



Center *for*
Rural Health

University of North Dakota
School of Medicine & Health Sciences

North Dakota Dentists Survey Results Health Profession Tracking Program

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*Connecting resources and knowledge to strengthen
the health of people in rural communities.*

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The Health Profession Tracking Program (HPTP) at the Center for Rural Health, University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences developed a survey modeled after the University of Nebraska Medical Center's Health Profession Tracking Center. The HPTP is a statewide healthcare provider tracking system with the ability to create and maintain a comprehensive inventory of North Dakota's critical healthcare resources. Data will be analyzed annually to monitor workforce trends in North Dakota.

The Dental Workforce Survey was designed to examine demographics, educational background, practice profiles, practice arrangements, and patient profile information. The survey was distributed to all 316 licensed dentists in North Dakota with a response rate of 73 % (232/316).^a

This program is supported with funding and personnel from the Center for Rural Health, University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences and the State Health Department's Division of Oral Health.

Dentist Survey Results

- The majority of dentists in North Dakota and the United States were male and non-Hispanic white.
- The average age in North Dakota is 52 years which is slightly older than the national average of 49 years.
- Over half were born in North Dakota and over half graduated from dental school before 1980. Over half graduated from the University of Minnesota program.
- Almost three-fourths were General Dentists which is slightly lower than the national data.
- Three-fourths were employed full-time which is slightly higher than the national average.
- Over half were self-employed, solo practitioners in North Dakota and the United States.
- Almost one-half plan to sell their practice in the next fifteen years and over half plan to retire in fifteen years.

^a Survey results vary in response rate from question to question and due to rounding may not add up to 100 %.

- Over one-third indicated that patients can access appointments for non-emergency treatment in less than two weeks with over three-fourths reported appointments can be made within 4 weeks.
- Over three-fourths accepted new patients and of these, all General Dentists and Oral Pathology Specialists actively sought new patients.
- Less than one-fourth accepted all Medicaid patients.
- One-third limit the number of new Medicaid patients.
- Rural Dentists were more likely to accept all Medicaid patients than urban Dentists.

INTRODUCTION

The Health Profession Tracking Program (HPTP) at the Center for Rural Health, University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences developed a survey modeled after the University of Nebraska Medical Center’s Health Profession Tracking Center. The HPTP is a statewide healthcare provider tracking system with the ability to create and maintain a comprehensive inventory of North Dakota’s critical healthcare resources. Data will be analyzed annually to monitor workforce trends in North Dakota.

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DEMOGRAPHICS

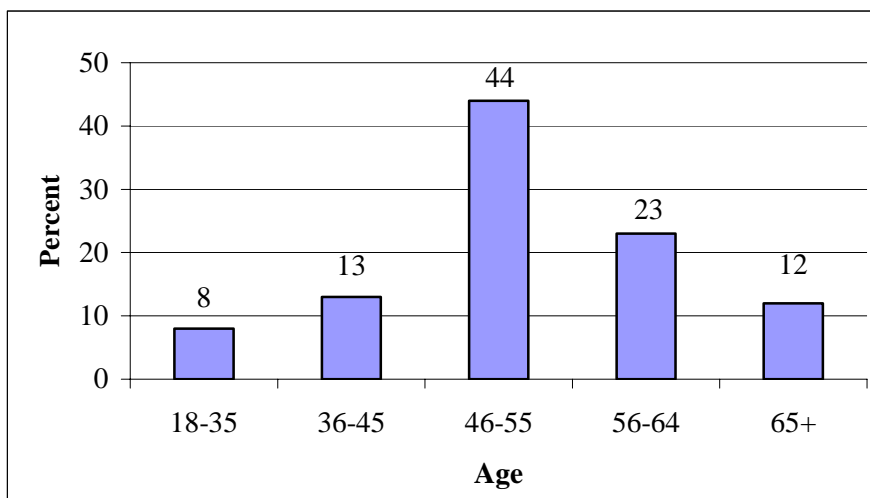
- **Gender**

10% of the dentists in North Dakota were female. Nationally, by 2020, females will increase to 29%¹.

- **Age**

Average age of dentists in North Dakota was 52 years compared with 49 years nationally³ (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Age



^b Survey results vary in response rate from question to question and due to rounding may not add up to 100%.

- **Country of Origin**

97% were born in the United States, 2% from Canada and 1% other countries.

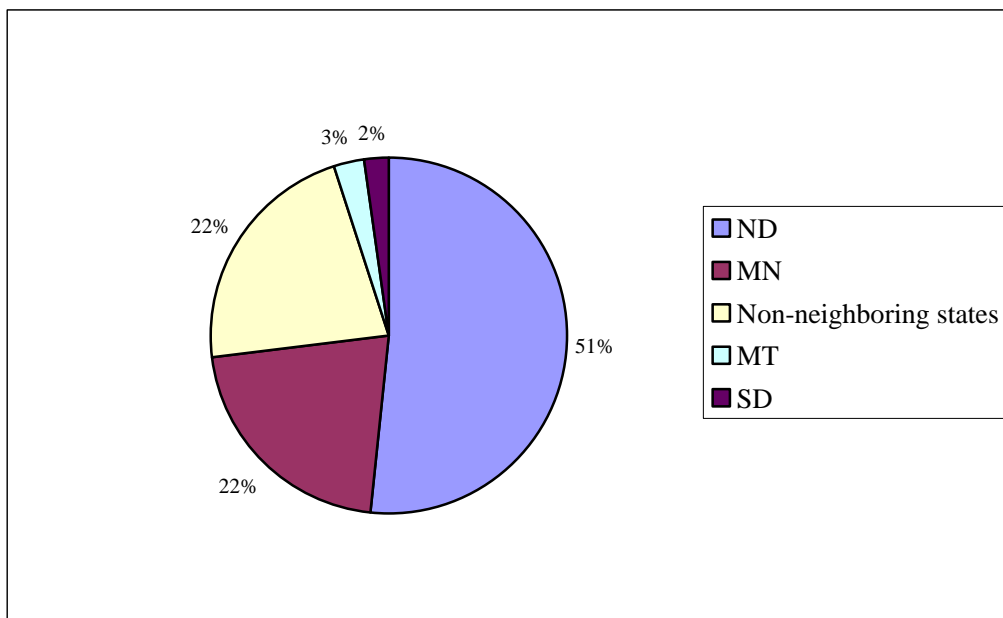
- **Race**

97% were non-Hispanic white compared to 87% nationally.²

- **Birth State**

51% were born in North Dakota (see Figure 2).

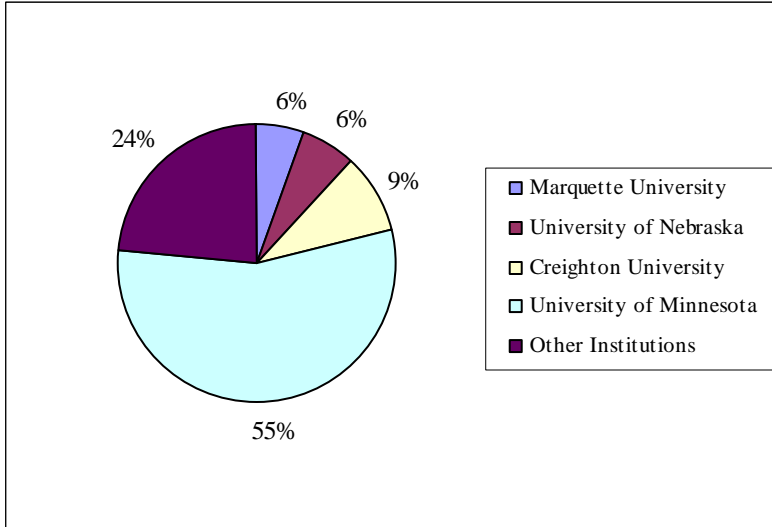
Figure 2: Birth State



EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

- 55% were University of Minnesota graduates (see Figure 3).

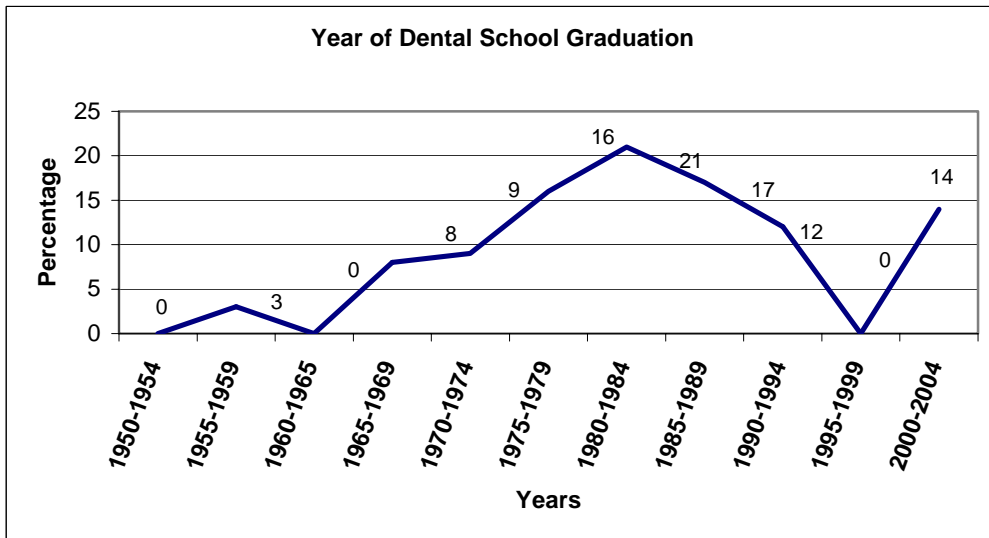
Figure 3: Educational Background



YEAR OF GRADUATION

- Nationally, 32% graduated from 1979-88 compared to 40% in North Dakota.
- 21% graduated in 1980 (see Figure 4).

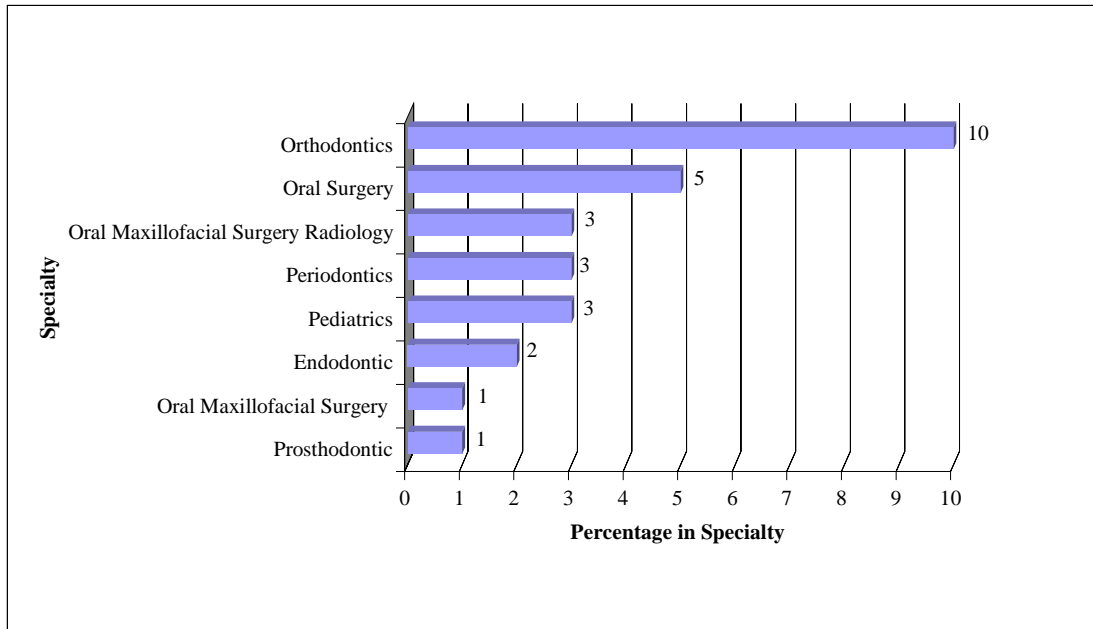
Figure 4: Actual Year North Dakota Dentists Graduated



PRIMARY SPECIALTY

- 73% practice General Dentistry compared with 80% nationally³, 10% practice Orthodontics (see Figure 5).

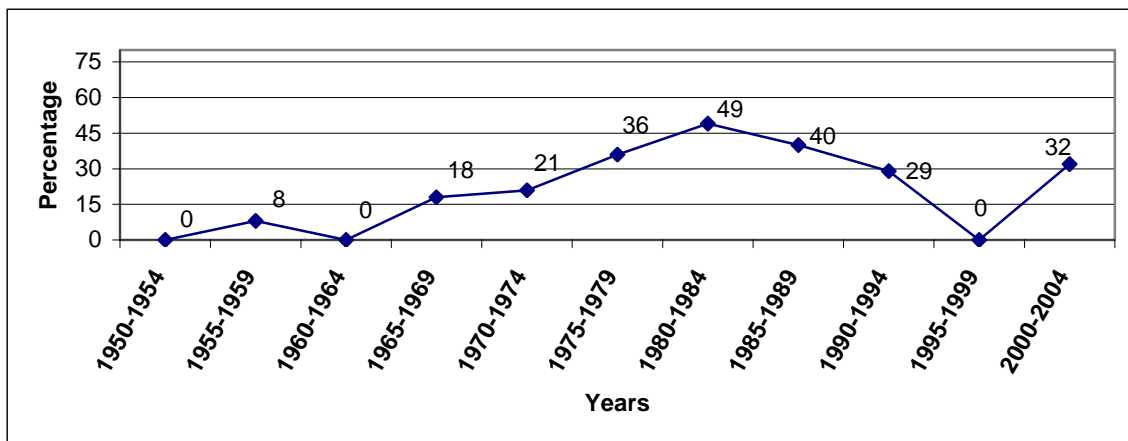
Figure 5: Specialty Other Than General Dentistry



YEAR BEGAN PRACTICING

- 57% began practicing before 1980 (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Year North Dakota Dentists Began Practicing



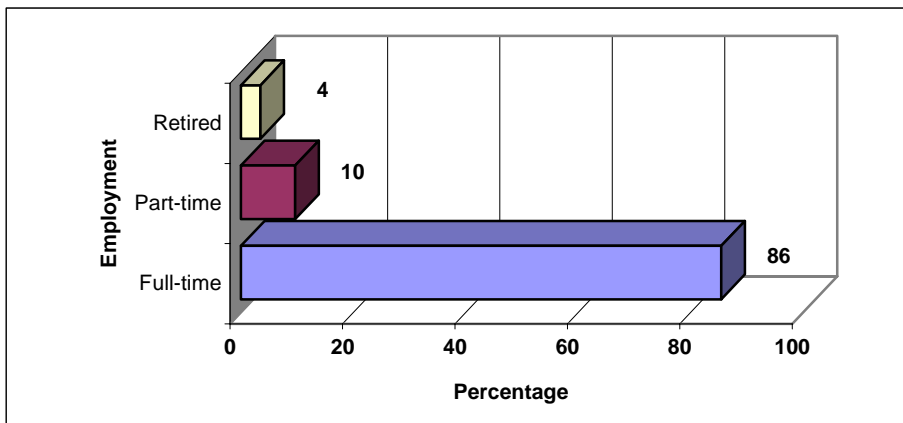
MARKETING THE PRACTICE

- 38% would like to advertise their practice with a central clearinghouse.
- 31% indicated a willingness to market their practice to dental schools.
- 38% would like to advertise their practice opportunity with the North Dakota Dental Association.

PRACTICE CHARACTERISTICS

- 86% were employed full-time compared to 76% nationally¹ (see Figure 7).

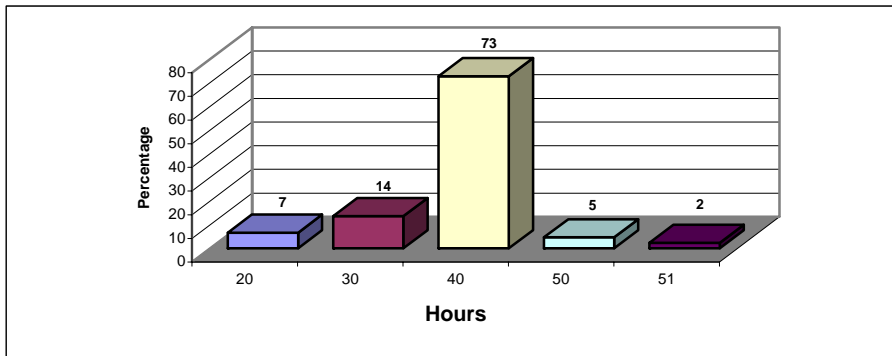
Figure 7: Overall Employment



HOURS WORKED IN DIRECT PATIENT CARE

- 73% work 40 hours a week in direct patient care while nationally, dentists average 33 hours¹ (see Figure 8).

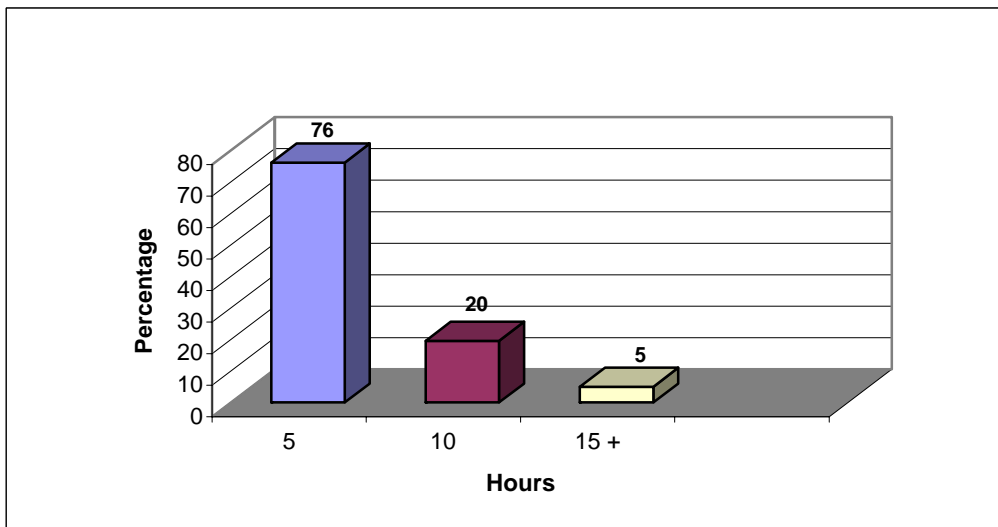
Figure 8: Hours Worked in Direct Patient Care



ALLOCATION OF TIME

- 76% spend five hours in administrative work per week (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Allocation of Administrative Time

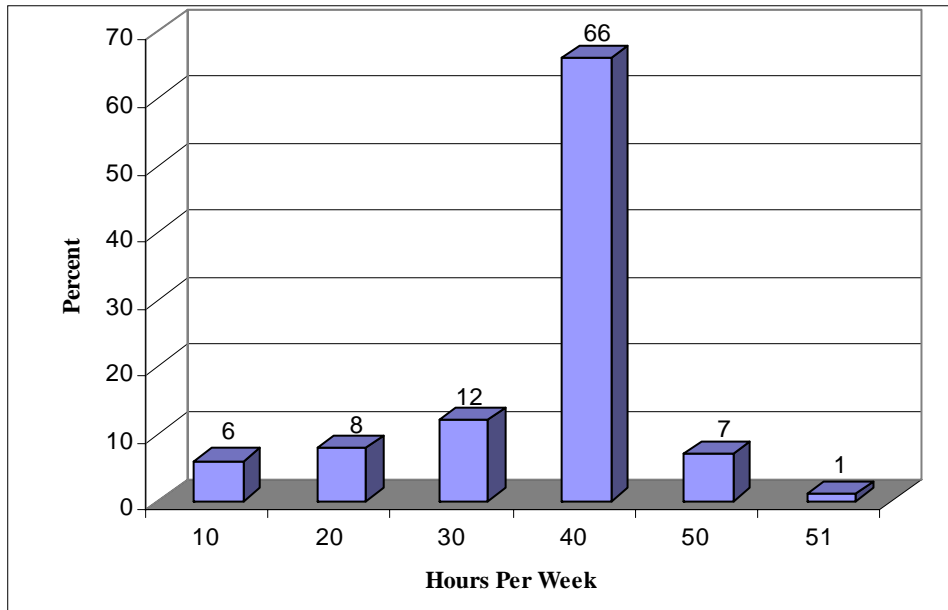


- 98% did not list any current academic involvement.

EMPLOYMENT HOURS OF DENTAL HYGIENISTS

- 66% worked an average of 40 hours per week (see Figure 10).

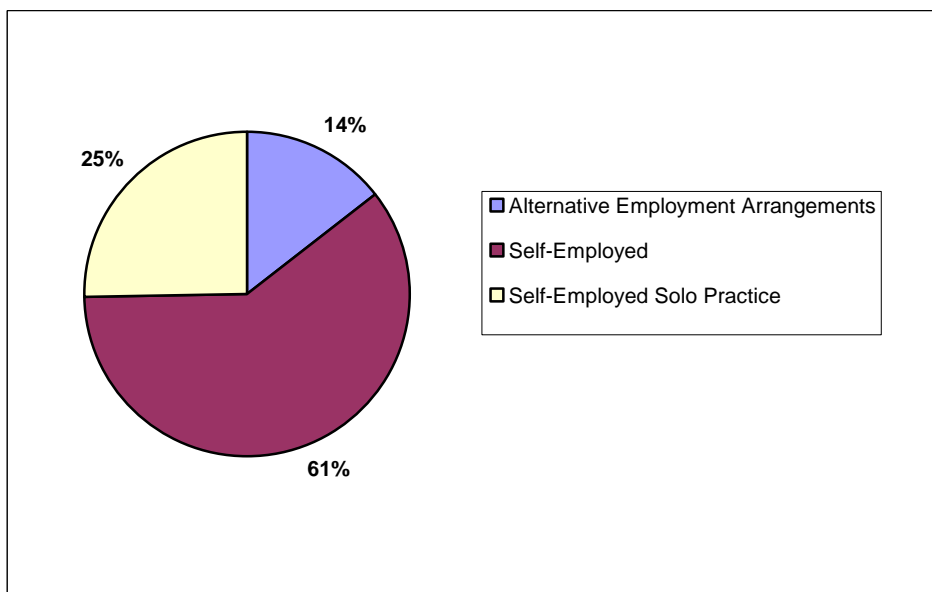
Figure 10: Hours Worked by Dental Hygienists



PRACTICE ARRANGEMENT

- 61% were self-employed compared to 67% nationally³ (see Figure 11).

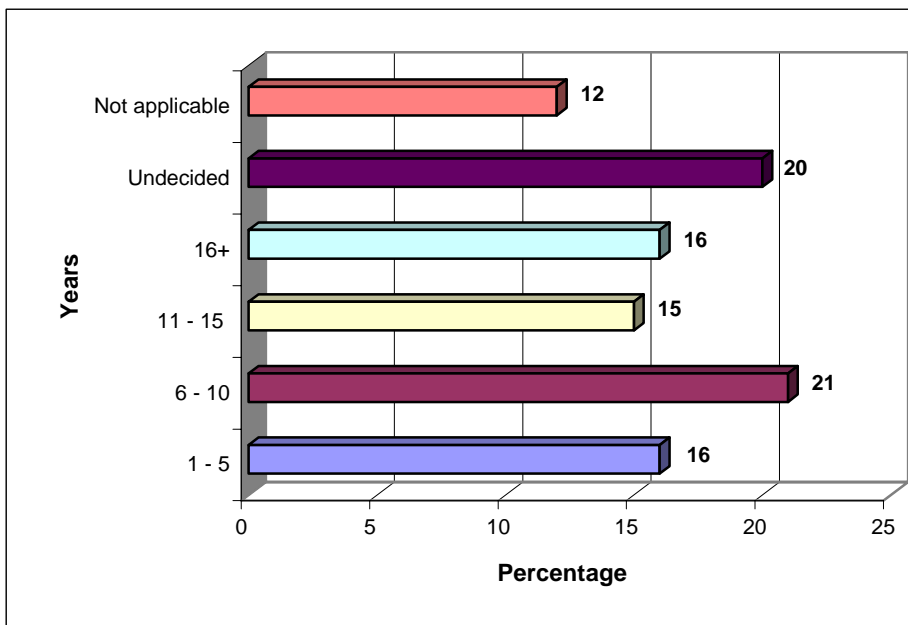
Figure 11. Practice Arrangement



RETIREMENT

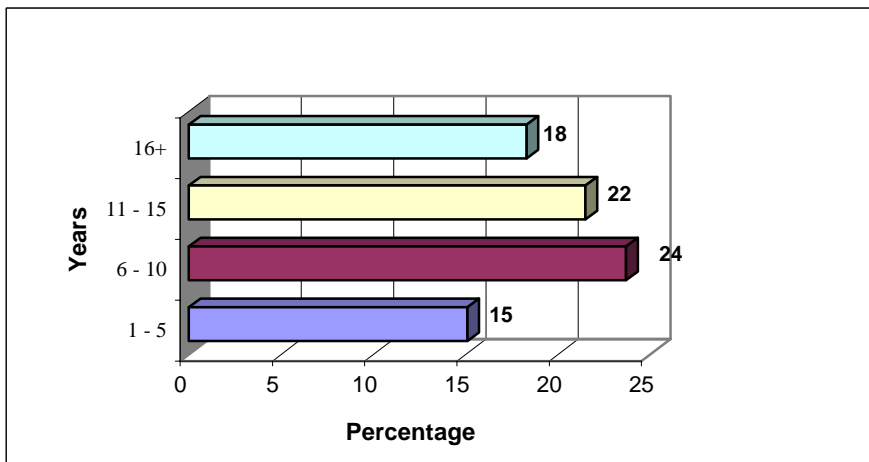
- 52% plan to sell their practice within the next 15 years (see Figure 12).

Figure 12: Time Frame for Selling the Practice



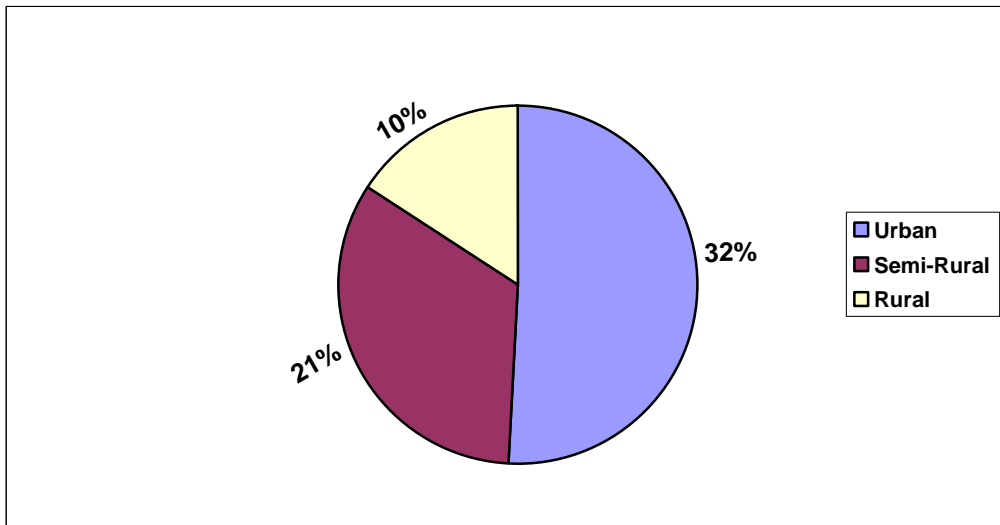
- 21% were undecided or had already retired and 61% plan to retire within the next 15 years (see Figure 14).

Figure 14: Years to Retiring from Full-time Practice



- 32% of urban, 21% of semi-rural, and 10% of rural dentists plan to retire in 15 years or less⁴; 38% plan to retire in 16 years or more (see Figure 13).

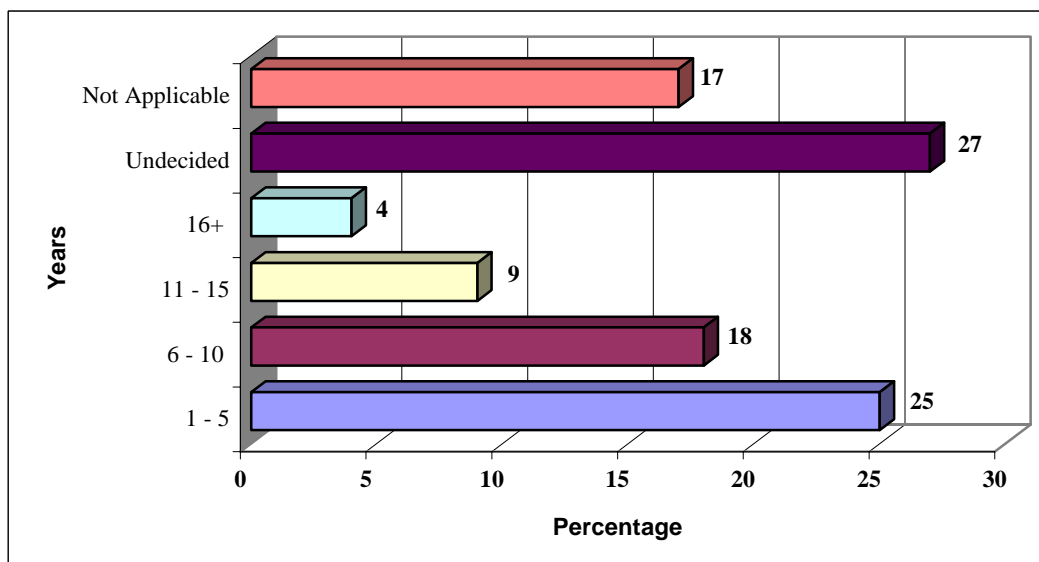
Figure 13: Retirement by Rurality



RECRUITMENT

- Within 15 years, 52% intend to employ an associate to purchase the practice (see Figure 15).

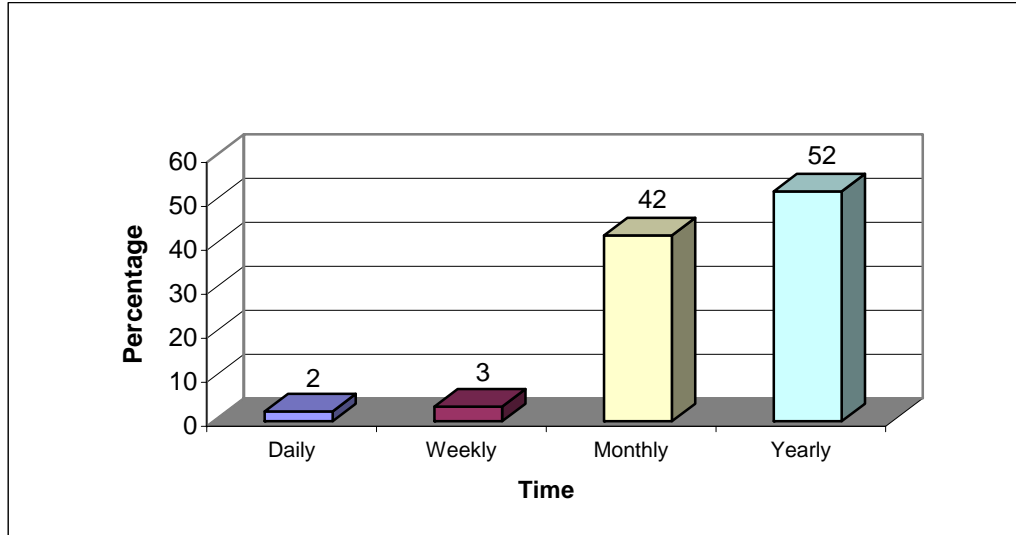
Figure 15: Employment of an Associate to Purchase the Practice



UTILIZATION OF THE NORTH DAKOTA DENTAL ASSOCIATION WEBSITE

- 52% utilized the website at least yearly (see Figure 16).

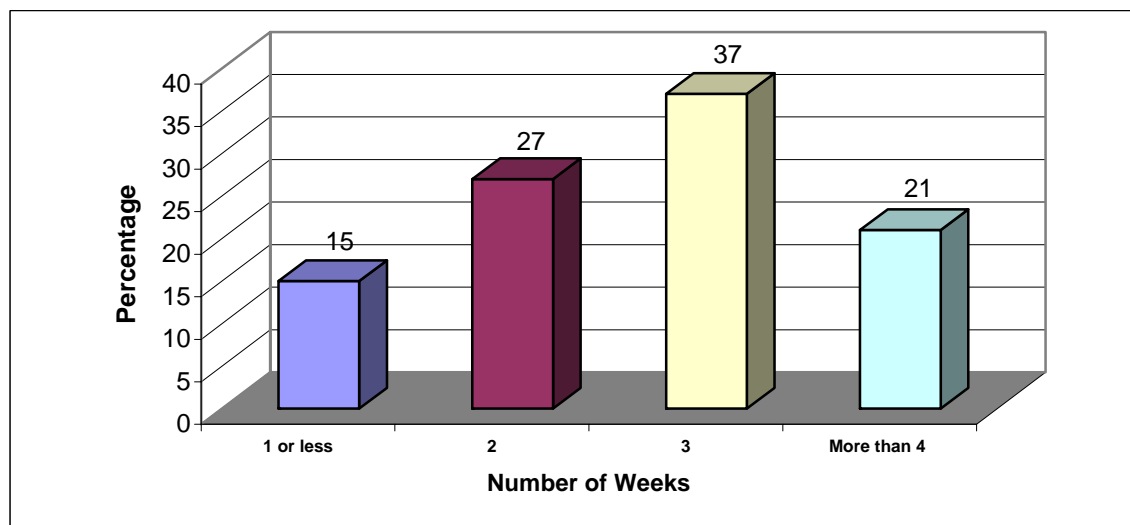
Figure 16: Utilization of the North Dakota Dental Association Website



PATIENT PROFILE

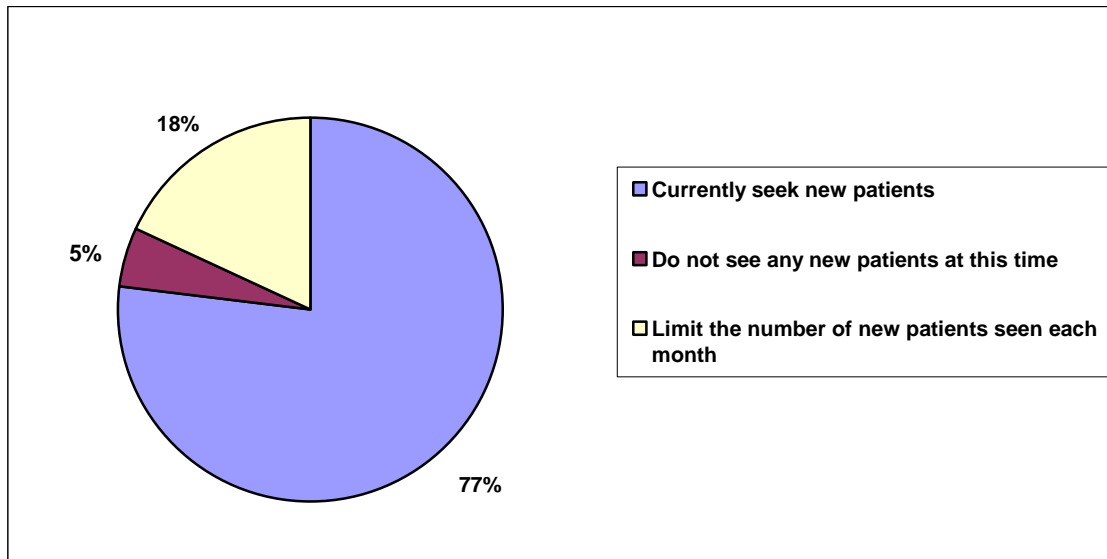
- 42% can schedule non-emergency appointments in less than two weeks and 79% within four weeks (see Figure 17).

Figure 17: Average Time for Non-Emergency Appointments



- 77% actively seek new patients (see Figure 18).

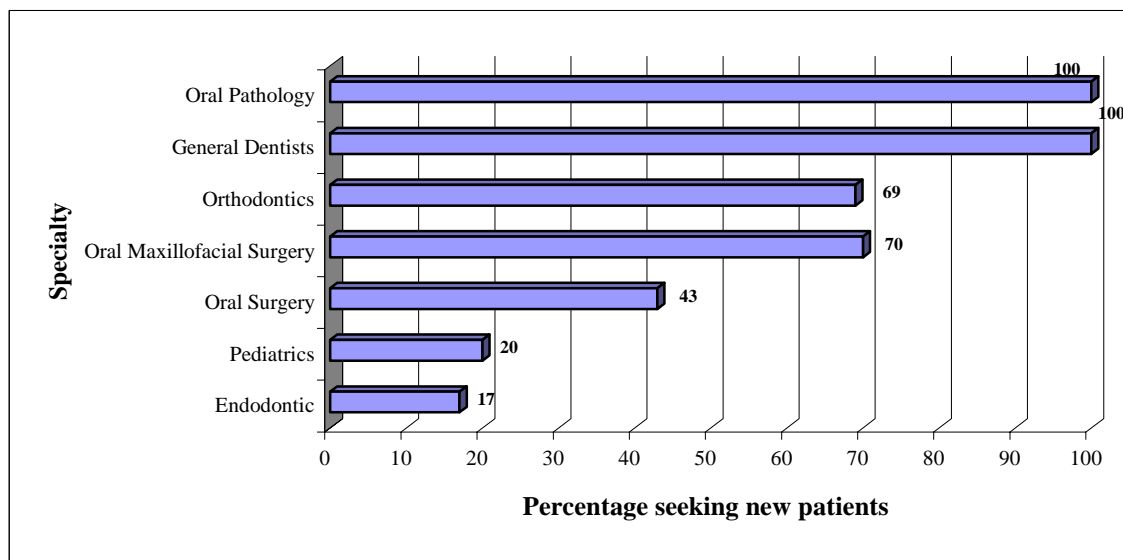
Figure 18: New Patient Activity



NEW PATIENTS BY SPECIALTY

- All Oral Pathologists and General Dentists actively seek new patients (see Figure 19).

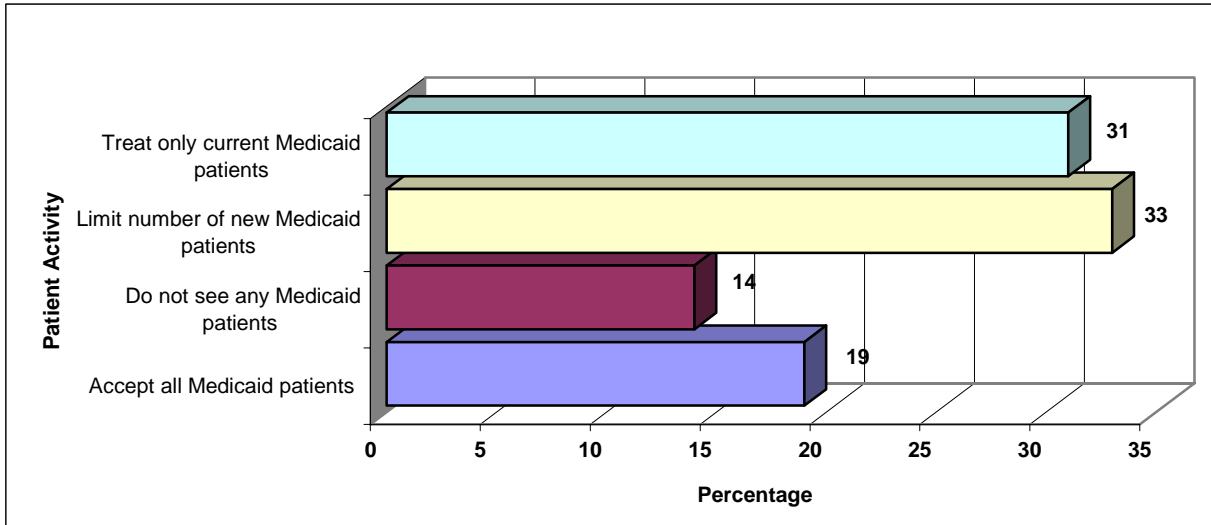
Figure 19: Seek New Patients by Specialty



MEDICAID PATIENT ACTIVITY

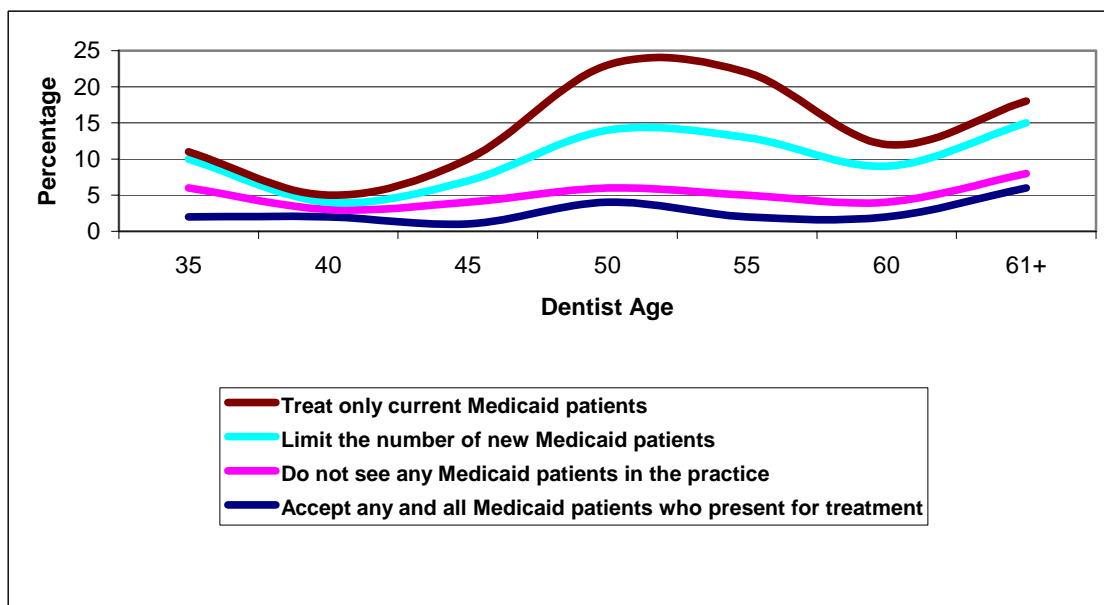
- 3% limit adults but see all children, treat only patients with Veteran status or limit emergency treatment of patients.
- 19% accept all, 31% see only current patients, 33% limit the number of new patients, and 14% do not see any Medicaid patients; (see Figure 20).

Figure 20: Medicaid Patient Activity



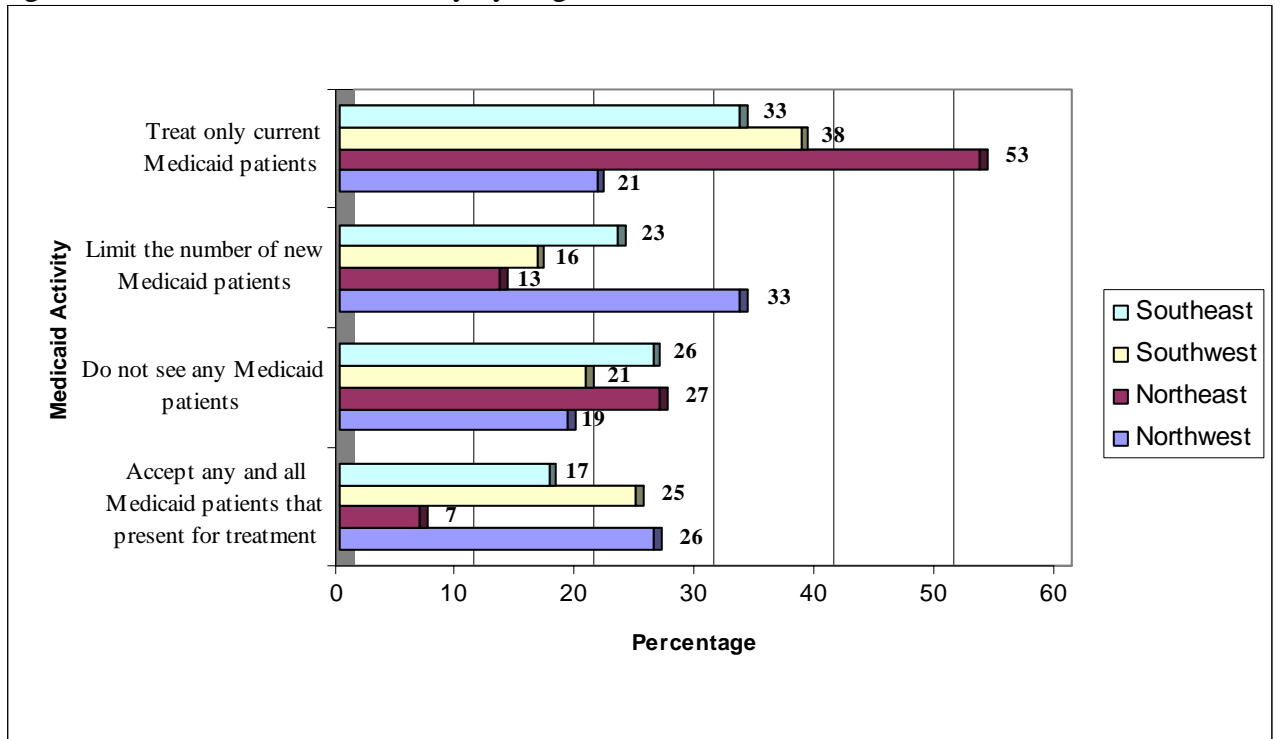
- By age, the largest percentage of dentists that treat only current Medicaid patients or limit the number of new Medicaid patients were between 50 and 55 years (see Figure 21).

Figure 21: Medicaid Activity by Age



- Twenty-six percent in the Northwest and 24% in the Southwest accept any and all Medicaid patients that present for treatment (see Figure 22).

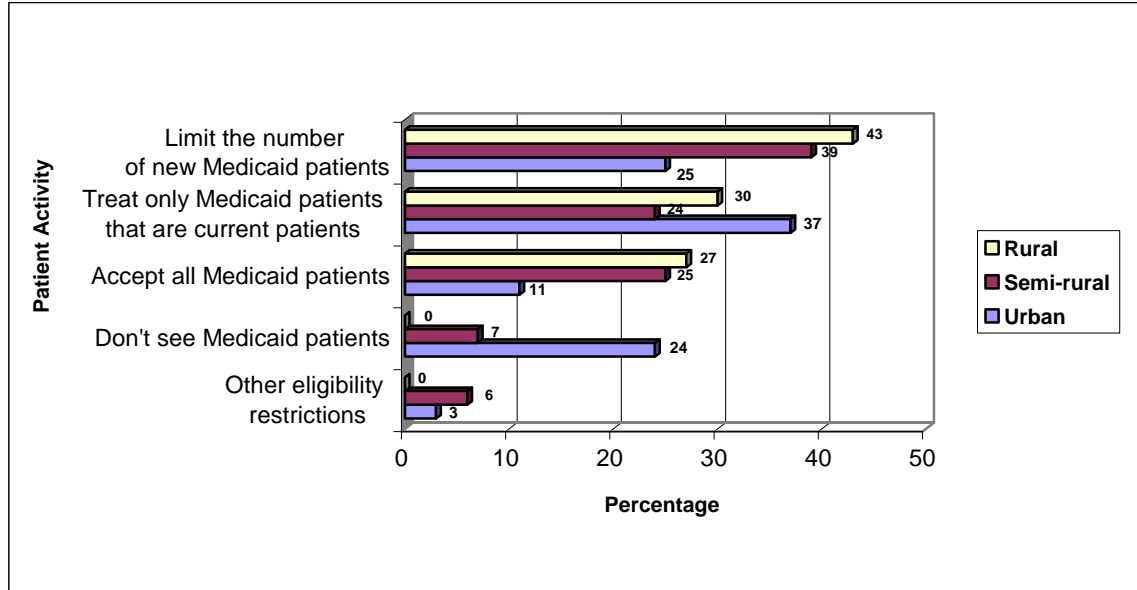
Figure 22: Medicaid Patient Activity by Region



MEDICAID PATIENT ACTIVITY BY RURALITY

- 29% of rural, 25% semi-rural and 11% urban accept all Medicaid patients⁴ (see figure 23).

Figure 23: Medicaid Patient Activity by Rurality



REFERENCES

¹ *The Growing Challenge of Providing Oral Health Care Services To All Americans/ Health Affairs*; Volume 21, Number 5; September/October 2002

² *State Health Workforce Profiles*; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Health Resources Services Administration's Bureau of Health Professions; 2004

³ ADA. *The 1999 Survey of Dental Practice: Characteristics of Dentists in Private Practice and Their Patients*. Chicago: American Dental Association, Survey Center; February 2001.

⁴ According to *A County-level measure of urban influence, 1997*, data was divided, when appropriate, by Urban Influence Codes. Due to the rural nature of the state, several of the categories include no counties for North Dakota, and some categories have only a small number of the state's counties included. Therefore, North Dakota counties were collapsed as follows into three larger categories based upon their Urban Influence Codes. **Urban Counties:** Those small metropolitan counties (fewer than one million residents including four North Dakota counties). **Semi-rural counties:** Those non-metropolitan counties with a town of at least 2,500 residents adjacent or not adjacent to a small metropolitan county (20 North Dakota counties). **Rural counties:** Those counties that do not contain a town with at least 2,500 residents and are not adjacent to a small metropolitan area (29 North Dakota counties).