



United States Virgin Islands Physician and Dentist Workforce Profile, 2020



School of Public Health
University at Albany, State University of New York

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PREFACE

This report summarizes the demographic and practice characteristics of physicians and dentists licensed to practice in the US Virgin Islands.

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Established in 2013 to support the efforts of the National Center for Health Workforce Analysis (NCHWA), the Health Workforce Technical Assistance Center (HWTAC) provides technical assistance to states and organizations that engage in health workforce planning. Each year HWTAC conducts a number of projects designed to support health workforce data collection, analysis, and dissemination. HWTAC is based at the Center for Health Workforce Studies (CHWS) at the School of Public Health, University at Albany, State University of New York.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report analyzes the results of a survey of physicians and dentists conducted as part of the 2020 licensure gaining and renewal process. The survey includes questions on providers' demographic and practice characteristics. Only physicians and dentists actively practicing in the United States Virgin Islands (USVI) are included in the analysis.

Physicians Actively Practicing in USVI

- Almost one-third of all physicians practicing in the USVI report a primary care specialty (32%).
- Sixty percent of physicians in USVI are male. While the majority of primary care physicians identify as female (60%), only 30% of specialty care physicians identify as female.
- The majority of physicians in USVI are more than 50 years old (70%). Sixty-three percent of primary care physicians and 73% specialty care physicians report being older than age 50.
- The largest proportion of physicians practicing in USVI are Black/African American (40%), followed by White Non-Hispanic (36%). Forty-six percent of all primary care physicians and 38% of specialty care physicians are Black/African American. In comparison, 19% of primary care physicians and 43% of specialty care physicians identify as White Non-Hispanic.
- Nearly half of all physicians practicing in USVI report a principal practice location in the St. John/St Thomas region (47%). Just less than one-third of physicians report a principal practice location in St. Croix (31%), and less than one-fourth of physicians report a principal practice location outside of USVI (22%).
- The most frequently reported principal practice setting for USVI physicians is private office (group practice) (30%), followed by private office (solo practice) (24%), and hospital inpatient (18%). Primary care physicians are more likely to report working in federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) and FQHC look-alikes compared to specialty care physicians (19% compared to 9%).
- The overwhelming majority of primary care (93%) and specialty care physicians (89%) report accepting new patients.
- Eighty percent of USVI physicians report that the average wait time for new patients was less than a week.
- When asked about their plans for the next 3 to 5 years, 92% of physicians plan to either maintain their practices as is or expand. No physicians report plans to retire.

Dentists Actively Practicing in USVI

- Almost two-thirds (65%) of dentists in USVI practice general dentistry and 35% practice specialty dentistry.
- The majority of dentists in USVI are male (72%), including 93% of all specialty dentists.
- Two-thirds of dentists in USVI are more than 50 years of age and almost one-third of them are older than age 60.
- Forty-five percent of dentists in USVI are White Non-Hispanic, followed by Black/African American (32%) and Hispanic (12%). The majority of general dentists are White Non-Hispanic (58%) and half of all specialty dentists are Black/African American (50%).
- Fifty percent of dentists in USVI report a principal practice location in St. John/St. Thomas and 45% report a principal practice location in St. Croix. However, 60% of general dentists work in St. John/St. Thomas and more than 60% of specialty dentists practice in St. Croix.
- Almost all of the dentists in USVI (97%) report accepting new patients.
- Nearly half of specialty dentists (46%) report wait times for new patients 7 days or longer, compared to less than one-third of general dentists (29%).
- When asked about their plans for the next 3 to 5 years, 74% of dentists plan to maintain their practices as is and 17% plan to expand. No dentists report plans to retire.

TECHNICAL REPORT

Background

While part of the United States (US), the population of United States Virgin Islands (USVI) differs considerable from the US with a higher percentage of racial/ethnic minorities, a lower median household income, and a higher unemployment rate.¹ All three islands which comprise USVI are federally designated primary care shortage areas, and the two main islands (St. Thomas and St. Croix) are federally designated dental health shortage areas.²

The USVI health care delivery system faces several challenges, and Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017 exacerbated them. An initial step in overcoming these challenges is understanding the supply and distribution of the health care providers in USVI. This report summarizes the demographic and practice characteristics of physicians and dentists who are actively practicing on USVI.

Methods

Data from a survey of physicians and dentists conducted as part of the 2020 licensure gaining and renewal process were used for this analysis. The survey included questions on providers' demographic and practice characteristics. Two-hundred and fifty-seven (257) physicians and 81 dentists responded to the survey for an overall response rate of 74% (= 257/345) and 83% (= 68/81) respectively. Only physicians (n = 211) and dentists (n = 40) who are actively practicing in USVI were included in the final analysis.

Physician Data

A.	Number of all licensed physicians in USVI <i>Less those who did not respond to the survey, including duplicates</i>	345 -88
B.	Baseline number of respondents after cleaning <i>Less those who do not hold active license excluded (Q4 of survey)</i>	257 -8
C.	Number of those actively licensed in USVI <i>Less those who are not currently working excluded (Q13 of survey)</i>	249 -36
D.	Number of those actively practicing in USVI <i>Less physician assistants and those with MBBS</i>	213 -2
E.	Number of those actively practicing in USVI with MD or DO	211

Dentist Data

A.	Number of all licensed dentists in USVI <i>Less those who did not respond to the survey, including duplicates</i>	81 -13
B.	Baseline number of respondents after cleaning <i>Less those who did not hold active license excluded (Q4 of survey)</i>	68 -4
C.	Number of those actively licensed in USVI <i>Less those who are not currently working excluded (Q17 of survey)</i>	64 -24
D.	Number of those actively practicing in USVI	40

Specialty Categories

Throughout this report information is examined by specialty groups.

Physicians were categorized as “primary care” or “specialty care” based on the principal specialty they reported. Primary care included the following specialties:

- family medicine
- general/internal medicine
- obstetrics/gynecology
- pediatrics/neonatology

Specialty care included all other physicians.

Likewise, dental specialties were categorized as “general dentistry” or “specialty dentistry.” General dentistry included the following principal specialties:

- dentistry
- general dentistry
- pediatric dentistry

Specialty dentistry included all other dental specialties.

PHYSICIANS ACTIVELY PRACTICING IN USVI

Physician Characteristics

This section includes information about the primary specialty and demographic characteristics of physicians who indicated they were actively practicing in USVI.

Table 1: USVI Physicians by Specialty

Specialty	<i>Physicians</i>	
	%	N
Primary Care	32%	68
Specialty Care	68%	143
Total	100%	211

- Almost one-third of all physicians practicing in the USVI report a primary care specialty (32%). Sixty-eight percent of physicians reported practicing specialty care.

Table 2: USVI Physicians by Gender and by Specialty

Gender	Specialty					
	<i>Primary Care</i>		<i>Specialty Care</i>		<i>All Physicians</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Female	60%	41	30%	43	40%	84
Male	40%	27	70%	100	60%	127
Total	100%	68	100%	143	100%	211

- Sixty percent of physicians in USVI were male. While the majority of primary care physicians identified as female (60%), only 30% of specialty care physicians identified as female.

Table 3: USVI Physicians by Age and by Specialty

Age	Specialty					
	<i>Primary Care</i>		<i>Specialty Care</i>		<i>All Physicians</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
25-30	0%	0	1%	2	1%	2
31-40	10%	7	6%	8	7%	15
41-50	26%	18	20%	29	22%	47
51-60	32%	22	37%	53	36%	75
61 & older	31%	21	36%	51	34%	72
Total	100%	68	100%	143	100%	211

- The majority of physicians in USVI were more than 50 years old (70%). Sixty-three percent of primary care physicians and 73% specialty care physicians reported being age 50 or older.

Table 4: USVI Physicians by Age and by Gender

Age	Gender					
	<i>Female</i>		<i>Male</i>		<i>All Physicians</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
25-30	1%	1	1%	1	1%	2
31-40	13%	11	3%	4	7%	15
41-50	31%	26	17%	21	22%	47
51-60	33%	28	37%	47	36%	75
61 & older	21%	18	43%	54	34%	72
Total	100%	84	100%	127	100%	211

- Overall, male physicians were older the female physicians in USVI. Eighty percent of male physicians were older than age 50 compared to only 54% of female physicians.

Table 5: USVI Physicians by Race/Ethnicity and by Specialty

Race/Ethnicity	Specialty					
	Primary Care		Specialty Care		All Physicians	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
White Non-Hispanic	19%	13	43%	62	36%	75
Black/African American	46%	31	38%	54	40%	85
Asian	12%	8	7%	10	9%	18
Hispanic	10%	7	8%	11	9%	18
Other	13%	9	4%	6	7%	15
Total	100%	68	100%	143	100%	211

- The largest proportion of physicians practicing in USVI were Black/African American (40%), followed by White Non-Hispanic (36%). Forty-six percent of all primary care physicians and 38% of specialty care physicians were Black/African American. In comparison, 19% of primary care physicians and 43% of specialty care physicians identified as White Non-Hispanic.

Practice Characteristics

This section contains information about physician practice location, setting, hours worked, and hospital admitting privileges. Only individuals who indicated that they had a primary or secondary practice location in USVI are included in this section (except for Table 6).

Table 6: USVI Physicians by Principal USVI Practice Location and by Specialty

Location	Specialty					
	Primary Care		Specialty Care		All Physicians	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
St. Croix	35%	24	29%	41	31%	65
St. John/St. Thomas	49%	33	46%	66	47%	99
Outside VI	16%	11	25%	36	22%	47
Total	100%	68	100%	143	100%	211

- Nearly half of all physicians practicing in USVI reported a principal practice location in the St. John/St Thomas region (47%). Just less than one-third of physicians reported a principal practice location in St. Croix (31%), and less than one-fourth of physicians reported a principal practice location outside of USVI (22%).

Table 7: USVI Physicians by Setting and by Specialty

The Setting of the Primary Practice Location	Specialty					
	Primary Care		Specialty Care		All Physicians	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Hospital emergency department	2%	1	8%	9	6%	10
Hospital inpatient	23%	13	16%	17	18%	30
Hospital outpatient or extension clinic	0%	0	6%	6	4%	6
Local health department	4%	2	4%	4	4%	6
Private office – group practice	19%	11	36%	39	30%	50
Private office – solo practice	32%	18	21%	22	24%	40
FQHC/FQHC look-like	19%	11	4%	4	9%	15
Other	2%	1	6%	6	4%	7
Total	100%	57	100%	107	100%	164

- The most frequently reported principal practice setting for USVI physicians was private office (group practice) (30%), followed by private office (solo practice) (24%), and hospital inpatient (18%). Primary care physicians were more likely to report working in FQHC/FQHC look-alikes compared to specialty care physicians (19% compared to 9%).

Table 8: USVI Physicians by Setting and by Region

The Setting of the Primary Practice Location	Region					
	St. John/St. Thomas		St. Croix		All Physicians	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Hospital emergency department	7%	7	5%	3	6%	10
Hospital inpatient	14%	14	25%	16	18%	30
Hospital outpatient or extension clinic	3%	3	5%	3	4%	6
Local health department	4%	4	3%	2	4%	6
Private office – group practice	35%	35	23%	15	30%	50
Private office – solo practice	23%	23	26%	17	24%	40
FQHC/FQHC look-like	7%	7	12%	8	9%	15
Other	6%	6	2%	1	4%	7
Total	100%	99	100%	65	100%	164

- Physicians in St. John/St. Thomas were more likely to report their principal practice setting as a private office (group practice) compared to physicians in St. Croix (35% compared to 23%).

Table 9: USVI Physicians by Average Weekly Hours Worked and by Specialty

Average Weekly Hours Worked	Specialty					
	Primary Care		Specialty Care		All Physicians	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
1-10 hours	0%	0	7%	7	4%	7
11-20 hours	18%	10	9%	10	12%	20
21-30 hours	20%	11	22%	24	21%	35
31-40 hours	36%	20	38%	41	37%	61
41-50 hours	5%	3	3%	3	4%	6
Over 50 hours	21%	12	18%	19	19%	31
Total	100%	56	100%	104	100%	160

- Approximately one in five providers reported working more than 50 hours per week on average.

Table 10: USVI Physicians With Admitting Privileges at Schneider Regional Medical Center by Specialty

Admitting Privileges at Schneider Regional Medical Center	Specialty					
	Primary Care		Specialty Care		All Physicians	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Yes	31%	17	38%	41	36%	58
No	69%	38	62%	66	64%	104
Total	100%	55	100%	107	100%	162

- Slightly more than one-third of all physicians reported having admitting privileges at Schneider Regional Medical Center. A higher proportion of specialty care physicians reported admitting privileges compared to primary care physicians (38% compared to 31%).

Table 11: USVI Physicians With Admitting Privileges at Schneider Regional Medical Center by Region

Admitting Privileges at Schneider Regional Medical Center	Location					
	<i>St. John/St. Thomas</i>		<i>St. Croix</i>		<i>All Physicians</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Yes	54%	53	8%	5	36%	58
No	46%	45	92%	59	64%	104
Total	100%	98	100%	64	100%	162

- More than half of all physicians practicing in the St. John/St. Thomas region reported admitting privileges at Schneider Regional Medical Center compared to less than 10% of physicians practicing on St. Croix.

Table 12: USVI Physicians With Admitting Privileges at Gov. Juan F. Luis Hospital and Medical Center by Specialty

Admitting Privileges at Gov. Juan F. Luis Hospital and Medical Center	Specialty					
	<i>Primary Care</i>		<i>Specialty Care</i>		<i>All Physicians</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Yes	25%	14	24%	25	24%	39
No	75%	42	76%	79	76%	121
Total	100%	56	100%	104	100%	160

- Just less than one-quarter of all physicians reported having admitting privileges at the Gov. Juan F. Luis Hospital and Medical Center, similar proportions were reported by both primary care and specialty care physicians.

Table 13: USVI Physicians With Admitting Privileges at Gov. Juan F. Luis Hospital and Medical Center by Region

Admitting Privileges at Gov. Juan F. Luis Hospital and Medical Center	Location					
	<i>St. John/St. Thomas</i>		<i>St. Croix</i>		<i>All Physicians</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Yes	12%	11	43%	28	24%	39
No	88%	84	57%	37	76%	121
Total	100%	95	100%	65	100%	160

- Forty-three percent of physicians on St. Croix reported admitting privileges at the Gov. Juan F. Luis Hospital and Medical Center, compared to just 12% from the St. John/St. Thomas region.

Patient Information, Wait Times, and Language Service Offered

This section includes information about patients, wait times, and language services offered. Only physicians who indicated that they had a primary or secondary practice location in USVI are included in this section.

Table 14: USVI Physicians Who Accept New Patients by Specialty

Accepting New Patients	Specialty					
	<i>Primary Care</i>		<i>Specialty Care</i>		<i>All Physicians</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Yes	93%	53	89%	95	90%	148
No	4%	2	7%	8	6%	10
No Response	4%	2	4%	4	4%	6
Total	100%	57	100%	107	100%	164

- An overwhelming majority of both primary care and specialty care physicians reported accepting new patients.

Medicaid Patients

Table 15: USVI Physicians Who Accept Medicaid Patients by Specialty

Accepting Medicaid Patients	Specialty					
	<i>Primary Care</i>		<i>Specialty Care</i>		<i>All Physicians</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Yes	19%	11	37%	40	31%	51
No	11%	6	7%	8	9%	14
No Response	70%	40	55%	59	60%	99
Total	100%	57	100%	107	100%	164

- Approximately one in five primary care providers and two in five specialty care providers reported accepting Medicaid patients. However, 70% of primary care providers and 55% of specialty care providers did not respond to the question.

Table 16: Percentage of Medicaid Patients by USVI Physician Specialty

Percentage of Medicaid Patients	Specialty					
	<i>Primary Care</i>		<i>Specialty Care</i>		<i>All Physicians</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
0-5%	48%	22	20%	19	29%	41
6-10%	9%	4	13%	13	12%	17
11-20%	4%	2	27%	26	20%	28
21-40%	20%	9	30%	29	27%	38
41-60%	13%	6	3%	3	6%	9
61-80%	4%	2	5%	5	5%	7
81-100%	2%	1	2%	2	2%	3
Total	100%	46	100%	97	100%	143

- Sixty-one percent of physicians reported that 20% or less of their patients had Medicaid, and nearly all reported that 40% or less of their patients were Medicaid patients.

Medicare Patients

Table 17: USVI Physicians Who Accept Medicare Patients by Specialty

Accepting Medicare Patients	Specialty					
	<i>Primary Care</i>		<i>Specialty Care</i>		<i>All Physicians</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Yes	23%	13	42%	45	35%	58
No	7%	4	3%	3	4%	7
No Response	70%	40	55%	59	60%	99
Total	100%	57	100%	107	100%	164

- Nearly one-quarter of primary care providers and more than 40% specialty care providers reported accepting Medicare patients. Seventy percent of primary care providers and 55% of specialty care providers did not respond to the question.

Table 18: Percentage of Medicare Patients by USVI Physician Specialty

Percentage of Medicare Patients	Specialty					
	<i>Primary Care</i>		<i>Specialty Care</i>		<i>All Physicians</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
0-5%	27%	14	19%	18	22%	32
6-10%	8%	4	6%	6	7%	10
11-20%	12%	6	11%	10	11%	16
21-40%	23%	12	28%	27	27%	39
41-60%	25%	13	32%	30	29%	43
61-80%	4%	2	4%	4	4%	6
81-100%	2%	1	0%	0	1%	1
Total	100%	52	100%	95	100%	147

- Twenty-two percent of physicians reported that 5% or less of their patients had Medicare and only 5% of physicians indicated that more than 60% their patients had Medicare.

Additional Payment Information

Table 19: Percentage of Self-Pay/Cash Patients by USVI Physician Specialty

Percentage of Self-Pay/Cash Patients	Specialty					
	<i>Primary Care</i>		<i>Specialty Care</i>		<i>All Physicians</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
0-5%	33%	17	43%	42	39%	59
6-10%	35%	18	26%	25	29%	43
11-20%	23%	12	19%	19	21%	31
21-40%	8%	4	8%	8	8%	12
41-60%	0%	0	2%	2	1%	2
61-80%	2%	1	0%	0	1%	1
81-100%	0%	0	2%	2	1%	2
Total	100%	52	100%	98	100%	150

- Almost 90% of physicians reported that 20% or less of their patients were self-pay/cash patients.

Table 20: USVI Physicians Who Offer a Sliding-Scale Fee by Specialty

Offering a Sliding-Scale Fee	Specialty					
	<i>Primary Care</i>		<i>Specialty Care</i>		<i>All Physicians</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Yes	53%	30	52%	56	52%	86
No	44%	25	43%	46	43%	71
No Response	4%	2	5%	5	4%	7
Total	100%	57	100%	107	100%	164

- More than half of all physicians offered a sliding-scale fee for patients.

Table 21: Percentage of Sliding-Scale Fee Patients by USVI Physician Specialty

Percentage of Sliding-Scale Fee Patients	Specialty					
	<i>Primary Care</i>		<i>Specialty Care</i>		<i>All Physicians</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
0%	44%	22	43%	40	43%	62
1-5%	18%	9	34%	32	28%	41
6-10%	18%	9	13%	12	15%	21
Over 10%	20%	10	11%	10	14%	20
Total	100%	50	100%	94	100%	144

- While 44% of all providers reported having 0% of their patients on a sliding-scale fee, 20% of primary care providers and 11% of specialty care providers reported more than 10% of their patients were on a sliding-scale fee.

Table 22: USVI Physicians Who See at least 5% Homeless Patients by Specialty

At least 5% Homeless Patients	Specialty					
	<i>Primary Care</i>		<i>Specialty Care</i>		<i>All Physicians</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Yes	14%	8	10%	11	12%	19
No	86%	49	90%	96	88%	145
Total	100%	57	100%	107	100%	164

- Only 12% of providers indicated that at least 5% of their patients were homeless.

Wait Times and Language Services Offered

Table 23: The Average Wait Time in Days for New Patients by USVI Physician Specialty

The Average Wait Time in Days for New Patients	Specialty					
	<i>Primary Care</i>		<i>Specialty Care</i>		<i>All Physicians</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Less than 1 Day	20%	10	19%	18	19%	28
1-2 Days	29%	15	28%	27	28%	42
3-7 Days	29%	15	37%	36	34%	51
More than a week	22%	11	16%	16	18%	27
Total	100%	51	100%	97	100%	148

- Eighty-two percent of physicians reported that the average wait time for new patients was less than a week. The majority of new patients waited either 1-2 days or 3-7 days to be seen by both primary care and specialty care physicians.

Table 24: The Average Wait Time in Days for Established Patients by USVI Physician Specialty

The Average Wait Time in Days for Established Patients	Specialty					
	<i>Primary Care</i>		<i>Specialty Care</i>		<i>All Physicians</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Less than 1 Day	20%	10	19%	18	19%	28
1-2 Days	37%	19	28%	27	31%	46
3-7 Days	33%	17	36%	35	35%	52
More than a week	10%	5	17%	16	14%	21
Total	100%	51	100%	96	100%	147

- Overall, primary care physicians reported shorter wait periods for established patients compared to specialty care physicians.

Table 25: Types of Interpretive Language Services Offered from USVI Physicians by Specialty

Interpretive Language Services	Specialty					
	<i>Primary Care</i>		<i>Specialty Care</i>		<i>All Physicians</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Americal Sign Language	14%	8	12%	13	13%	21
In-person Interpretation	39%	22	37%	40	38%	62
Telephone Interpretation	40%	23	35%	37	37%	60
Video Interpretation	10%	6	12%	13	12%	19
Other	4%	2	5%	5	4%	7

- In-person interpretation and telephone interpretation were the most commonly reported interpretive language services by physicians practicing in USVI.

Table 26: Types of Interpretive Language Services Offered from USVI Physicians by Region

Interpretive Language Services	Location					
	<i>St. John/St. Thomas</i>		<i>St. Croix</i>		<i>All Physicians</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Americal Sign Language	12%	7	13%	14	13%	21
In-person Interpretation	58%	33	27%	29	38%	62
Telephone Interpretation	40%	23	35%	37	37%	60
Video Interpretation	5%	3	15%	16	12%	19
Other	4%	2	5%	5	4%	7

- Fifty-eight percent of physicians practicing in St. John/St. Thomas offered in-person interpretation services compared to only 27% of physicians practicing in St. Croix.

Future Plans

This section includes the responses to the question about plans for the next 3 to 5 years. All physicians who reported practicing in USVI are included in this section.

Table 27: USVI Physicians' Plans for the Next 3 to 5 Years by Specialty

Plans for the Next 3 to 5 Years	Specialty					
	<i>Primary Care</i>		<i>Specialty Care</i>		<i>All Physicians</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Continue as is	73%	46	81%	113	78%	159
Cut back on patient care hours	6%	4	4%	6	5%	10
Expand practice	17%	11	13%	18	14%	29
Relocate	3%	2	2%	3	2%	5
Retire	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Total	100%	63	100%	140	100%	203

- When asked about their plans for the next 3 to 5 years, 92% of physicians plan to either maintain their practices as is or expand. No physicians reported plans to retire.

DENTISTS ACTIVELY PRACTICING IN USVI

Dentist Characteristics

This section includes information about the specialty and demographic characteristics of dentists who reported they were actively practicing in USVI.

Table 28: USVI Dentists by Specialty

Specialty	<i>Dentists</i>	
	%	N
General Dentistry	65%	26
Specialty Dentistry	35%	14
Total	100%	40

- Approximately two-thirds of dentists practicing in USVI reported practicing general dentistry.

Table 29: USVI Dentists by Gender and by Specialty

Gender	Specialty					
	<i>General Dentistry</i>		<i>Specialty Dentistry</i>		<i>All Dentistry</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Female	38%	10	7%	1	28%	11
Male	62%	16	93%	13	72%	29
Total	100%	26	100%	14	100%	40

- More dentists in USVI were male than female, with males comprising nearly three-quarters of all dentists, and more than 90% of specialty dentists.

Table 30: USVI Dentists by Age and by Specialty

Age	Specialty					
	<i>General Dentistry</i>		<i>Specialty Dentistry</i>		<i>All Dentistry</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
25-30	0%	0	7%	1	2%	1
31-40	15%	4	14%	2	15%	6
41-50	15%	4	14%	2	15%	6
51-60	35%	9	36%	5	35%	14
61 & older	35%	9	29%	4	32%	13
Total	100%	26	100%	14	100%	40

- Two-thirds of dentists in USVI were older than age 50 and almost one-third of them were older than age 60.

Table 31: USVI Dentists by Age and by Gender

Age	Gender					
	<i>Female</i>		<i>Male</i>		<i>All Dentists</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
25-30	0%	0	4%	1	3%	1
31-40	20%	2	14%	4	16%	6
41-50	20%	2	11%	3	13%	5
51-60	50%	5	29%	8	34%	13
61 & older	10%	1	43%	12	34%	13
Total	100%	10	100%	28	100%	38

- Overall, male dentists in USVI tended to be older than female dentists. Forty-three percent of male dentist reported being age 61 or older compared to only 10% of female dentists.

Table 32: USVI Dentists by Race/Ethnicity and by Specialty

Race/Ethnicity	Specialty					
	<i>General Dentistry</i>		<i>Specialty Dentistry</i>		<i>All Dentistry</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
White Non-Hispanic	58%	15	21%	3	45%	18
Black/African American	23%	6	50%	7	32%	13
Asian	0%	0	7%	1	2%	1
Hispanic	12%	3	14%	2	12%	5
Other	8%	2	7%	1	8%	3
Total	100%	26	100%	14	100%	40

- Forty-five percent of dentists in USVI were White Non-Hispanic, followed by Black/African American (32%) and Hispanic (12%). The majority of general dentists were White Non-Hispanic (58%) and half of all specialty dentists were Black/African American (50%).

Practice Characteristics

This section contains information about practice location, hours worked, and hospital admitting privileges. Only dentists who indicated that they had a primary or secondary practice location in USVI are included in this section (except for Table 33).

Table 33: USVI Dentists by Principal Practice Location and by Specialty

Location	Specialty					
	<i>General Dentistry</i>		<i>Specialty Dentistry</i>		<i>All Dentistry</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
St. Croix	38%	10	57%	8	45%	18
St. John/St. Thomas	58%	15	36%	5	50%	20
Outside VI	4%	1	7%	1	5%	2
Other	100%	26	100%	14	100%	40

- Forty-five percent of dentists reported working in St. Croix and 50% reported working in St. John/St. Thomas. However, 57% of specialty dentists reported working in St. Croix and 58% of general dentists reported working in St. John/St. Thomas.

Table 34: USVI Dentists by Average Weekly Hours Worked and by Specialty

Average Weekly Hours Worked	Specialty					
	<i>General Dentistry</i>		<i>Specialty Dentistry</i>		<i>All Dentistry</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
1-10 hours	16%	4	38%	5	24%	9
11-20 hours	12%	3	31%	4	18%	7
21-30 hours	20%	5	8%	1	16%	6
31-40 hours	52%	13	23%	3	42%	16
Total	100%	25	100%	13	100%	38

- More than half of general dentists (52%) reported working 31-40 hours a week. In comparison, only 23% of specialty dentists reported working 31-40 hours a week and 38% of specialty dentists reported working 1-10 hours a week.

Table 35: USVI Dentists With Admitting Privileges at Schneider Regional Medical Center by Specialty

Admitting Privileges at Schneider Regional Medical Center	Specialty					
	<i>General Dentistry</i>		<i>Specialty Dentistry</i>		<i>All Dentists</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Yes	5%	1	0%	0	3%	1
No	90%	18	100%	18	95%	36
No Response	5%	1	0%	0	3%	1
Total	100%	20	100%	18	100%	38

- One dentist reported having admitting privileges at Schneider Regional Medical Center.

Table 36: USVI Dentists With Admitting Privileges at Gov. Juan F. Luis Hospital and Medical Center by Specialty

Admitting Privileges at Gov. Juan F. Luis Hospital and Medical Center	Specialty					
	<i>General Dentistry</i>		<i>Specialty Dentistry</i>		<i>All Dentists</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Yes	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
No	95%	19	94%	17	95%	36
No Response	5%	1	6%	1	5%	2
Total	100%	20	100%	18	100%	38

- No dentists reported having admitting privileges at Gov. Juan F. Luis Hospital and Medical Center.

Patient Information, Wait Times, and Language Services Offered

This section includes information about patients, wait times, and language services offered. Only dentists who indicated that they had a primary or secondary practice location in USVI are included in this section.

Table 37: USVI Dentists Who Accept New Patients by Specialty

Accepting New Patients	Location					
	<i>General Dentistry</i>		<i>Specialty Dentistry</i>		<i>All Dentists</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Yes	100%	25	92%	12	97%	37
No	0%	0	8%	1	3%	1
Total	100%	25	100%	13	100%	38

- Every general dentist and all but one specialty dentist reported accepting new patients.

Medicaid Patients

Table 38: USVI Dentists Who Accept Medicaid Patients by Specialty

Accepting Medicaid Patients	Specialty					
	<i>General Dentistry</i>		<i>Specialty Dentistry</i>		<i>All Dentistry</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Yes	20%	5	69%	9	37%	14
No	80%	20	31%	4	63%	24
Total	100%	25	100%	13	100%	38

- More than two-thirds of specialty dentists reported accepting Medicaid patients, compared to only 20% of general dentists.

Table 39: Percentage of Medicaid Patients by USVI Dentist Specialty

Percentage of Medicaid Patients	Specialty					
	<i>General</i>		<i>Specialty</i>		<i>All Dentistry</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
0-5%	87%	20	38%	5	69%	25
6-10%	0%	0	15%	2	6%	2
11-20%	0%	0	8%	1	3%	1
21-40%	4%	1	0%	0	3%	1
41-60%	4%	1	31%	4	14%	5
61-80%	0%	0	8%	1	3%	1
81-100%	4%	1	0%	0	3%	1
Total	100%	23	100%	13	100%	36

- The majority of dentists reported that only 0 to 5% of their patients had Medicaid.

Additional Payment Information

Table 40: Percentage of Self-Pay/Cash Patients by USVI Dentist Specialty

Percentage of Self-Pay/Cash Patients	Specialty					
	<i>General</i>		<i>Specialty</i>		<i>All Dentistry</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
0-5%	86%	19	75%	9	82%	28
6-10%	5%	1	8%	1	6%	2
11-20%	5%	1	0%	0	3%	1
21-40%	5%	1	0%	0	3%	1
41-60%	0%	0	8%	1	3%	1
61-80%	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
81-100%	0%	0	8%	1	3%	1
Total	100%	22	100%	12	100%	34

- More than 80% of dentists indicated that 0 to 5% of their patient were self-pay/cash patients.

Table 41: USVI Dentists Offering a Sliding-Scale Fee by Specialty

Offering a Sliding-Scale Fee	Specialty					
	<i>General Dentistry</i>		<i>Specialty Dentistry</i>		<i>All Dentistry</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Yes	12%	3	31%	4	18%	7
No	84%	21	69%	9	79%	30
No Response	4%	1	0%	0	3%	1
Total	100%	25	100%	13	100%	38

- Less than 20% dentists reported offering a sliding-scale fee. A larger percentage of specialty dentists offered a sliding-scale fee compared to general dentists (31% compared to 12%).

Table 42: Percentage of Sliding-Scale Fee Patients by USVI Dentist Specialty

Percentage of Sliding-Scale Fee Patients	Specialty					
	<i>General Dentistry</i>		<i>Specialty Dentistry</i>		<i>All Dentistry</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
0%	77%	17	75%	9	76%	26
1-5%	9%	2	0%	0	6%	2
6-10%	5%	1	8%	1	6%	2
Over 10%	9%	2	17%	2	12%	4
Total	100%	22	100%	12	100%	34

- Twelve percent of dentists indicated that more than 10% of their patients were on a sliding-scale fee.

Table 43: USVI Dentists Who See at least 5% Homeless Patients by Specialty

At least 5% Homeless Patients	Specialty					
	<i>General Dentistry</i>		<i>Specialty Dentistry</i>		<i>All Dentistry</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Yes	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
No	100%	25	100%	13	100%	38
Total	100%	25	100%	13	100%	38

- No dentists reported seeing homeless patients.

Wait Times and Language Services Offered

Table 44: The Average Wait Time in Days for New Patients by USVI Dentist Specialty

Average Wait Time in Days for New Patients	Specialty					
	<i>General Dentistry</i>		<i>Specialty Dentistry</i>		<i>All Dentistry</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Less than 1 Day	4%	1	8%	1	5%	2
1-2 Days	38%	9	15%	2	30%	11
3-7 Days	29%	7	31%	4	30%	11
More than a week	29%	7	46%	6	35%	13
Total	100%	24	100%	13	100%	37

- Nearly half of specialty dentists reported wait times for new patients of longer than 7 days, compared to less than one-third of general dentists.

Table 45: The Average Wait Time in Days for Established Patients by USVI Dentist Specialty

Average Wait Time in Days for Established Patients	Specialty					
	<i>General Dentistry</i>		<i>Specialty Dentistry</i>		<i>All Dentistry</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Less than 1 Day	4%	1	0%	0	3%	1
1-2 Days	42%	10	31%	4	38%	14
3-7 Days	17%	4	23%	3	19%	7
More than a week	38%	9	46%	6	41%	15
Total	100%	24	100%	13	100%	37

- Specialty dentists reported longer wait times for established patients compared to general dentists.

Table 46: Types of Interpretive Language Services Offered by USVI Dentists by Specialty

Interpretive Language Services	Specialty					
	<i>General Dentistry</i>		<i>Specialty Dentistry</i>		<i>All Dentists</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
American Sign Language	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
In-person Interpretation	16%	4	38%	5	24%	9
Telephone Interpretation	0%	0	23%	3	8%	3
Video Interpretation	0%	0	8%	1	3%	1
Other	20%	5	15%	2	18%	7

- No USVI dentists reported American Sign Language as an interpretive service offered. No USVI general dentists reported offering telephone or video language interpretation services.

Future Plans

This section includes the responses to the question about plans for the next 3 to 5 years. All dentists who reported practicing in USVI are included in this section.

Table 47: USVI Dentists' Plans for the Next 3 to 5 Years by Specialty

Plans for the Next 3 to 5 Years	Specialty					
	<i>General Dentistry</i>		<i>Specialty Dentistry</i>		<i>All Dentistry</i>	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Continue as is	78%	21	67%	10	74%	31
Cut back on patient care hours	7%	2	7%	1	7%	3
Expand practice	15%	4	20%	3	17%	7
Others or no response	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Relocate	0%	0	7%	1	2%	1
Retire	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Total	100%	27	100%	15	100%	42

- When asked about their plans for the next 3 to 5 years, 74% of dentists planned to maintain their practices as is and another 17% planned to expand. No dentists reported plans to retire.

DISCUSSION

The health care delivery system in USVI faces unique challenges compared the rest of the US. In 2016, the uninsured rate in USVI was more than double the uninsured rate in the US (30% compared to 12%).² Also in 2016, about 40% of the population was on some form of public insurance, with 23% enrolled in Medicaid and 17% receiving Medicare benefits, while a further 27% of the population was uninsured.² This means that just 23% of the population of USVI had private health insurance, which typically reimburses at the highest rates, and 40% of the population had decreased reimbursement for care. When comparing gender, there was a higher percentage of active female physicians in the USVI than when compared to the US as a whole (Table 2).³ These trends were not observed among dentists, with USVI seeing a lower percentage of female dentists compared to the US as a whole (Table 29).⁴ USVI also had a higher unemployment rate, which was reported as 10.4% in 2017, compared to 5% in the US that same year.⁵ The high unemployment rate may explain the high uninsured rate, as those without employment would not have private insurance provided through their employer. Just less than one-third of physicians reported more than 10% of their patients were self-pay/cash as their primary means of paying for health care services, further indicating issues with lack of insurance among those seeking medical care (Table 19).

The survey responses from providers enables some insight into the challenges unique to USVI when compared with the US. Those with Medicaid may struggle to find care, as fewer than one-fifth of primary care providers and slightly more than one-third of specialty care providers reported accepting Medicaid patients altogether (Table 15). The acceptance of Medicare among physicians was only slightly higher, with 23% of primary care physicians and 42% of specialty care physicians who reported accepting Medicare patients (Table 17). Among dentists, an interesting observation included just 1 in 5 general dentists accepted patients with Medicaid, yet more than two-thirds of specialty dentists accepted Medicaid patients (Table 38). Medicare does not offer dental coverage for beneficiaries.

People living in the USVI face multiple potential barriers to accessing health care.⁶ Physicians reported higher rates of self-pay/cash patients (Table 19) than dentists (Table 40). Language presented another barrier, with a substantial portion of the USVI population speaking a language other than English at home, with Spanish/Spanish Creole and French/French Creole as significant minority languages.⁷ Interpretive language services were offered by physicians with similar rates across specialties (Table 25), but some variance depended on region (Table 26). It was much less common for interpretive language services to be offered by dentists than by physicians (Table 46).

When asked about future plans, providers overwhelmingly reported plans to continue as is for the next 3 to 5 years, with expanding practice being the second most popular option, consistent among physicians (Table 27) and dentists (Table 47). This response, in the case of both professions, was consistent among primary care/general dentistry and specialty care/specialty dentistry. Very few providers planned to cut back on patient care hours, and no providers reported plans to retire.

Some components of this report offer glimpses into possible changes in plans for providers following the impact of Hurricanes Irma and Maria in September 2017.

CONCLUSION

Given the diverse demographic, socioeconomic, and health characteristics of the population of the USVI, a different composition for the health workforce may not be surprising. A major issue of concern is access to dental care for a significant percentage of the population, as that repeatedly comes up as a potential issue based on the survey results, especially when considering coverage by insurance and language availability.

The immediate future of the health workforce composition in the USVI will likely remain similar, as survey responses indicated an overwhelming desire from physicians and dentists to continue their practices as is, with some seeking to expand their practices over the next 3 to 5 years and few seeking to cut back their hours or retire.

It is important to consider the limitations of this survey, as many providers were excluded for their lack of indicating they work in USVI presently. It is also important to consider again the implications of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, which may have significantly changed the health care landscape in the USVI, making the results of this survey more difficult to compare to previous surveys. Further surveying and data collection may be needed to address the long-term needs of the USVI population.

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