Office for HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE analysis & planning

Employment Outlook • March 2011

Expected Growth Rates in the South Carolina Dental Care Workforce

Every two years, the South Carolina Department of Commerce and the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics collaborate to estimate future employment levels for a wide variety of healthcare occupations. Their most recent report covers the period from 2008 to 2018. Summarized below are their estimates of how demand for dental care professionals is expected to change in South Carolina over the next decade. The number of anticipated annual openings include those due to growth (new jobs) and those created when people leave the workforce through retirement, career change, or for other reasons (replacements).

Dentistry and Support Occupations	Employment			Total % Change	Average Annual Openings
	Actual 2008	Estimated 2018	Total Change		
Dentists, General	1,337	1,557	220	16%	59
Orthodontists	74	90	16	22%	4
Dental Hygienists	2,599	3,578	979	38%	151
Dental Assistants	3,247	4,446	1,199	37%	181

Note: The counts of dentists and dental hygienists in this table are based on survey data collected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and may differ from counts based on analysis of South Carolina professional license data used in the "South Carolina Health Professions Data Book."

The greatest job growth, both in terms of overall percentage change and by the volume of openings expected each year, is for dental support personnel. Most of those anticipated annual opening are being driven by new job growth rather than by the need for replacements. On the other hand, the majority of annual openings anticipated for dentists will be due to the need to replace experienced dentists who are expected to leave the workforce, mostly due to retirement.

In the 2008-09 academic year 57 new dentists were graduated from the state's single College of Dental Medicine located in the Medical University of South Carolina. In that same year, education programs located throughout the state produced 139 new dental hygienists and 125 dental assistants.

Data Source: Unpublished tables provided by the South Carolina Department of Commerce "2008 - 2018 Healthcare Workforce in South Carolina by Occupational Title." National occupational projections can be found at: http://www.bls.gov/news.release/ecopro.toc.htm . Graduation figures are from the *Institute of Education Sciences National Center for Education Statistics "Program Major Completions 2008-2009 Health Professions and Related Clinical Sciences" downloaded August, 2010.*

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