

# 2007 HIV/AIDS Dental Services Survey

(Report Date March 24, 2008 data summary prepared by Allan Hancock College)

## **Background of Santa Barbara County HIV/AIDS Demographics**

According to Public Health Department statistics, 821 individuals have been diagnosed with AIDS from 1981 – 2007. Currently, 325 individuals are living with AIDS (283 male, 42 female) in Santa Barbara County, and 157 have been diagnosed HIV positive (87% male, 13% female). The present distribution of HIV positive individuals countywide is 115 (73%) in the south county and 41 (26%) in the north and 1 (1%) in the central county area. Please refer to the Public Health Department website for further analysis of HIV/AIDS data in Santa Barbara County.

## **2007 Dental Services Survey**

The 2007 Dental Services Survey was conducted as a requirement of the Part B Needs Assessment component of the Services Delivery Plan. Additionally, this survey will provide baseline data of what services are provided, what the perceptions of clients are regarding their dental care, and assist with implementing a priority system for allocating funds in the future. This survey also will allow services to be tracked over time. Surveys were distributed to participating agencies in October 2007 and surveys were collected from November 2007 to January 2008. A total of 135 completed surveys were returned. Seventy-seven participants responded from the south county organizations, 58 participants responded from the north county organizations. The surveys were completed in English (N= 98) and Spanish (N= 37).

- Pacific Pride Foundation – North                      58 surveys collected
- Pacific Pride Foundation – South                      52 surveys collected
- Westside Clinic    10 surveys collected
- Bridge Project staff                                        1 survey collected
- Dr. Cowan’s office<sup>1</sup>                                        14 surveys collected

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. David Cowan DMD provides dental services for Ryan White clients under contract with the Public Health Department for those clients that do not have any other third party payor source for dental care. Dr. Cowan’s practice is currently the only Ryan White contracted dental provider.

Of those clients that submitted surveys, approximately 38% received medical care at the Santa Barbara Public Health Clinic, 37% at the Santa Maria Public Health Clinic, 8% at the Santa Barbara Neighborhood Clinics Westside Clinic and the remaining 17% were unknown or received their medical services through private providers.

### **2006 Needs Assessment**

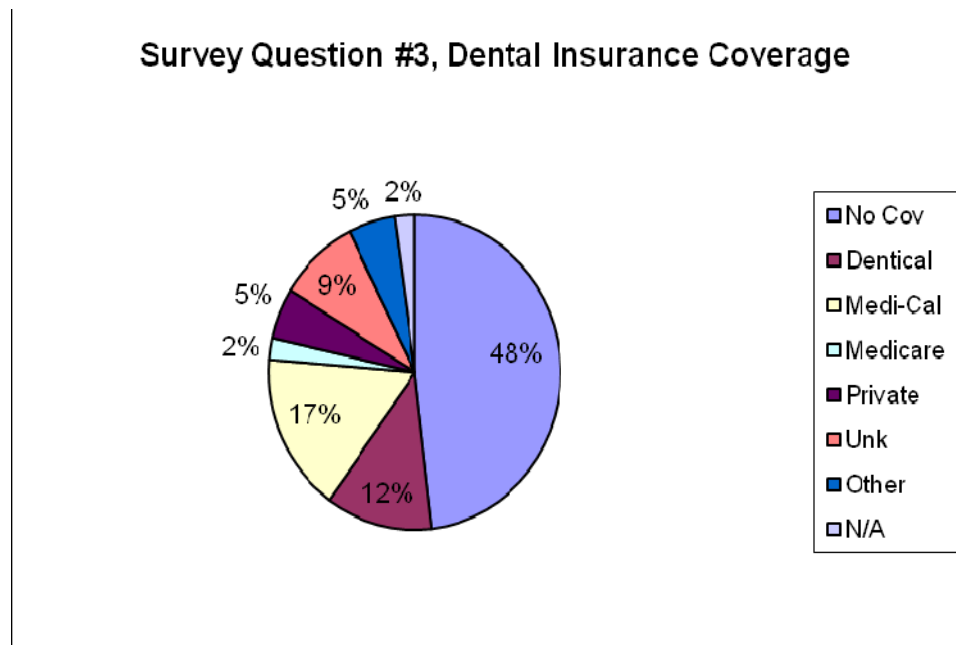
The 2006 Needs Assessment results listed dental care as “*needed and utilized*” by 54% of the participants. The results also showed dental care as “*needed and could not get*” by 36% of participants. Dental care was the number one choice in “*what services are most important to you*” category and it was the second choice in the “help to get” category.

### **2007 Dental Services Survey Results**

#### **Question #3**

“*What type of dental insurance do you currently have?*”

Forty-eight percent responded that they have no dental coverage, 12% have Dential, and 17% have Medi-Cal.

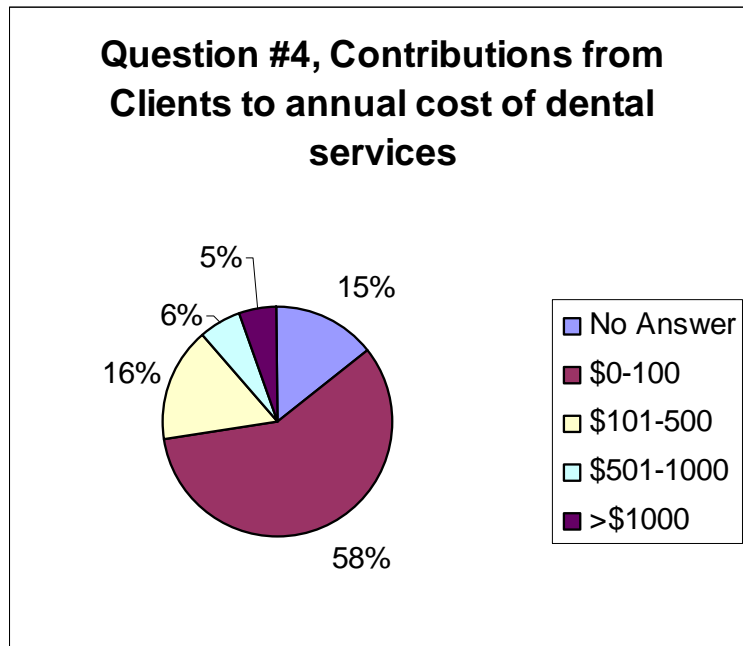


**N = 135**

**Question #4**

*“About how much do you pay for dental services each year (including costs for dental insurance)?”*

58% responded that they pay less than \$100, 16% paid \$101-500, and 15% did not answer.



**N = 131**

**Question #5**

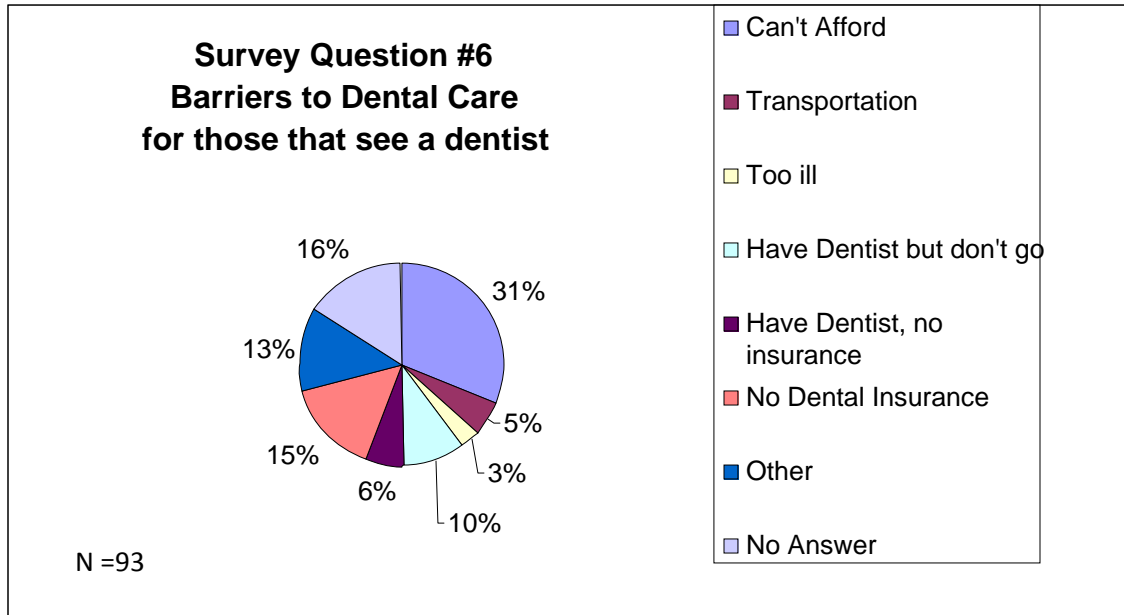
*“Do you regularly see a dental provider (at least once per year)?”*

54% responded “No” , 46% responded “Yes” and one responder didn’t answer this question. (N = 134)

**Question #6**

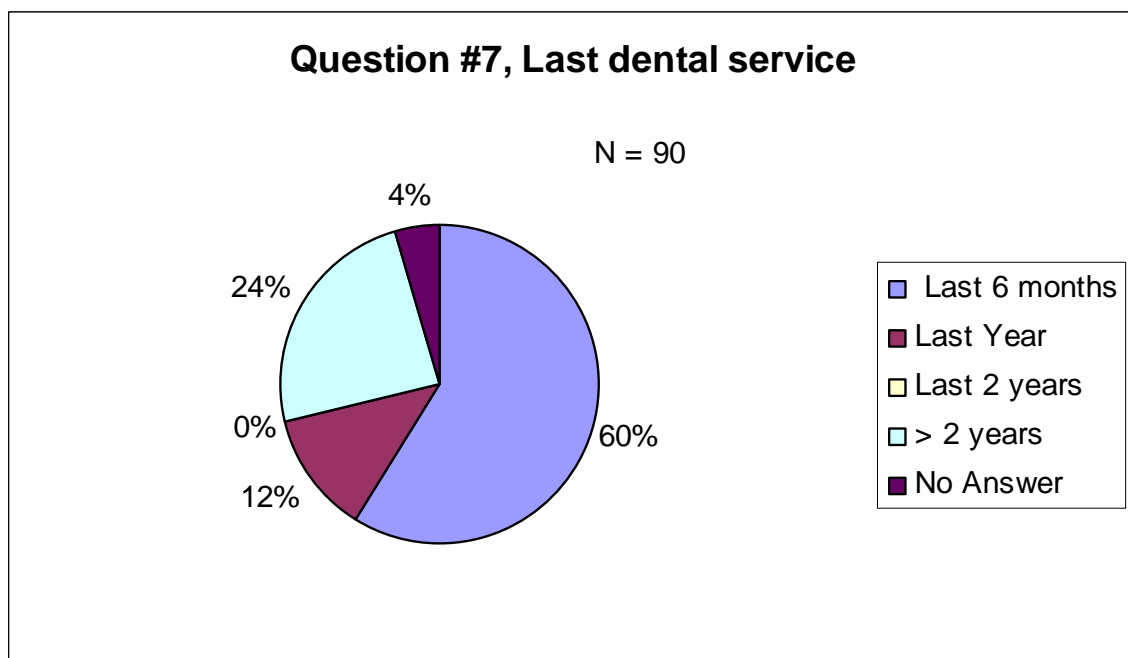
*“Barriers to dental care for those that see a dentist.”*

31% responded that they “can’t afford”, 15% have “no dental insurance” and 13 % responded “other”.



**Question 7**

*“When was the last time you saw your dentist?”*



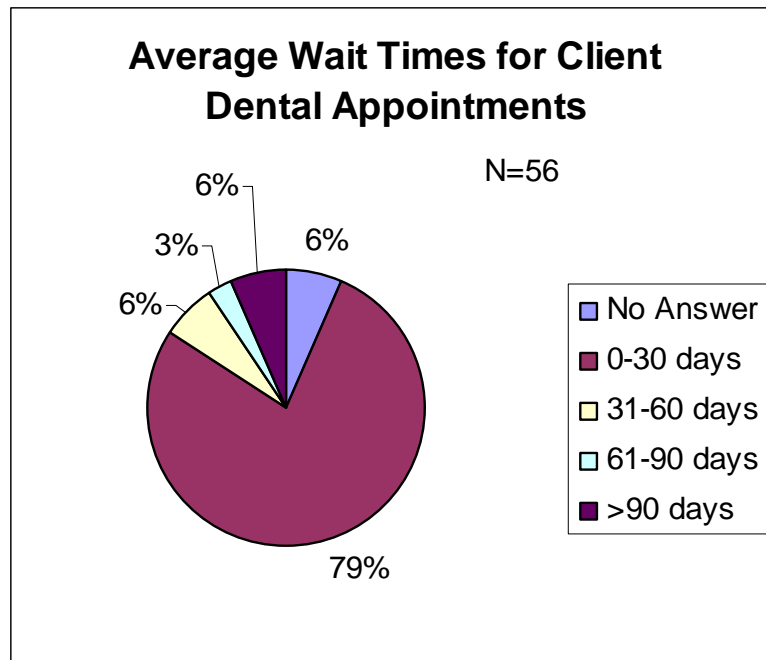
**Question #8**

*“If you have a dentist, please provide their name and their office location.”*

Responders provided 30 different dental providers or service locations. Only four providers were identified by more than one survey responder. Thirty of the 66 responding surveys that identified providers and service areas identified the practice of Dr. Cowan/Ward as their provider. Of these 30 clients, 90% (27 out of 30) indicated they were “very satisfied” with Dr. Cowan/Ward services.

**Question #9**

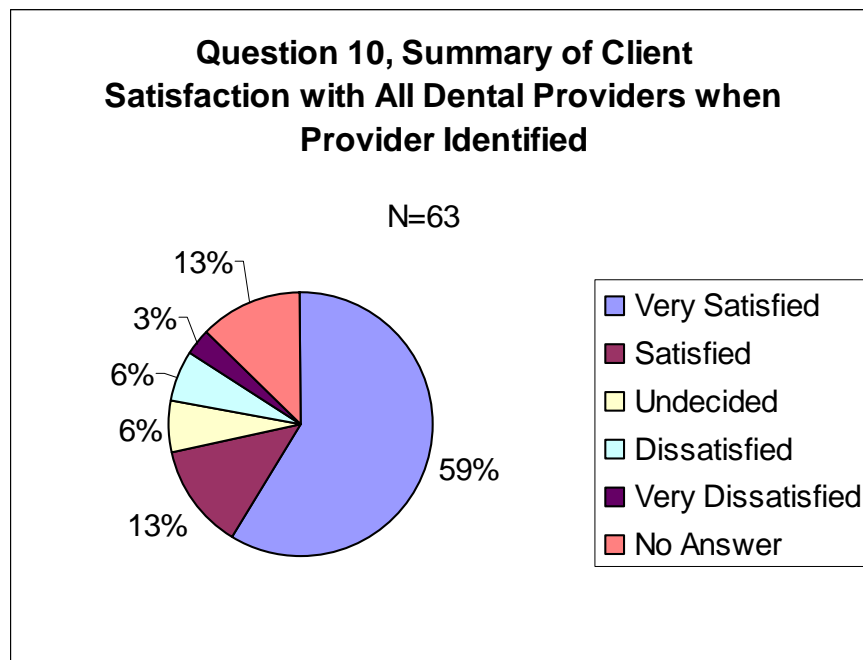
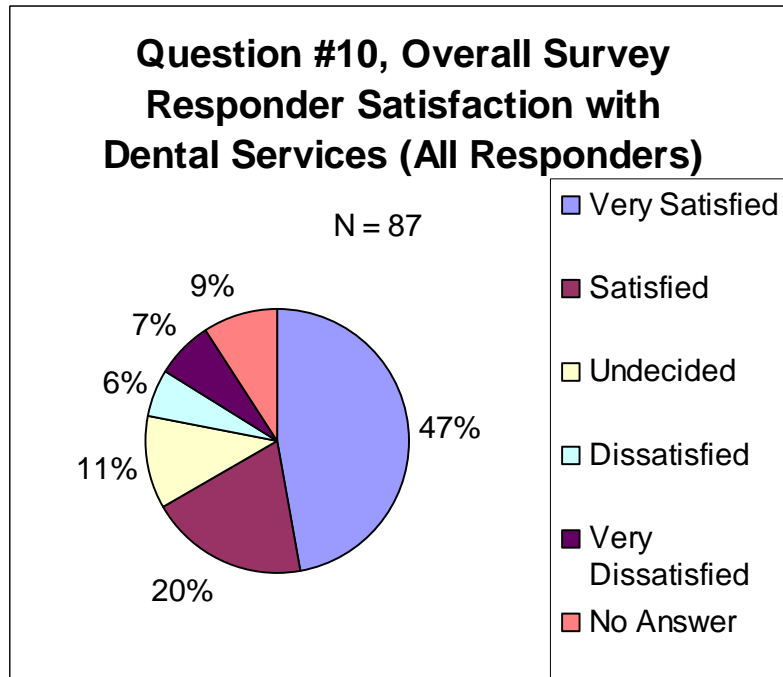
*“How long did you have to wait for your last appointment before you could see your dentist?”*



There was no significant difference between Dr. Cowan/Ward and all other dental providers in regards to wait times for appointments. The vast majority of clients were able to access their dental provider in thirty days or less.

**Question #10**

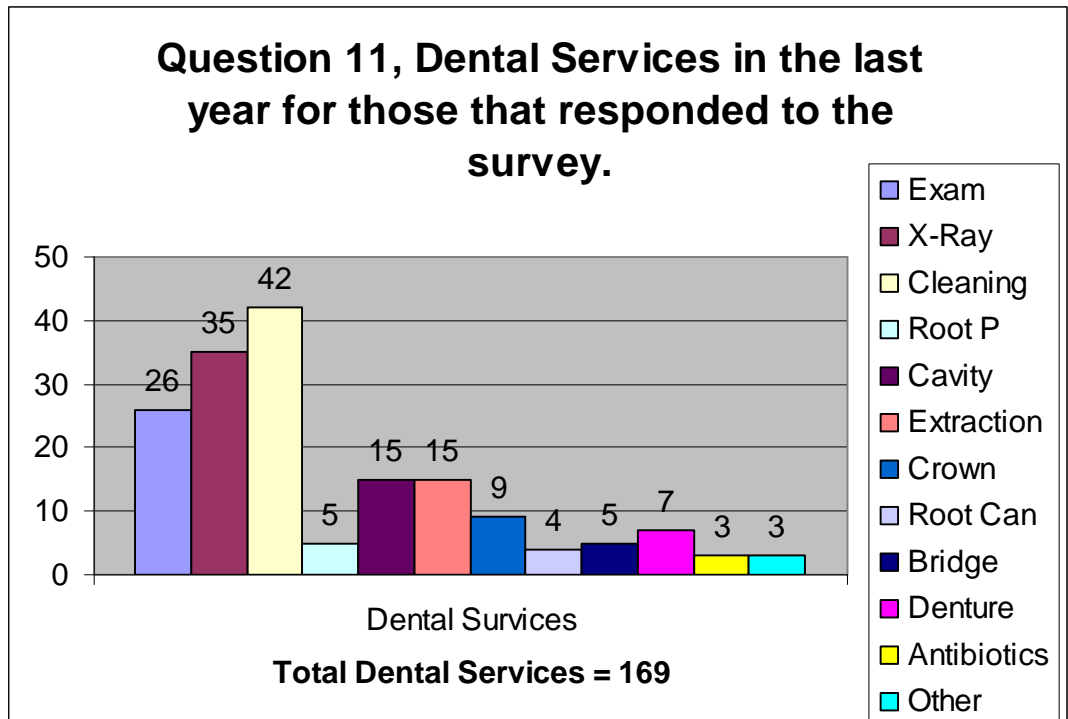
*“If you see a dentist, how satisfied are you with their dental services?”*



Of those responding to this question and indicating a dental provider, 72% were either very satisfied or satisfied with their dental provider. Of those that responded to this question, 13% indicated they were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

**Question 11**

*“If you saw a dentist in the last year, what dental services did you receive?”*



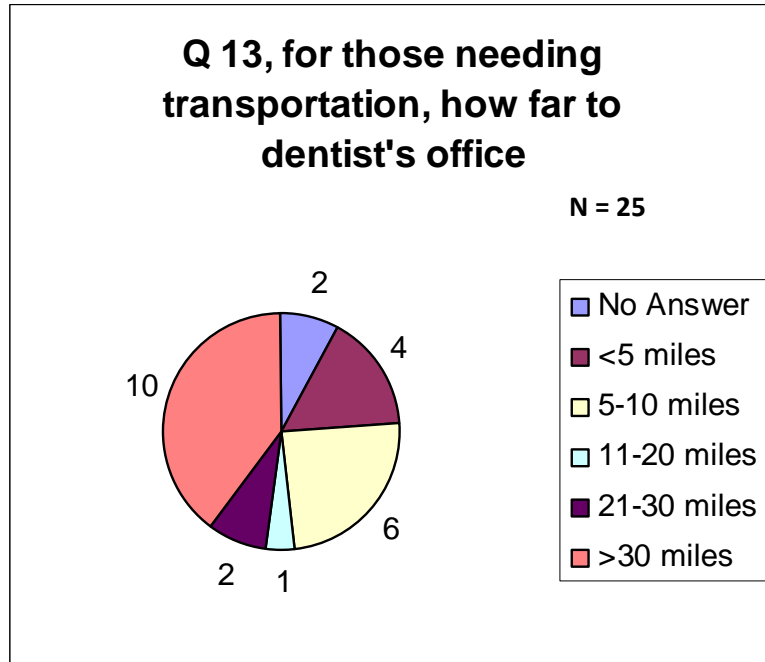
**Question #12**

*“Do you need transportation to your dentist’s office location?”*

Twenty-five clients or 18% responded that they did need transportation to their dentist’s office.

**Question 13**

*“If you need transportation, how far is it from your either your home or work to your dentist’s office? Select whichever location is closest to your dentist’s office.”*



Clients indicating >30 miles to their dental provider are possible residents of North county and traveling to access services through Dr. Cowan’s office in South county.

**Question 14**

*“If you need transportation, is public transportation to your dentist’s office available?”*

- Yes, I take it. 2
- Yes, but I don’t have money for the fare. 1
- Yes, but public transportation takes all day. 10
- No. 3
- Don’t know. 7
- No response. 2
- Total 25

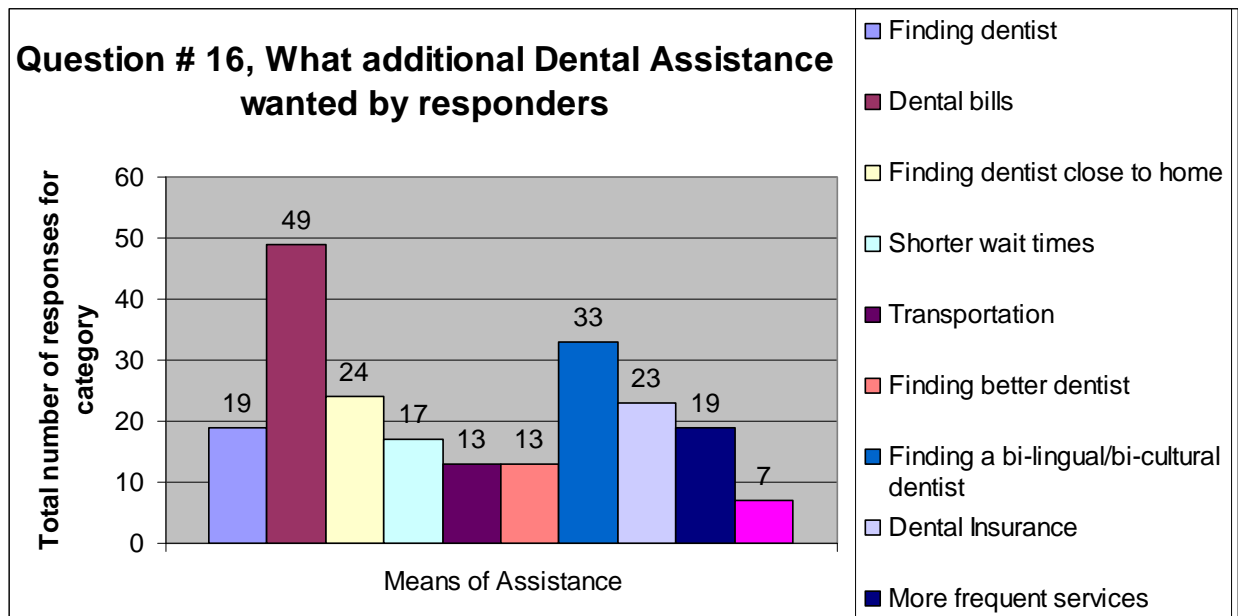
**Question #15**

*“If you do not take public transportation, how do you usually get to your dentist’s office?”*

- Drive self 56% N = 72
- Family or friends provide rides 19%
- Case manager 17%

**Question #16**

*“What do you think would improve dental service for you? (Check all that apply)”*



N = 217

**General Conclusions**

- ❖ Many clients (48%) do not have dental insurance.
- ❖ Most clients (58%) pay less than \$100 for their annual dental costs. This percentage may be high due to many clients not receiving dental services and/or for those clients that see the Part C sponsored dental provider (Dr. Ward/Dr. Cowan) where most if not all of their service costs are paid for through the Ryan White Program.

- ❖ Most clients (54%) do not receive dental services. Predominate barriers to dental services were reported to be cost and lack of insurance.
- ❖ Almost half of all responders that identified a provider identified Dr. Cowan/Ward as their provider. These clients were very satisfied with the services received, which is reflected in the data graphs. The remaining responders tended to be dissatisfied with their Dental providers.
- ❖ Most respondents reported needing help with paying dental bills and finding a better dentist and a dentist that was bi-lingual/bi-cultural.
- ❖ Although there were few responses in relation to distance to travel to the dental providers' offices, the majority of responses were over thirty (30) miles. As about half of the surveys submitted were from north county clients, these responses were likely from those clients accessing Dr. Cowan/Ward's practice in South County. This fact points out the lack of a viable dental provider in North County.
- ❖ From the comments, some additional information may be gleaned, such as:
  - Many clients indicated lack of oral surgery for extractions. Although a reference to specialty care providers such as oral surgeons is limited, it is available each year. Care providers, administrators and case managers should discuss these issues with their clients to insure they receive proper referrals.
  - Gaps in Dental (Medi-Cal) coverage prevent some clients from receiving comprehensive dental care.
  - Providing these survey results, especially for those Dental providers identified, may assist other clients with Dental coverage locate a more satisfactory dental provider.

### **Researchers Recommendations**

- ❖ Consider adding location information and where clients are receiving medical services to survey. This would enable tracking services and survey completion accurately.

- ❖ Highest response to a survey in over five years. North County returned approximately 85% of their client surveys and South County returned approximately 46% of their client surveys. Providing a breakout of data may yield different information and needs between North and South County areas.

### **Limitations**

- ❖ There was some confusion regarding question #5, “*Do you regularly see a dental provider?*” Many clients indicated that they did not see a dental provider regularly but provided additional information on services they had received in the past.
- ❖ Many surveys were not completed entirely.
- ❖ Dr. Cowan/Ward’s office collected 14<sup>2</sup> surveys. Surveying clients at their service provider regarding their services may influence the responses.
- ❖ The Access database did not provide additional space for written responses for question #6 or question #15. This information may be reviewed at a later date.
- ❖ Based upon surveys returned, South County may be underrepresented with only 46% of surveys being returned from South County areas.

### **HIV Prevention and Care Council (HPCC) Input and Comments**

- ❖ For future surveys, should have a space to indicate for those clients that indicated that they were “dissatisfied” with oral care, there should be a means to collect data on why they indicated that they were dissatisfied such as an explanation blank on this question.
- ❖ Request to change graphs to add the number with the percentages to each graph. This report has been modified since the March HPCC meeting to indicate the total number of respondents. Numbers and percentages on the same pie chart can be confusing.

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<sup>2</sup> Two additional surveys (a total of 16 surveys) were collected by Dr. Cowan’s office but were received too late to be included in this report.

- ❖ Concern regarding the possibility that some clients may be receiving medical care privately but using Dential for dental services may have a share of cost they are not yet aware of.
- ❖ Clients have better wait times for getting appointments than were perceived by staff.
- ❖ Request for additional efforts to recruit a contracted dental provider for clients in the north county as well as research other dental capacity that may be available out of county (e.g. Oxnard Dental Hygienist School, UCLA School of Dentistry, etc.).

### **Survey Participant Comments**

(Some duplicate comments were not included in this summary for the sake of brevity and clarity)

- SC<sup>3</sup> Ami me ayudaria bastante que mi dentista me atienda en menos tiempo por que abeses tengo que esperar aster 5 horas. **It would help me a lot if my Dentist could see me with less waiting; sometime I have to wait 5 hours**
- SC No tengo queju alguna y me proque que he recibiedo un buen trato en mis citus el doctor gracias pr su apoyo. **I don't have any complaints because I have received good treatment at my doctor visits, thank you for your support.**
- SC Yo uso auto bus gracias por todo. **I use the Bus, thank you for everything**
- SC Que truten de abler mi idioma o que me abien des pusio y completa el ingles. **That they try to speak Spanish or that they speak slowly and completely in English.**
- NC Que me den una cita lo mds pronto possible por que tengo mucho que no voy al dentista. **That they give me an appointment the soonest available because it has been a long time since I've seen a Dentist.**
- NC Tengo que buscaqr otro dentista. **I have to look for another Dentist**
- NC Que me hagan una cita por ano minimo. **That they make me an appointment as least yearly.**
- NC Encontrar un dentista cerca de mi casa pero con la misma calidad professional y human del doctor de santa Barbara. **To find a Dentist closer to my house but just as professional and caring as the Doctor/Dentist from Santa Barbara**
- NC Una revision completa. **A complete review**

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<sup>3</sup> SC = South County responder; NC = North County responder

- NC Que nos recuerde cada tiempo de nuestro citas dentales por favor. **IF they could remind us about our appointment for dental visits, please**
- NC Tener cita con dentista que ya tengo mucho que no voy. **Have an appointment with a dentist because it's been a long time since I've been.**
- NC Hace una cita sin que me toque esperar mucho para una revision general. **Make an appointment that I don't have to wait too long for a check-up.**
- NC Que recibiera un servicio complete el cual me pueda cubrir PPF sin que me toque sacar de mi bolsillo, pro que tengo muchas gustos con mi hijo. **To get a complete service that could be covered by PPF without me paying out of pocket because I have lots of expenses with my son.**
- NC Tener una promima cita y que cobra los gastos. **To have another appointment that will cover the costs.**
- NC Todo esta bien gracias. **Everything is fine, thank you.**
- SC Gratitude for excellent care- thanx!
- SC I am very satisfied with my dental services and their program.
- SC I appreciate that they keep my HIV status quiet and treat me like a regular patient.
- SC My social worker handles all my paper work and appointments, I don't know.
- SC There are only 2 dentists in SB that take medi-medi, I just made an appt. for next week with 2 new ones because the last dentist I saw no longer accepts medi-cal. Need more dentists in SB.
- SC We need it, thank you.
- SC A Dential dentist removed most of my teeth. Maybe because he doesn't get enough money. All of her dentist told me that they were strong enough to keep. Having teeth removed is like having a limb removed.
- SC I am a periodontic patient and require 4 root planings per year.
- SC I am very happy with my dental health plan.

- SC** Provide Emergency dental services to people with no insurance.
- SC** Dentists who don't use their practice as a cattle call, shuttling patients in and out so fast.
- NC** This survey has very confusing elements.
- NC** Has had dentures 36 years- same pair.
- NC** Tooth needs cap and dentist wants \$800, has only been able to pay \$400 at \$25/month.
- NC** Dentist could not pull teeth until the gums were treated and I can not get gums healed.
- NC** PPF has been very helpful in meeting my dental needs.
- NC** Over the last 4-5 years my teeth required more work by far then I could afford. Now, I believe if I could get the bulk of these issues handled, I could avoid a much more serious problem.
- NC** Medi-cal did not cover oral surgery.
- NC** I need a dentist that is concerned with my needs.
- NC** Pam Miller has been a God send to us North County clients. After years of mouth pain, I am finally, after 4 years, pain free in my mouth.
- NC** My dentist said that we should at the very least have our teeth cleaned 2 times a year per the HIV virus.
- NC** Coverage for extra work- such as oral surgery. I needed to have wisdom teeth (4) extracted.
- NC** Lost dentures 3 years ago, medi-cal will not approve new ones for 5 years. Still waiting.