rerun for more recent data and include APCD (All Payer Claims Database) if possible
- A potential data request for the specific names of dentists and locations for potential collaborative dentists was recommended from the licensure renewal survey responses
- CHIA (Center for Health Information and Analysis) related requests suggested – staffing: vacancy rates, racial composition, turnover rates, challenges to recruiting and retaining and strategies to resolve, impacts of standing shortages on patient care
  - CHC data – dentists and DA workforce data

- Residents survey – broad questions about Massachusetts residents and access to healthcare, unmet need for dental services as an existing question was highlighted
- Unmet need also exists within the PHDH service data reported to DPH (Department of Public Health)
- Other workforce data measures were reviewed:
  - The number of clinical hours practicing is available in the licensure renewal data
    - A need to look at populations by county, adding the number of clinical hours available per person was suggested
  - A blank copy of the dentist and RDH licensure renewal survey was requested to be sent to the subcommittee
  - ED dollar amount paid claims for ED visits in the medical setting versus the average amount paid for in-office emergency dental care was recommended for potential data
  - A review of the eligibility requirements for becoming a MassHealth dentist and comparing the requirements to physicians was recommended
- Other missed thoughts were reviewed:
  - Foreign-trained dentists will soon be able to hygiene licenses – what requirements are required and within reason
  - There is healthcare loan repayment – that’s not available to dental folks
    - A link to the existing state healthcare loan repayment programs, including those that dentists and hygienists are not included in, was requested for inclusion in the minutes: <https://www.massleague.org/programs-initiatives/workforce-development/repayment-programs/>
  - Continuing education credits – the need for issuing credits for no-charge dental work that count toward required continuing education was requested to include dentists and RDHs, and a recommendation to administer and issue credits via the Office of Oral Health was discussed
- Homework – each member to work on their individual data request thoughts using the worksheet between meetings
- The group plans to share, compare, and reconcile the data requests during the next meeting

## **V. Adjourn**

### DISCUSSION

None.

### ACTION

Motion by Catherine Hayes to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Nihya Ramesh, and unanimously approved by roll call vote as follows:

#Approve: 8

1. Chair: Abdullaibrahim Abdulwaheed
2. Hussam Batal
3. Alec Eidelman

4. Marcy Foreman
5. Catherine Hayes
6. Emma Lawson
7. Catherine Nwachukwu
8. Nithya Ramesh

# Absent: 2

1. Michelle Henshaw
2. Barbara Young

# Recused: 0

# Abstained: 0

*Let the record show the meeting adjourned at 1:42 PM.*