

New England Rural Oral Health Conference

Addressing Oral Health Workforce Dilemmas Through Alternative Practice Models in New England

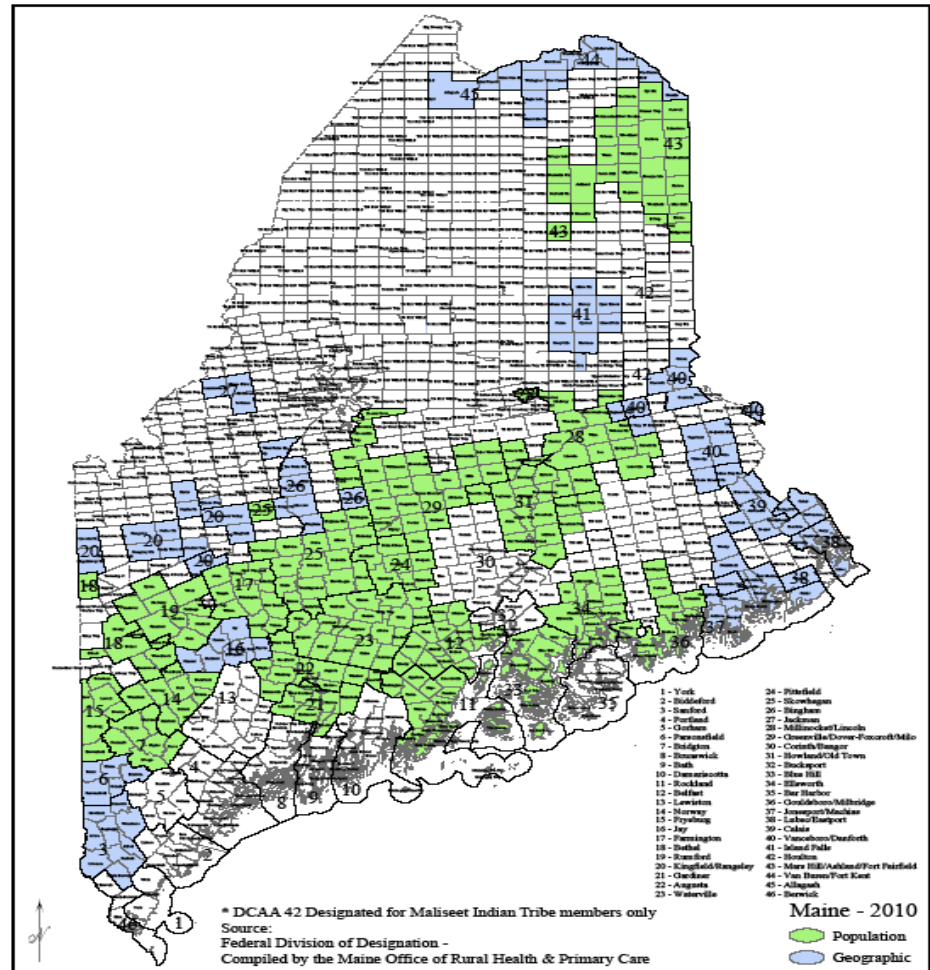
Michael Saxl
Maine Street Solutions
September 16, 2011

Maine has a Shortage of Dentists

- Maine has a dental health professional shortage in every county
- Maine's ratio of dentists to patients is 1:2300
- In FY 2010, 55% of all children had no access to dental care during the year



Federally Designated Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas



dentists in the state. More than
... **AND MORE DENTISTS ARE EXPECTED**
... **40 percent of our practicing**
... **TO LEAVE THE WORKFORCE**
dentists are approaching
retirement. Fewer young
dentists are moving to our state.
Maine needs about 200 new
dentists in the next decade just
to keep pace with services being
provided today."

Dr. Phil Higgins, Chairman, *Maine Board of Dental Examiners*

<http://www.bangordailynews.com/detail/139187.html>

Who Suffers?

- **Children** (dental decay is 5x more prevalent than asthma)
- **Rural Communities**
- **Low-income**
- **Elderly**
- **Disabled**
- **Veterans** (52% of our forces had to defer deployment)

Maine Strategy: Never Surrender

- New Dental School at UNE
 - Estimated 60,000 New patient visits
- MDA Recruiting of Dentists
- Dental coverage through state and private programs: sealants, cleanings, from the first tooth
- Grants to safety net providers
- MaineCare assist with scheduling, transportation and follow-ups (496 families)



Never Surrender (cont.)

- Loan forgiveness program
- Tax incentives for rural practice
- MHIMS system results in more timely payment for MaineCare services
- Independent practice and Public Health dental hygienists
- Expanded function dental auxiliaries
- Community health workers
- FQHC's (went from 19-35 in one year)
- Cross training of health professionals (71 practices)



Are We Meeting the Need?

SOURCE: *Maine DHHS, Improving MaineCare Dental Access For Maine Children*

-
- Despite the lower than market rates of MaineCare reimbursement to dental providers, Maine has a better than average rate of children who are seen by a dentist.
 - Prevention rates have risen to 41% but treatment/ restorative services remain low at just under 14%

Are We Meeting the Need? (cont.)

- Still, 46% of MaineCare Kids don't have a Dentist
- *55% of all kids*
- 30-40% of children have untreated cavities

NYU College of Dentistry Henry Schein Care Global Student Outreach

What We Have Been Up To This Year?

- Six month facilitation sponsored by Maine Oral Health Funders and Maine Health Access Foundation
- Working with Maine Dental Access Coalition, MDA and MDHA to introduce a study
- Cultivating legislative and public health champions
- Passing initial study legislation
- Working with stakeholders to raise resources and commission a study

LD 1105: The Maine Study

1. Existing public and private **financial resources** for oral health care in the State;
2. **Limitations on access** to oral health care for citizens of the State;
3. The **sustainability** of public financing programs for oral health care;
4. The actual and projected **dental workforce needs** for the State;
5. The **effect of recent changes surrounding oral health care** in the State, such as the development of a dental school based in the State and the creation of expanded function dental assistants, dental hygienists with public health supervision status and independent practice dental hygienists; and
6. Possible **policy models** from other states and countries that have been effective in addressing identified workforce shortages;

Workforce Proposals

GOAL: Safe, high quality care to meet existing and projected shortages

- Scope of Practice
- Educational Requirements
 - Cost
 - How Many Years
 - Accreditation
- Supervision: Part of a Dental Team
- Regulatory Body

Workforce Proposals (cont.)

- Insurance and Public Reimbursement
- Treatment Settings
- Business Impacts
- Quality
- Scope of Practice
 - Diagnosis by non-dentist
 - Defining “routine” or “simple” procedures
 - Irreversible Procedures/Extractions of permanent teeth
- Measuring Results

For More Information

Michael Saxl

Maine Street Solutions

(207) 622-7432

msaxl@mainestreetolutions.com

www.mainestreetolutions.com