



## Loan Forgiveness Program Outcomes for 2003

Seven dentists participated in the loan forgiveness program in 2003. Each dentist received a grant of \$20,000 in exchange for a two year commitment to practice part time in a public health setting.

The dentists participating in this program increase the volume of dental services delivered at community health centers while maintaining high quality standards in the community. Based on data collected from the community health centers, the seven awardees saw 5,286 patients and delivered approximately 13,374 procedures. Each dentist on average saw 1,322 patients and delivered on average approximately 1,910 procedures.

Over the year each dentist spent his or her time at the clinic contributing the following:

- ◆ About 56% of the procedures were for restoration
- ◆ About 15% involved examining the patients or taking x-rays, both for diagnosing the condition of the patient, and treatment planning
- ◆ About 26% of the procedures delivered were preventive services, such as cleanings and sealants.

In the spring of 2004, MAP surveyed the dentists participating in the first cycle of Loan Forgiveness for Dental Public Health in order to learn about their experiences during the first service obligation year. From the survey, the following special community contributions were made by these awardees:

- ◆ Delivering care to inmates at Hampden County Correctional Facility (Holyoke Community Health Center)
- ◆ Dental fun days in the community targeted to Latino families (South Boston Community Health Center)
- ◆ Writing a grant for and implementing telephonic language interpretation at the dental chairs in the clinic (Cambridge Health Alliance, Windsor Dental Clinic)
- ◆ Using mobile equipment to serve children in Department of Youth Services (Dorchester House)
- ◆ Developing a dental emergency pamphlet for WIC workers to distribute (South Boston Community Health Center)
- ◆ Delivering services in the homes of frail elders (Windsor Street Community Health Center.)

Other aspects of their experiences included:

- ◆ The group covers a variety of work schedules and business hours.
- ◆ Some of the dentists are serving in early morning or evening shifts at the community clinics in addition to the regular business hours of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- ◆ The group delivers some specialty care.
- ◆ In addition to skills of general dentistry, this group brought expertise in pediatric, geriatric, and prosthetic dental specialties to the public sector.

- ◆ Loan forgiveness dentists deliver care to both adults and children.
- ◆ Of the seven dentists awarded loan forgiveness funds, three serve about equal numbers of adults and children; two serve mostly adults; two serve mostly children.
- ◆ Through this experience loan forgiveness dentists are improving their clinical skills, broadening their perspectives, and wanting even more growth.
  - The dentists commented that they are improving their clinical expertise, building skills and confidence in treatment planning, emergent care, operative and patient management skills.
    - The community health center environment exposed them to a diverse group of patients and many different types of pathologies, helping them to grow as professionals.
    - Two commented that they would like more experience in delivering dentures in the community health center.
- ◆ The dentists find their work schedule and supervision satisfying.
  - The work environments are supportive.
- Three of these dentists are also working part time in private practice or a for profit setting.
  - They report working in a for profit company with many locations, a solo practice and a group practice. They serve from 1-3 days per week.
  - They report that the skills they acquired in the community health center have been very helpful in their private sector work.
- All of the dentists report that they would recommend this program to a colleague who might qualify for this program.
- All state that they plan to continue to work in the public sector.