

Michigan Department of Community Health

Survey of Dental Hygienists 2006

January 2007

INTRODUCTION

The Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) asked Public Sector Consultants Inc. (PSC) to conduct a survey of licensed dental hygienists in 2006 to gather information about their employment characteristics, education, and work environment. A total of 3,433 dental hygienists received the survey. Responses were received online or by return mail from 2,062 dental hygienists, for a response rate of 60 percent and a margin of error of ± 1.4 percent with 95 percent confidence. Key survey findings are presented below.

EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS

- About 79 percent of dental hygienists licensed in Michigan are working either part- or full-time as a dental hygienist in Michigan. Analysis of data in this report focuses on active dental hygienists in Michigan.
 - Of active dental hygienists in Michigan, 45 percent are working 30 or more hours per week in dental hygiene or a related area; 46 percent are working between 12 and 29 hours; and 9 percent work fewer than 12 hours per week in dental hygiene or a related area (see Exhibit 1).
- About 8 percent of dental hygienists licensed in Michigan are working as a dental hygienist, but not in Michigan.
- Thirteen percent of licensed dental hygienists are not working as a hygienist.
 - Three percent are not employed but are seeking employment in dental hygiene or a related area.
 - Less than one percent are not employed and are seeking employment outside dental hygiene.
 - Four percent are temporarily not working and are not looking for a job.
 - Two percent are retired, with no plans to return to work.
 - Three percent are employed in a field other than dental hygiene.

EXHIBIT 1
Employment Characteristics of Dental Hygienists, 2006

	Percentage of all hygienists	Percentage of active hygienists in Michigan
30 or more hours per week in dental hygiene or related area	41%	45%
12-29 hours per week in dental hygiene or related area	40	46
Less than 12 hours per week in dental hygiene or related area	8	9
Not employed and seeking employment in dental hygiene or related area	3	--
Not employed and seeking employment outside of dental hygiene	<1	--
Temporarily not working and not looking for a job	4	--
Retired, with no plans to return to work	2	--
Employed in another field	3	--
Licensed hygienists working in hygiene-related area in Michigan	79%	--
Licensed hygienists working in hygiene-related area outside of Michigan	8	--
Licensed hygienists not working in hygiene-related area	13	--

SOURCE: Michigan Department of Community Health Survey of Dental Hygienists 2006.
 NOTE: Percentages may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Of the three percent of hygienists who are not employed and are seeking employment in hygiene or a related area, most indicate that this is the result of having difficulty finding a hygienist position (83 percent). Of the three percent of hygienists who are either employed in a field other than hygiene or are not employed and are seeking employment outside of dental hygiene, the majority (69 percent) say this is because they find another position more professionally rewarding (see Exhibit 2).

EXHIBIT 2
Reasons for Not Practicing as a Hygienist, 2006

	Percentage of hygienists seeking employment in hygiene	Percentage of hygienists employed or seeking employment in another field
Difficult to find hygienist position	83%	12%
Better salary in other type of work	5	25
Work environment prevents me from practicing effectively	6	15
Other position more rewarding professionally	3	69
Disability/physical demands of the job	5	22
Taking care of home/family	34	12

SOURCE: Michigan Department of Community Health Survey of Dental Hygienists 2006.

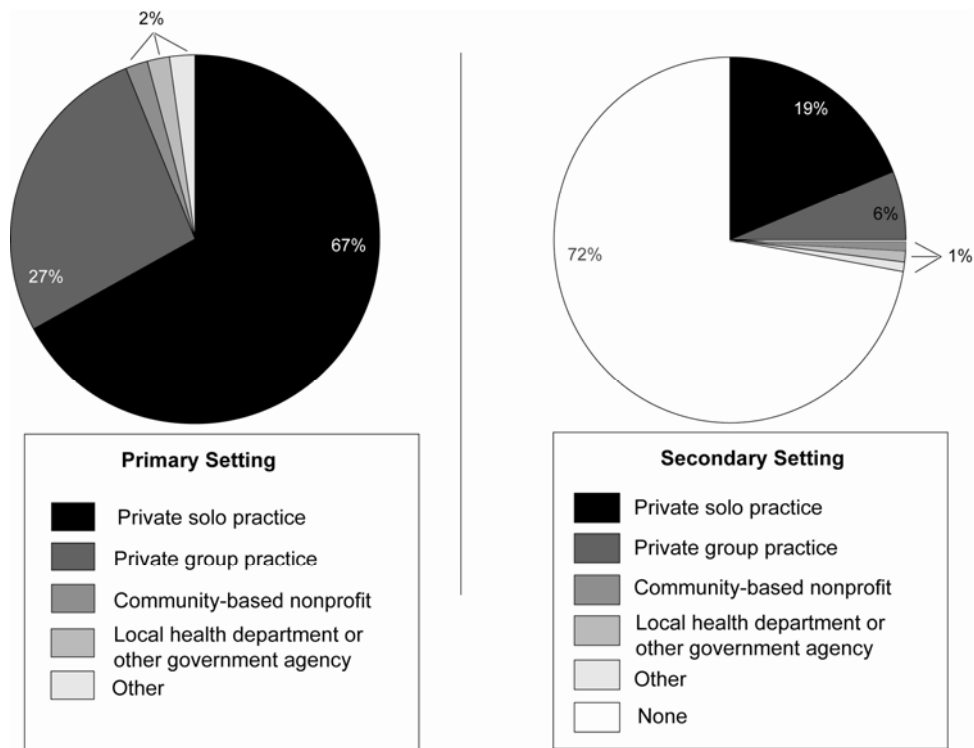
NOTE: Hygienists were asked to indicate all of the reasons they are not practicing as a hygienist, making the sum of the percentages more than 100 percent.

PRACTICE SETTING CHARACTERISTICS

About 28 percent of active dental hygienists work at more than one site; 72 percent work at only one site as a dental hygienist. The primary practice setting of the majority (67 percent) of active dental hygienists is a private solo practice, while slightly more than a quarter (27 percent) work primarily in a private *group* practice. About 2 percent of active hygienists work primarily in a community-based nonprofit; another 2 percent work in a local health department or another government agency; and 2 percent work in another setting.

The secondary practice setting of almost 20 percent of active dental hygienists is a private solo practice and about 6 percent work secondarily in a private group practice. About 1 percent work secondarily in a community-based nonprofit; another 1 percent work in a local health department or another government agency; and 1 percent report working in a secondary practice in another setting (see Exhibit 3).

EXHIBIT 3
Practice Settings of Active Hygienists in Michigan, 2006



SOURCE: Michigan Department of Community Health Survey of Dental Hygienists 2006.
NOTE: Data presented are for *active* licensed dental hygienists in Michigan.

SPECIAL SKILLS

Administering Local Anesthesia and Nitrous Oxide

About 35 percent of active dental hygienists report that they have met the requirements to administer local anesthesia and another 12 percent say they are currently working toward meeting these requirements. Approximately 27 percent of active hygienists report meeting the requirements to administer nitrous oxide and another 14 percent say they are currently working toward meeting those requirements.

About 30 percent of active hygienists do administer local anesthesia in their practice and 26 percent administer nitrous oxide (see Exhibit 4).

EXHIBIT 4
Administration of Local Anesthesia and Nitrous Oxide by
Active Dental Hygienists, 2006

	Meet Requirements to Administer	Working Toward Meeting Requirements to Administer	Administer
Local anesthesia	35%	12%	30%
Nitrous oxide	27	14	26

SOURCE: Michigan Department of Community Health Survey of Dental Hygienists 2006.

NOTE: Data presented are for *active* licensed dental hygienists in Michigan.

Speaking a Foreign Language

About 8 percent of active dental hygienists speak another language in addition to English. Three percent speak Spanish, 1 percent speak French, less than 1 percent speak Arabic, and 5 percent speak a language other than these.

COMPENSATION AND FRINGE BENEFITS

Survey respondents were asked to indicate all of the ways in which they are paid. About 12 percent of active dental hygienists are paid a salary. The vast majority (84 percent) are paid an hourly wage. Only about 6 percent are paid a day rate and 8 percent are paid a percentage of production (service fees charged by the dentist). These percentages add up to more than 100 percent because some hygienists work at multiple sites and, therefore, may receive more than one type of compensation.

Respondents were also asked to indicate all of the benefits they receive through any of their employers. The employment benefits received most commonly by active hygienists include vacation (71 percent) and holidays (67 percent), continuing education (65 percent), retirement/401k (55 percent), and a uniform allowance (53 percent).

Only about a third (32 percent) of active hygienists receive paid sick leave from their employer. Less than a quarter have either medical insurance (24 percent) or dental insurance (22 percent) through their employer; and fewer still have vision insurance or life insurance (7 percent each). Another 7 percent receive help in paying association dues (see Exhibit 5).

EXHIBIT 5
Compensation and Fringe Benefits of Active Dental Hygienists, 2006

Compensation Type	Percentage of Active Dental Hygienists
Hourly	84%
Salary	12
Day rate	6
Percentage of production (service fees charged by the dentist)	8
Benefits Received	Percentage of Active Dental Hygienists
Vacation	71%
Holidays	67
Continuing education	65
Retirement/401k	55
Uniform allowance	53
Sick leave	32
Medical insurance	24
Dental insurance	22
Malpractice insurance	13
Vision insurance	7
Life insurance	7
Association dues	7

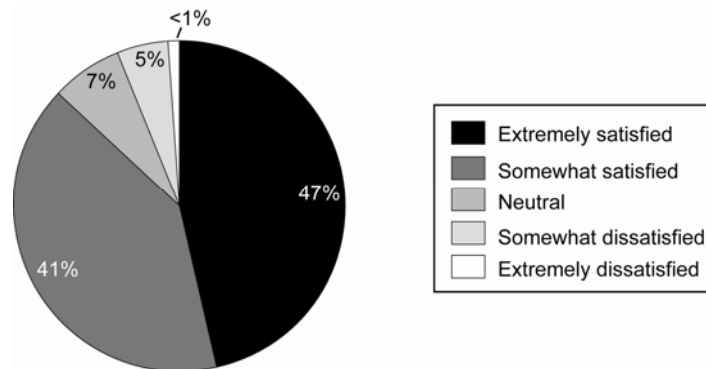
SOURCE: Michigan Department of Community Health Survey of Dental Hygienists 2006.

NOTE: Data presented are for *active* licensed dental hygienists in Michigan. Hygienists were asked to indicate all of the ways they are paid and all of the benefits they receive from their employers, making the sum of the percentages more than 100.

PROFESSIONAL SATISFACTION

When asked to rate their overall professional satisfaction as a dental hygienist, 47 percent of dental hygienists report that they are extremely satisfied; another 41 percent are somewhat satisfied (see Exhibit 6).

EXHIBIT 6
Active Hygienists' Professional Satisfaction, 2006



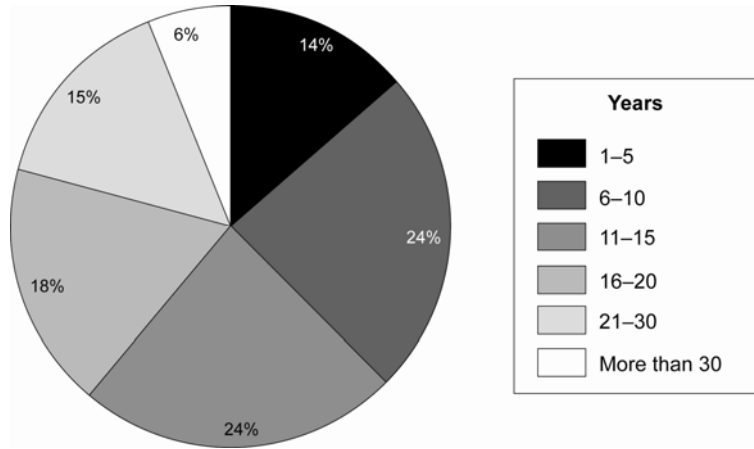
SOURCE: Michigan Department of Community Health Survey of Dental Hygienists 2006.

NOTE: Data presented are for *active* licensed dental hygienists in Michigan. Percentages do not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

PLANS TO CONTINUE PRACTICE

Thirty-eight percent of active hygienists indicate that they plan to work as a dental hygienist for only one to 10 more years (see Exhibit 7).

EXHIBIT 7
Active Hygienists' Plans to Continue Practicing, 2006



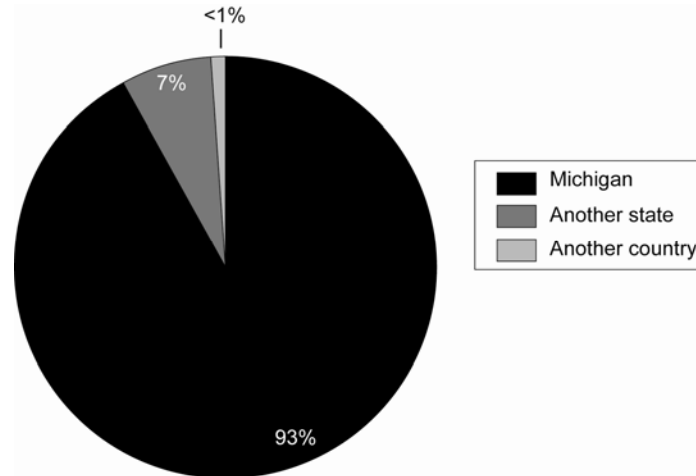
SOURCE: Michigan Department of Community Health Survey of Dental Hygienists 2006.

NOTE: Data presented are for *active* licensed dental hygienists in Michigan. Percentages do not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

EDUCATION

The vast majority of active dental hygienists (93 percent) received their dental hygiene education in Michigan; 7 percent received their education in another state; and less than 1 percent in another country (see Exhibit 8).

EXHIBIT 8
Education Background of Active Dental Hygienists, 2006



SOURCE: Michigan Department of Community Health Survey of Dental Hygienists 2006.
NOTE: Data presented are for *active* licensed dental hygienists in Michigan. Percentages do not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Respondents to the survey were also asked to indicate all of the degrees they have achieved. Approximately 82 percent of active hygienists have an associate's degree in hygiene and 17 percent have a bachelor's degree in hygiene. About 10 percent have a non-hygiene associate's degree and 9 percent have a bachelor's degree in a non-hygiene-related area. Two percent hold a master's degree and less than 1 percent hold a doctoral degree (see Exhibit 9).

EXHIBIT 9
Degrees Held by Active Dental Hygienists, 2006

Degree Achieved	Percentage of Active Hygienists
Associate's: Hygiene	82%
Associate's: Non-hygiene	10
Bachelor's: Hygiene	17
Bachelor's: Non-hygiene	9
Master's	2
Doctorate	<1

SOURCE: Michigan Department of Community Health Survey of Dental Hygienists 2006.
NOTE: Data presented are for *active* licensed dental hygienists in Michigan. Hygienists were asked to indicate all of the degrees they hold, so the sum of the percentages will be more than 100.

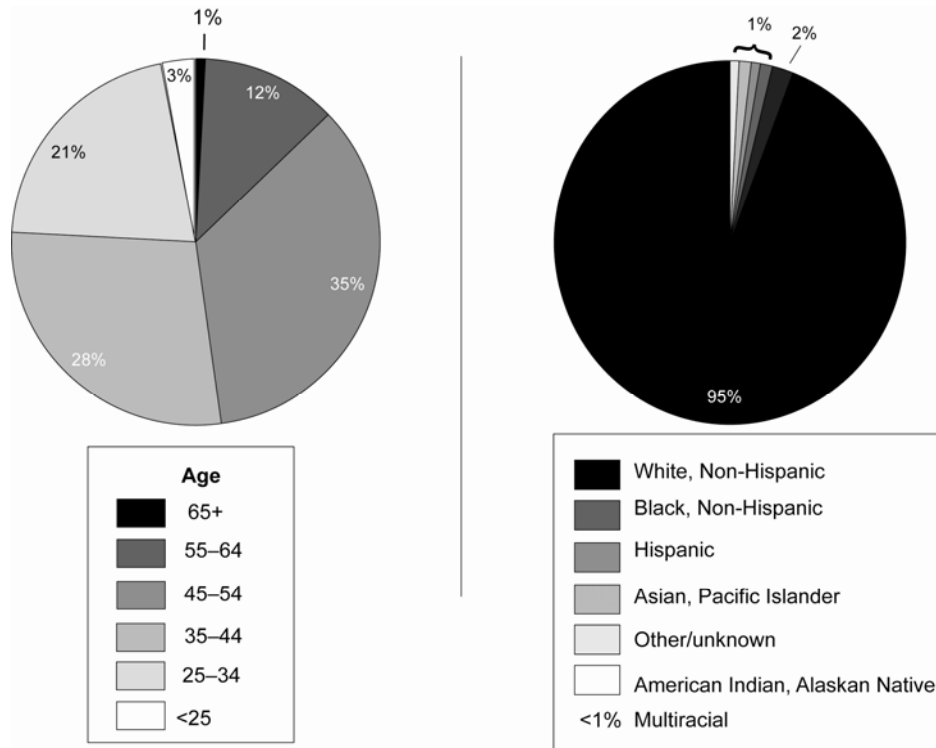
GENDER, AGE, RACE, AND ETHNICITY

- More than 99 percent of active hygienists are female; less than 1 percent are male.
- More than half (51 percent) of active hygienists are aged 44 or younger. Only 14 percent of active hygienists are aged 55 or older.

- Ninety-five percent of active hygienists are white; 2 percent are African American; 1 percent each are American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander, Hispanic, or another race (see Exhibit 10).

EXHIBIT 10

Age, Race, and Ethnicity of Active Hygienists, 2006



SOURCE: Michigan Department of Community Health Survey of Dental Hygienists 2006.

NOTE: Data presented are for *active* licensed dental hygienists in Michigan. Percentages may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

METHODOLOGY

The Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) contracted with Public Sector Consultants Inc. (PSC) for development, implementation, and analysis of the survey of dental hygienists. The survey was designed in collaboration with MDCH and the Michigan Dental Hygienists Association. The instrument (attached in the Appendix) contained questions about employment status, education, location and setting of primary and secondary practice sites, compensation, whether requirements are met to administer local anesthesia and nitrous oxide, professional satisfaction, the length of time that the respondent intended to continue practicing, as well as a number of demographic questions (age, gender, race/ethnicity).

The sample for this survey was drawn from the Michigan licensure files maintained by MDCH. All hygienists are required to renew their license every three years from the first

year of licensure, thus dividing the universe of hygienists into three cohorts of roughly equal size.

As of January 2006, a total of 9,436 dental hygienists were licensed in Michigan. For 2006, 3,433 hygienists were eligible for license renewal. The surveys were mailed to all dental hygienists renewing their license in 2006. Hygienists could either return the two-page paper version of the survey by mail or complete the survey online. Combining the responses from the paper version (1,709 responses) with the results from the Web survey (353 responses) resulted in a final total of 2,062 returned surveys, yielding a margin of error of ± 1.4 percent with 95 percent confidence. This total includes fully and partially completed surveys (i.e., those with information missing for one or more variables), meaning that sample size for individual variables will differ and the margin of error may change slightly depending upon the amount of missing data for that particular variable.

Analysis of all questions other than those on age and race/ethnicity includes responses from both the paper and Web versions of the survey. Web data were unavailable for the questions on age and race/ethnicity; analysis of those questions is based on the 1,709 paper responses.

Appendix

Survey Instrument and Response Frequencies (N=2,062)*

1. In what year were you born?

Age	Percentage
<25	3%
25-34	21
35-44	28
45-54	35
55-64	12
65+	1

2. What is your current employment status? (Mark **one**)

	Percentage of all hygienists	Percentage of active hygienists in Michigan
30 or more hours per week in dental hygiene or related area	41%	45%
12-29 hours per week in dental hygiene or related area	40	46
Less than 12 hours per week in dental hygiene or related area	8	9
Not employed and seeking employment in dental hygiene or related area	3	--
Not employed and seeking employment outside of dental hygiene	<1	--
Temporarily not working and not looking for a job	4	--
Retired, with no plans to return to work	2	--
Employed in another field	3	--

*Unless otherwise noted, all frequencies are for the dental hygienists who indicated they are working as a hygienist in Michigan. Frequencies may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

3. If you are working but not as a hygienist or you are unemployed and seeking work as a hygienist, why is this the case? (Mark **all** that apply)

	Percentage of hygienists seeking employment in hygiene	Percentage of hygienists employed or seeking employment in another field
Difficult to find hygienist position	83%	12%
Better salary in other type of work	5	25
Work environment prevents me from practicing effectively	6	15
Other position more rewarding professionally	3	69
Disability/physical demands of the job	5	22
Taking care of home/family	34	12

4. Please indicate all education degrees completed.

Associate's: Hygiene	82%
Associate's: Non-hygiene	10
Bachelor's: Hygiene	17
Bachelor's: Non-hygiene	9
Master's	2
Doctorate	<1

5. Where did you get your dental hygiene education?

Michigan	93%
Another state	7
Another Country	<1

6. Do you work as a dental hygienist at more than one site?

Yes	28%
No	72

7. Where is your primary place of employment?

	Percentage of All Hygienists
Michigan	91
Other U.S. state	9
Canada	<1
Other nation	<1

8. What is the setting of your primary practice?

Private solo practice	67%
Private group practice	27
Community-based nonprofit	2
Local health department or other government agency	2
Other	2

9. What is the setting of your secondary practice?

Private solo practice	19%
Private group practice	6
Community-based nonprofit	1
Local health department or other government agency	1
Other	1
None	72

10. What is the zip code of your primary place of employment? _____

11. What is the zip code of your secondary place of employment? _____

12. How do you get paid? (Mark **all** that apply)

Hourly	84%
Salary	12
Day rate	6
Percentage of production (service fees charged by the dentist)	8

13. Which of the following benefits do you receive through any of your employers? (Mark **all** that apply)

Vacation	71%
Holidays	67
Sick leave	32
Medical insurance	24
Dental insurance	22
Vision insurance	7
Malpractice insurance	13
Life insurance	7
Retirement/401k	55
Uniform allowance	53
Association dues	7
Continuing education	65

14. Have you met the requirements that allow a dental hygienist to administer...

Local anesthesia	35%
Nitrous oxide	27

15. Are you currently working toward meeting the requirements that allow a dental hygienist to administer...

Local anesthesia	12%
Nitrous oxide	14

16. In your practice, do you administer...

Local anesthesia	30%
Nitrous oxide	26

17. For how many years do you plan to continue to work in dental hygiene?

1-5 years	14%
6-10 years	24
11-15 years	24
16-20 years	18
21-30 years	15
More than 30 years	6

18. Overall, how would you rate your professional satisfaction as a dental hygienist?

Extremely satisfied	47%
Somewhat satisfied	41
Neutral	7
Somewhat dissatisfied	5
Extremely dissatisfied	1

19. Do you speak another language in addition to English?

Yes	8%
No	92

20. If yes, indicate what language(s) you speak? (Mark **all** that apply)

Spanish	3%
French	1
Arabic	<1
Other	5

21. What is your race/ethnicity? (Mark **one**)

American Indian, Alaskan Native	1%
Asian, Pacific Islander	1
Black, Non-Hispanic	2
Hispanic	1
White, Non-Hispanic	95
Multi-racial	<1
Other/unknown	1

22. What is your gender?

Female	100%
Male	<1