

Agenda Item 8: Oral Health Recommendations & Discussion

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Oral Health Discussion Recap

Sep. 2023 Council meeting Oral Health key takeaways:

- Increase affordability of education and training
- Incentivize career pathway mobility
- Increase access to data
- Develop a career pathway system with many points of entry
- Increase collaboration between oral health and primary care to support interprofessional teams and focus on whole person health
- Focus on alternatives to dentists to expand access to basic services
- Dental education creates significant costs for students
- Diversity within dentists is low, improves with Registered Dental Hygienists (RDH) and more significantly with Registered Dental Assistants (RDA)

Findings on RDH and RDA Workforce

RDH

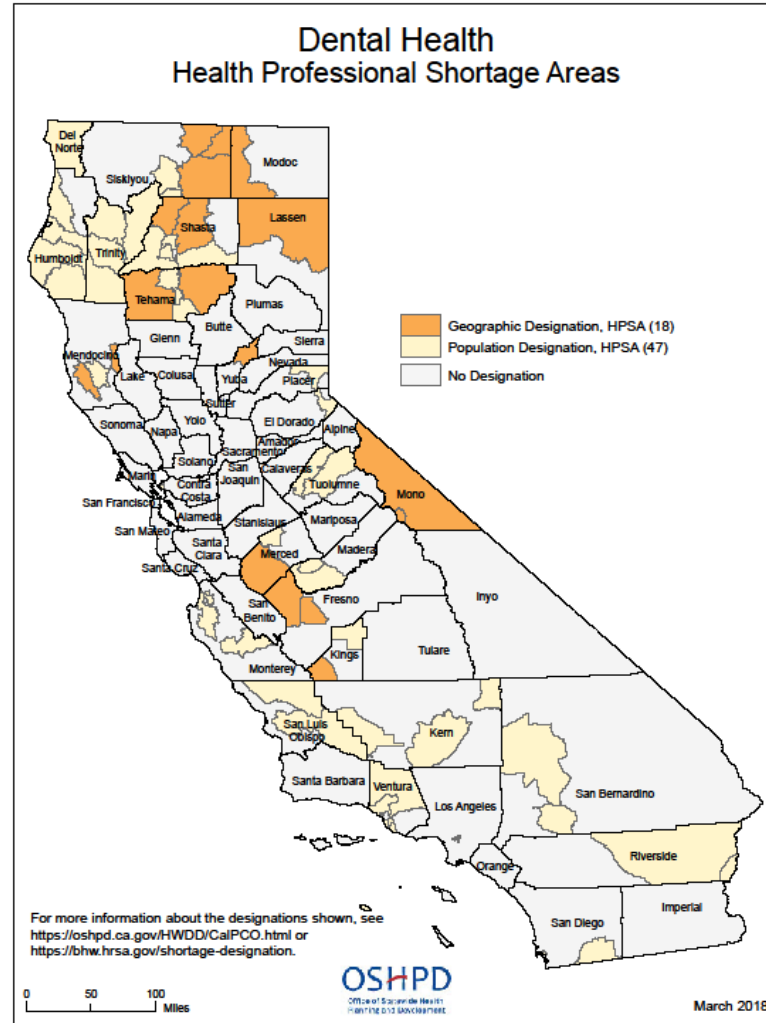
- AA and BS level professions
- Faculty must have same degree or higher
- Program director must have higher degree than program offers
- Diversity is improving in DH students
- Education programs are mostly at Community Colleges with some private non-profit and for-profit schools
- Overall, school capacity is a regional issue
- RDH in Alternative Practice (RDHAP) can establish their own practices
 - Currently only three schools offer RDHAP training

RDA

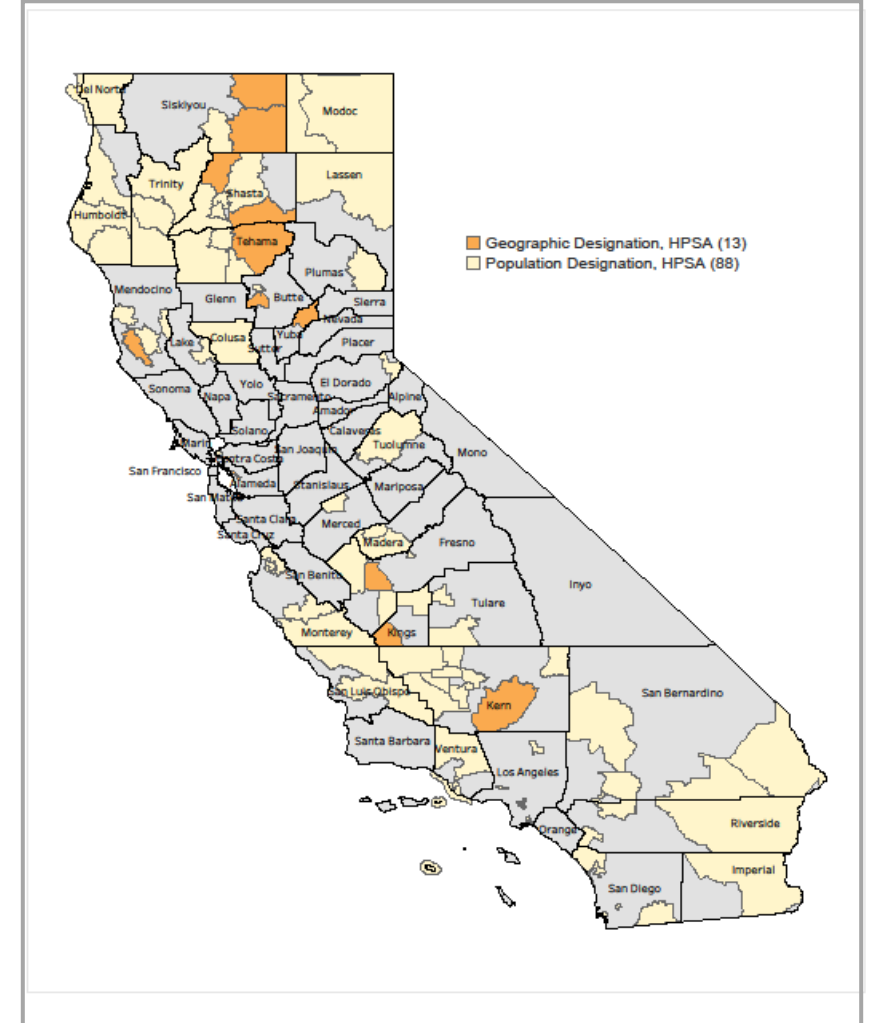
- Three pathways to licensure:
 - Board Approved Education/AA Degree
 - Work Experience
 - Blended Education/Work Experience
- Number of active licenses has decreased for the last three years
- Nationally DA school enrollment has shrunk for eight straight years
- Education programs are mainly through Community Colleges and private institutions
- RDA is one of the most diverse licensed health professions, over 50% of RDAs are Hispanic

Impact of Data- Statewide Shortages

Dental HPSAs 2018



Dental HPSAs 2024



Oral Health and HCAI

Current HCAI Oral Health Workforce Programs:

- Loan Repayment and Scholarships:
 - State Loan Repayment Program (Dentists and RDHs)
 - Advanced Practice Healthcare Scholarship (Dentists)
 - Allied Healthcare Scholarship Program (RDHs and RDAs)
- Career Pathway Programs
 - Health Professions Pathways Program (Oral Health)
- Education Capacity
 - HCAI does not have programs and funding for Oral Health education capacity

Council's Recommendation Process

- Discuss draft recommendations
- Gather Council input and clarify recommendations
- **Identify the types of organizations and institutions that can potentially support and advance the recommendations**
- Finalize recommendations and hold vote

Recommendations for RDA

Education and Training:

- Expand opportunities at schools for the education and blended pathway. *(Which entities?)*
 - Apprenticeships with educational experience support future career growth and licensure preparedness.
- Establish partnerships and regional consortiums between schools and community clinics to expand opportunities for clinical training in underserved communities. *(Which entities?)*
- Expand loan repayment, scholarship, and stipend opportunities for individuals. *(Which entities?)*

Recommendations for RDH

Education and Training:

- Support education capacity expansion in underserved and rural communities. (*Which entities?*)
 - Focus on Associate's and Bachelor's degree to expand RDH workforce and faculty.
 - Create and expand the hybrid/online programs to reduce cost and encourage workforce distribution.
- Establish partnerships or regional consortiums between the schools and community clinics to expand opportunities for clinical training in underserved communities. (*Which entities?*)
 - Including funding for supervision to minimize impact to the clinic.
- Expand loan repayment, scholarships, and stipend opportunities for individuals. (*Which entities?*)

Recommendations for RDA & RDH

Systems of Support:

- Create a structure of support within the schools to provide tutoring, mentoring, counseling, and wrap around services intended to eliminate barriers to education for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds. *(Which entities?)*
- Support development and expansion of pipeline and pathway programs:
 - Establish oral health pathway programs at high school and earlier. *(Which entities?)*
 - Create comprehensive pathway programs that include oral health in addition to other health professions, i.e., primary care, nursing, behavioral health, and allied health. *(HCAI)*

Recommendations for Registered Dental Hygienists in Alternative Practice (RDHAP)

Comprehensive approach to expand RDHAPs

- Expand education programs through expansion at existing schools and creation of new programs. (*Which entities?*)
- Create and expand scholarship programs to include RDHAP students. (*HCAI*)
- Provide incentives to RDHAPs to establish practices in underserved communities, schools, and residential facilities. (*Which entities?*)
 - Create opportunities for RDHAPs to collaborate with Dentists including supporting the expansion of Virtual Dental Homes.
- Provide technical assistance and community outreach to assist RDHAPs in identifying potential practice locations. (*HCAI and Education Programs*)

Next Steps

- HCAI will continue to work with stakeholders, state partners, and educational institutions to further refine and identify potential solutions derived from Council's recommendations
- Future Oral Health workforce strategy
 - The Council's recommendations will support HCAI's comprehensive Oral Health workforce strategy development expected to begin in 2025