

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER WORKFORCE



January 2023

Wisconsin Community Health Centers employ over 1,300 medical, dental, and behavioral health staff providing primary care, behavioral health, and support services for 278,800 Wisconsin residents.

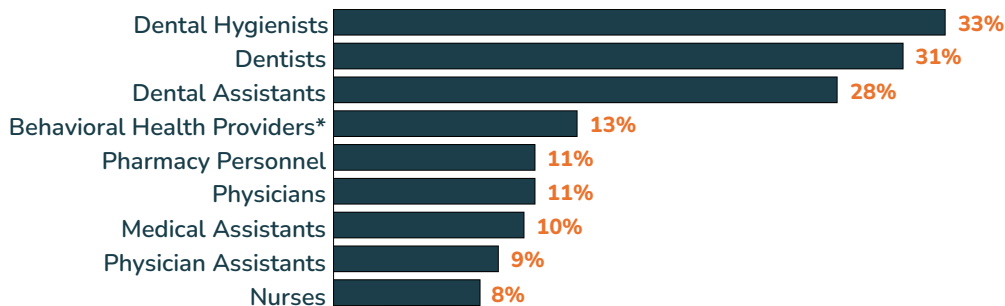
A top challenge to meeting community needs are critical workforce shortages inhibiting their ability to serve patients. **Staffing shortages for clinical providers such as Medical Assistants (MAs) and Dental Assistants (DAs), oral health staff, and behavioral health providers are most acute.**

Particularly in rural areas, the impact of each provider is especially significant. With one retirement or departure to another location, a whole community can lose access to care. Recruiting and retaining every single provider truly matters in a small community.

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER EFFORTS

- Development of MA and DA apprenticeship programs for new entry-level providers
- Cross-sector collaboration to build a Teaching Health Center physician residency program
- Creation of career ladders to recruit and retain mission-oriented staff

WI Community Health Center Provider Vacancy Rates (July 2022, N=10 CHCs)



*Behavioral Health Providers include mental health and substance use treatment providers
Source: WI CHC Workforce Survey, July 2022. Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association

The dental team includes Dentists, Dental Hygienists, and DAs. Community Health Centers report open positions for **more than 100 dental team members** across these provider types.

WPHCA encourages policymakers to **explore all avenues to reduce barriers to health professions training in order to increase the total number of new providers in primary care professions.** This includes investments in UW system schools and technical colleges to hire and retain faculty, partner with health care entities for clinical training, and eliminate wait lists.

PUBLIC POLICY OPPORTUNITIES

- Pass Dental Therapy legislation in Wisconsin and provide funding for development of Dental Therapy academic programs
- Add funding and broaden eligibility for loan assistance programs for MAs and DAs
- Provide resources to increase exposure to health professions for high school students

Read WPHCA's complete Workforce Issue Brief online at <https://www.wphca.org/public-policy/issue-briefs-and-data>, which outlines additional efforts to strengthen the Community Health Center workforce and public policy opportunities.