

Michigan Department of Community Health

Survey of Dental Hygienists 2007

March 2008

INTRODUCTION

In 2007, the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) conducted the second annual survey of licensed dental hygienists to gather information about their employment characteristics, education, and work environment. A total of 3,351 dental hygienists received the survey. Responses were received online or by return mail from 2,108 dental hygienists, for a response rate of 63 percent and a margin of error of ± 2 percent with 95 percent confidence. While the results of the 2007 survey of hygienists are generally consistent with those of the 2006 survey, differences in the data that fall outside the margin of error are noted. Key survey findings are presented below.

METHODOLOGY

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 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 survey questions and response frequencies are provided in the Appendix.

As of January 2007, a total of 9,587 dental hygienists were licensed in Michigan. 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. For 2007, 3,351 hygienists were eligible for license renewal. The surveys were mailed to all dental hygienists renewing their license in 2007. Hygienists could either return the two-page paper version of the survey by mail or complete the survey online.

The sample for this survey was drawn from the Michigan licensure files maintained by MDCH. The 2,108 responses include 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 includes responses from both the paper and Web versions of the survey. Web data were unavailable for the questions on age; analysis of that question is based on the 1,935 paper responses.

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, 48 percent are working 30 or more hours per week in dental hygiene or a related area; 43 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 9 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.

EXHIBIT 1

Employment Characteristics of Dental Hygienists, 2007

	Percentage of all hygienists	Percentage of active hygienists in Michigan
30 or more hours per week in dental hygiene or related area	43%	48%
12-29 hours per week in dental hygiene or related area	38	43
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	NA
Not employed and seeking employment outside of dental hygiene	<1	NA
Temporarily not working and not looking for a job	5	NA
Retired, with no plans to return to work	2	NA
Employed in another field	2	NA
Licensed hygienists working in hygiene-related area in Michigan	79%	NA
Licensed hygienists working in hygiene-related area outside of Michigan	9	NA
Licensed hygienists not working in hygiene-related area	13	NA

SOURCE: Michigan Department of Community Health Survey of Dental Hygienists 2007.

NOTE: Percentages may not equal 100 percent due to rounding. NA = Not applicable.

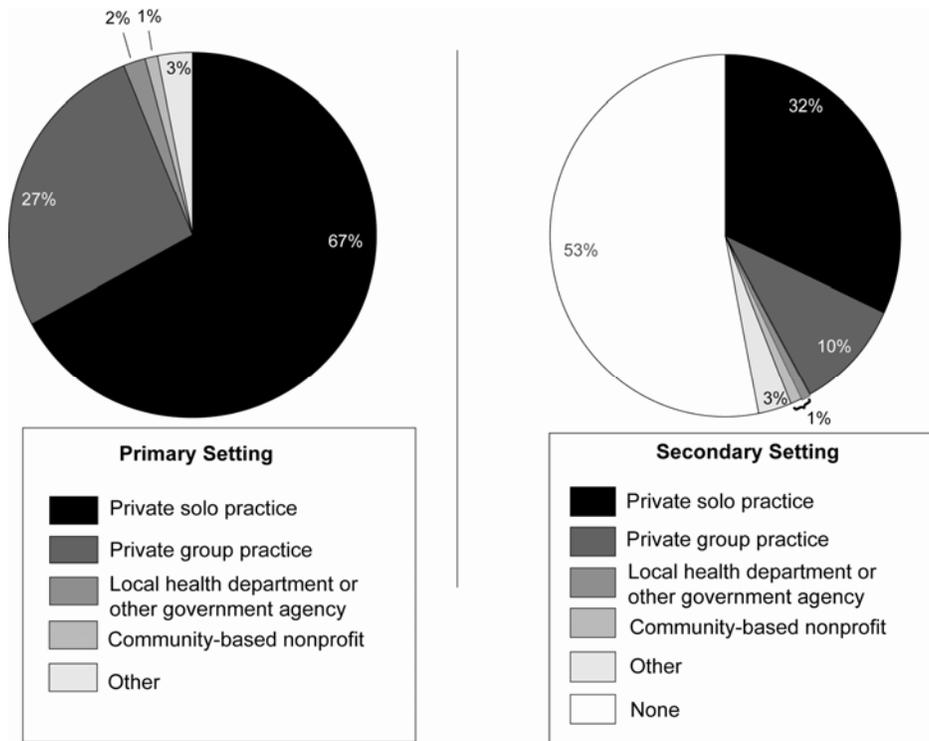
Of the 3 percent of hygienists who are not employed and are seeking employment in hygiene or a related area, most indicate that this is the result of having difficulty finding a hygienist position (87 percent). Of the 3 percent of hygienists who are either employed in a field other than hygiene or are not employed and are seeking employment outside of dental hygiene, the largest proportion (43 percent) say this is because they find another position more professionally rewarding, and more than a quarter (27 percent) say it is due to difficulty finding a hygienist position.

PRACTICE SETTING CHARACTERISTICS

About 30 percent of active dental hygienists work at more than one site; 70 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 a third (32 percent) of active dental hygienists is a private solo practice (up from 19 percent in 2006) and about 10 percent work secondarily in a private group practice (up from 6 percent in 2006). About 1 percent work secondarily in a community-based nonprofit; another 1 percent work in a local health department or another government agency; and 3 percent report working in a secondary practice in another setting (see Exhibit 2).

EXHIBIT 2
Practice Settings of Active Hygienists in Michigan, 2007



SOURCE: Michigan Department of Community Health Survey of Dental Hygienists 2007.
NOTE: Data presented are for *active* licensed dental hygienists in Michigan.

SPECIAL SKILLS

Administering Local Anesthesia and Nitrous Oxide

About 38 percent of active dental hygienists report that they have met the requirements to administer local anesthesia and another 11 percent say they are currently working toward meeting these requirements. Approximately 30 percent of active hygienists report meeting the requirements to administer nitrous oxide and another 13 percent say they are currently working toward meeting those requirements.

About 31 percent of active hygienists do administer local anesthesia in their practice and 24 percent administer nitrous oxide (see Exhibit 3).

EXHIBIT 3

Administration of Local Anesthesia and Nitrous Oxide by Active Dental Hygienists, 2007

Type of anesthesia	Meet requirements to administer	Working toward meeting requirements to administer	Administer
Local anesthesia	38%	11%	31%
Nitrous oxide	30	13	24

SOURCE: Michigan Department of Community Health Survey of Dental Hygienists 2007.

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

Speaking a Foreign Language

About 7 percent of active dental hygienists speak another language in addition to English. Three percent speak Spanish, 1 percent speak French, 1 percent speak Arabic, and 3 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 13 percent of active dental hygienists are paid a salary. The vast majority (83 percent) are paid an hourly wage. Only 5 percent are paid a day rate and 7 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 (70 percent) and holidays (66 percent), continuing education (65 percent), retirement/401k (52 percent), and a uniform allowance (49 percent).

Only about a third (31 percent) of active hygienists receive paid sick leave from their employer. A quarter have medical insurance (25 percent) and less than a fifth (18 percent) have dental insurance through their employer; and fewer still have vision insurance (7 percent) or life insurance (9 percent). Seven percent receive help in paying association dues (see Exhibit 4).

EXHIBIT 4
Compensation and Fringe Benefits of Active Dental Hygienists, 2007

Compensation type	Percentage of active dental hygienists
Hourly	83%
Salary	13
Percentage of production (service fees charged by the dentist)	7
Day rate	5
Benefits received	Percentage of active dental hygienists
Vacation	70%
Holidays	66
Continuing education	65
Retirement/401k	52
Uniform allowance	49
Sick leave	31
Medical insurance	25
Dental insurance	18
Malpractice insurance	11
Life insurance	9
Vision insurance	7
Association dues	7

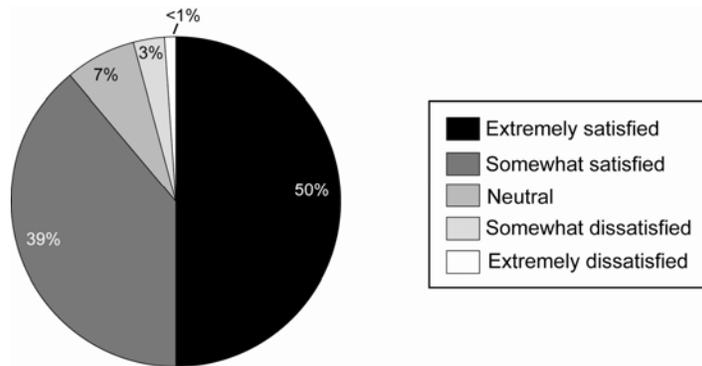
SOURCE: Michigan Department of Community Health Survey of Dental Hygienists 2007.

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, 50 percent of dental hygienists report that they are extremely satisfied; another 39 percent are somewhat satisfied (see Exhibit 5).

EXHIBIT 5
Active Hygienists' Professional Satisfaction, 2007

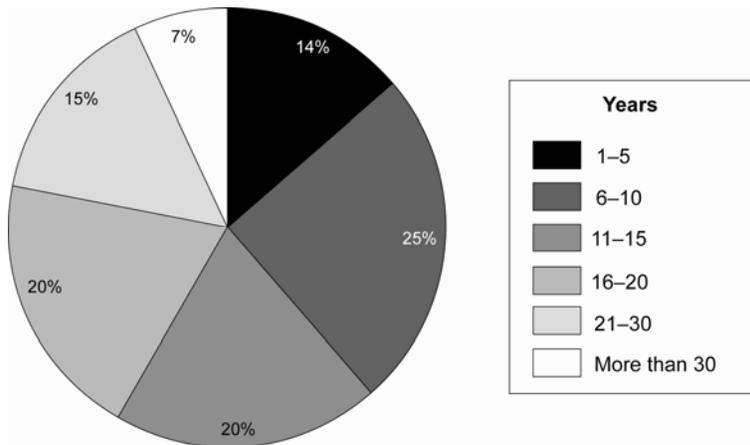


SOURCE: Michigan Department of Community Health Survey of Dental Hygienists 2007.
NOTE: Data presented are for *active* licensed dental hygienists in Michigan. Percentages may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

PLANS TO CONTINUE PRACTICE

Thirty-nine percent of active hygienists indicate that they plan to work as a dental hygienist for only one to 10 more years (see Exhibit 6).

EXHIBIT 6
Active Hygienists' Plans to Continue Practicing, 2007

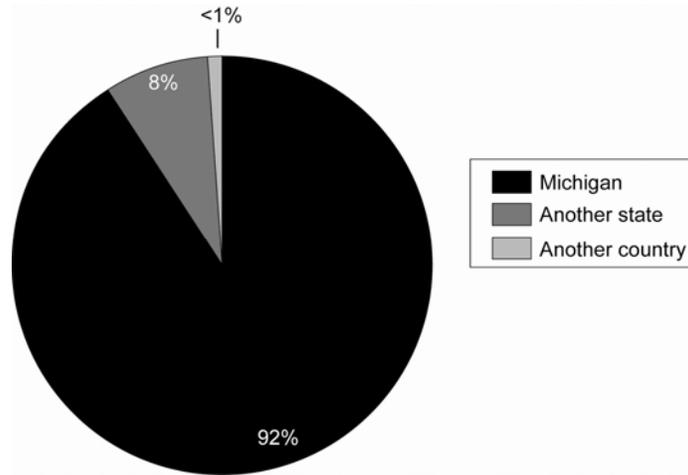


SOURCE: Michigan Department of Community Health Survey of Dental Hygienists 2007.
NOTE: Data presented are for *active* licensed dental hygienists in Michigan. Percentages may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

EDUCATION

The vast majority of active dental hygienists (92 percent) received their dental hygiene education in Michigan; 8 percent received their education in another state; and less than 1 percent in another country (see Exhibit 7).

EXHIBIT 7
Education Background of Active Dental Hygienists, 2007



SOURCE: Michigan Department of Community Health Survey of Dental Hygienists 2007.

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

Survey respondents were also asked to indicate all of the degrees they have earned. Approximately 82 percent of active hygienists have an associate's degree in hygiene and 17 percent have a bachelor's degree in hygiene. About 11 percent have a non-hygiene associate's degree and 7 percent have a bachelor's degree in a non-hygiene-related area. Three percent hold a master's degree and less than 1 percent hold a doctoral degree (see Exhibit 8).

EXHIBIT 8
Degrees Held by Active Dental Hygienists, 2007

Degree achieved	Percentage of active hygienists
Associate's: Hygiene	82%
Associate's: Non-hygiene	11
Bachelor's: Hygiene	17
Bachelor's: Non-hygiene	7
Master's	3
Doctorate	<1

SOURCE: Michigan Department of Community Health Survey of Dental Hygienists 2007.

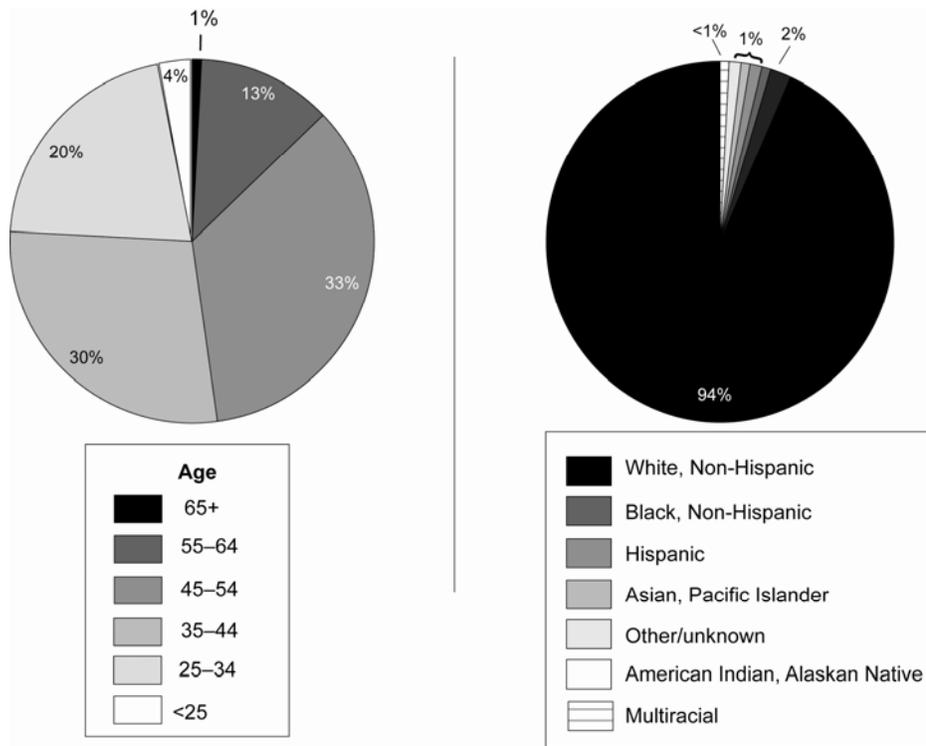
NOTE: Data presented are for *active* licensed dental hygienists in Michigan. Hygienists were asked to indicate all of the degrees they hold, so the sum of the percentages will be more than 100.

GENDER, AGE, RACE, AND ETHNICITY

- More than 99 percent of active hygienists are female; less than 1 percent are male.
- More than half (54 percent) of active hygienists are aged 44 or younger. Only 14 percent of active hygienists are aged 55 or older.
- Ninety-four 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 9).

EXHIBIT 9

Age, Race, and Ethnicity of Active Hygienists, 2007



SOURCE: Michigan Department of Community Health Survey of Dental Hygienists 2007.

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

Appendix

Survey Instrument and Response Frequencies * (N=2,108)

1. In what year were you born?

Age	Percentage
<25	4%
25–34	20
35–44	30
45–54	33
55–64	13
65+	1

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

	Percentage of all hygienists	Percentage of active hygienists in Michigan
a. 30 or more hours per week in dental hygiene or related area	43%	48%
b. 12–29 hours per week in dental hygiene or related area	38	43
c. Less than 12 hours per week in dental hygiene or related area	8	9
d. Not employed and seeking employment in dental hygiene or related area	3	NA
e. Not employed and seeking employment outside of dental hygiene	<1	NA
f. Temporarily not working and not looking for a job	5	NA
g. Retired, with no plans to return to work	2	NA
h. Employed in another field	2	NA

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

3. If you are not working 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
a. Difficult to find hygienist position	87%	27%
b. Better salary in other type of work	3	29
c. Work environment prevents me from practicing effectively	7	12
d. Other position more rewarding professionally	3	43
e. Disability/physical demands of the job	2	20
f. Taking care of home/family	26	14

4. Please indicate all education degrees completed.

a. Associate's: Hygiene	82%
b. Associate's: Non-hygiene	11
c. Bachelor's: Hygiene	17
d. Bachelor's: Non-hygiene	7
e. Master's	3
f. Doctorate	<1

5. Where did you get your dental hygiene education?

a. Michigan	92%
b. Another state	8
c. Another country	<1

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

a. Yes	30%
b. No	70

7. Where is your primary place of employment?

	Percentage of all hygienists
a. Michigan	91%
b. Other U.S. state	9
c. Canada	<1
d. Other nation	0

8. What is the setting of your primary practice?

a. Private solo practice	67%
b. Private group practice	27
c. Community-based nonprofit	2
d. Local health department or other government agency	1
e. Other	3

9. What is the setting of your secondary practice?

a. Private solo practice	32%
b. Private group practice	10
c. Community-based nonprofit	1
d. Local health department or other government agency	1
e. Other	3
f. None	53

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)

a. Hourly	83%
b. Salary	13
c. Day rate	5
d. Percentage of production (service fees charged by the dentist)	7

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

a. Vacation	70%
b. Holidays	66
c. Sick leave	31
d. Medical insurance	25
e. Dental insurance	18
f. Vision insurance	7
g. Malpractice insurance	11
h. Life insurance	9
i. Retirement/401k	52
j. Uniform allowance	49
k. Association dues	7
l. Continuing education	65

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

a. Local anesthesia	38%
b. Nitrous oxide	30

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

a. Local anesthesia	11%
b. Nitrous oxide	13

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

a. Local anesthesia	31%
b. Nitrous oxide	24

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

a. 1-5 years	14%
b. 6-10 years	25
c. 11-15 years	20
d. 16-20 years	20
e. 21-30 years	15
f. More than 30 years	7

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

a. Extremely satisfied	50%
b. Somewhat satisfied	39
c. Neutral	7
d. Somewhat dissatisfied	3
e. Extremely dissatisfied	1

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

a. Yes	7%
b. No	93

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

a. Spanish	3%
b. French	1
c. Arabic	1
d. Other	3

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

a. American Indian, Alaskan Native	1%
b. Asian, Pacific Islander	1
c. Black, Non-Hispanic	2
d. Hispanic	1
e. White, Non-Hispanic	94
f. Multi-racial	1
g. Other/unknown	1

22. What is your gender?

a. Female	100%
b. Male	<1