

Stronger Together: Community Partnerships for a Sustainable Dental Workforce

CCO Oregon Conference Panel Presentation

October 5, 2026

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Maddie Jackson, Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center

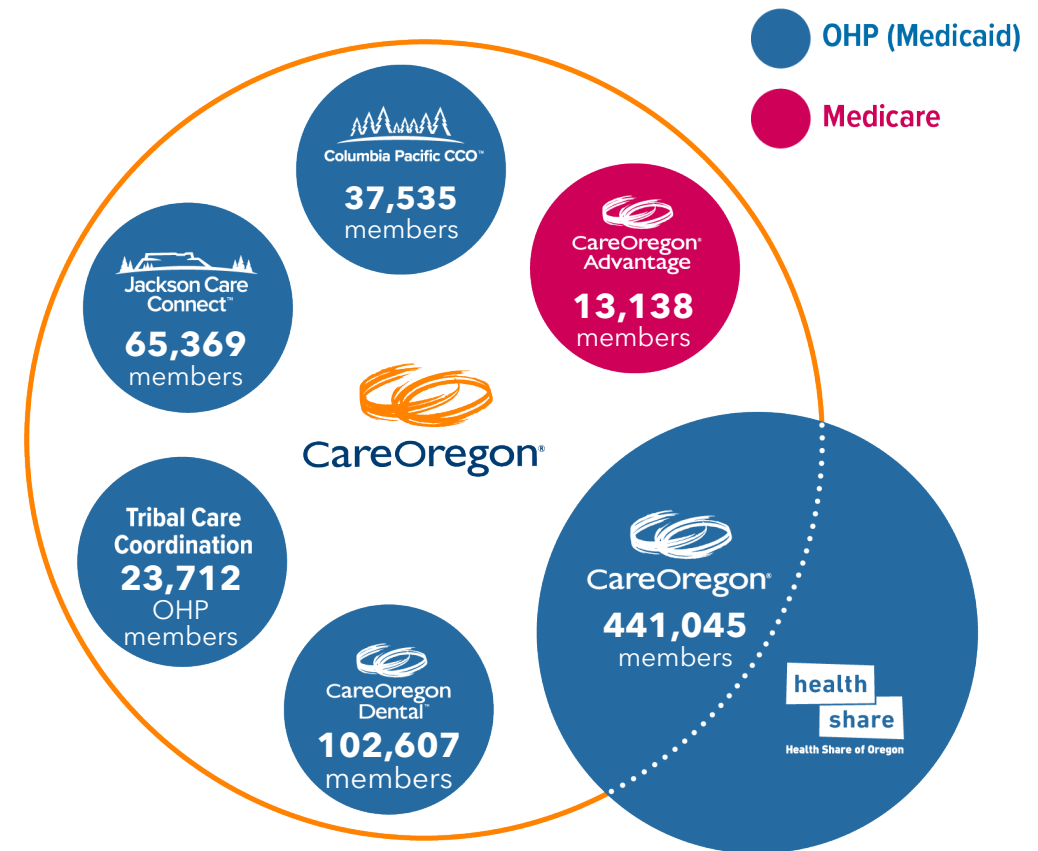
Lisa Bozzetti, DDS, Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center

The CareOregon Family

CareOregon is a mission-driven, community based nonprofit organization. For 30 years, CareOregon has offered health services and community benefit programs to Oregon Health Plan members.

Today, we support the needs of over 500,000 Oregonians through three coordinated care organizations, a Medicare Advantage plan, a Tribal Care Coordination program, and a dental care organization.

CareOregon members have access to integrated medical, dental and mental health care and substance use treatment. We also connect members to housing, fresh food, education and transportation services.



*** Membership numbers updated as of July 1, 2026

Building Sustainable Dental Workforce Pathways



Community Partnerships



Recruitment



Training & Upskilling



Career Advancement



Workforce & Access Impact

Dental Assistant Workforce

careoregon.org

Multnomah County Community Health Center

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Strong Together: Community Partnerships for a Sustainable Dental Workforce



Presenters:

Dr. Azma Ahmed, DDS

Norma Santiago Hernandez, EPDH

Student Health

(9) Student Health Centers
embed in high schools
across 5 school districts

Primary Care

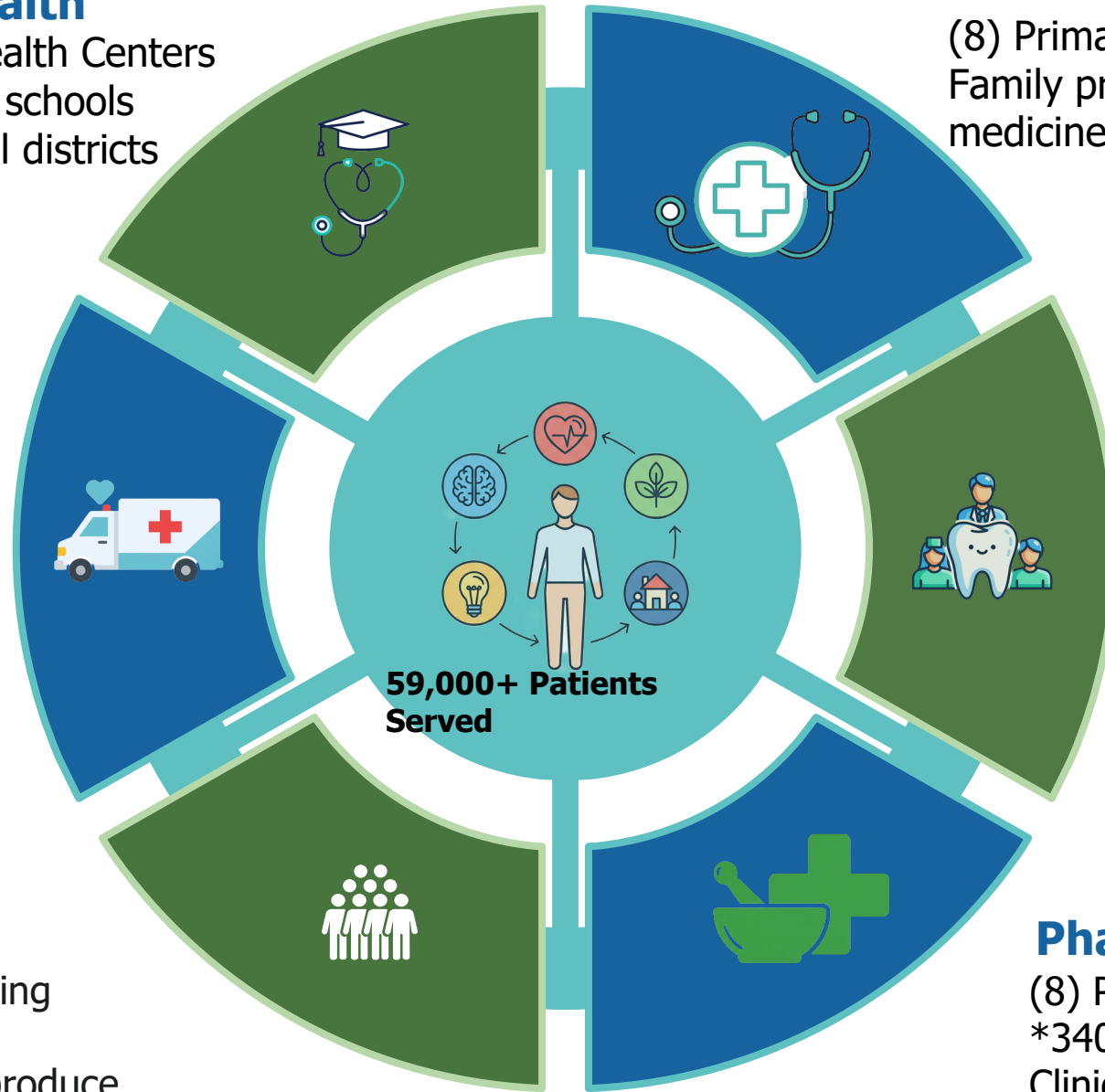
(8) Primary Care Clinics
Family practice, internal
medicine, and pediatrics

Mobile

Our van brings dental, lab, and
primary care services to
locations across Multnomah
County each week.

Social Needs

Providing telehealth services, including
assistance with insurance, case
management, and access to fresh produce
through our community-supported
agriculture program.



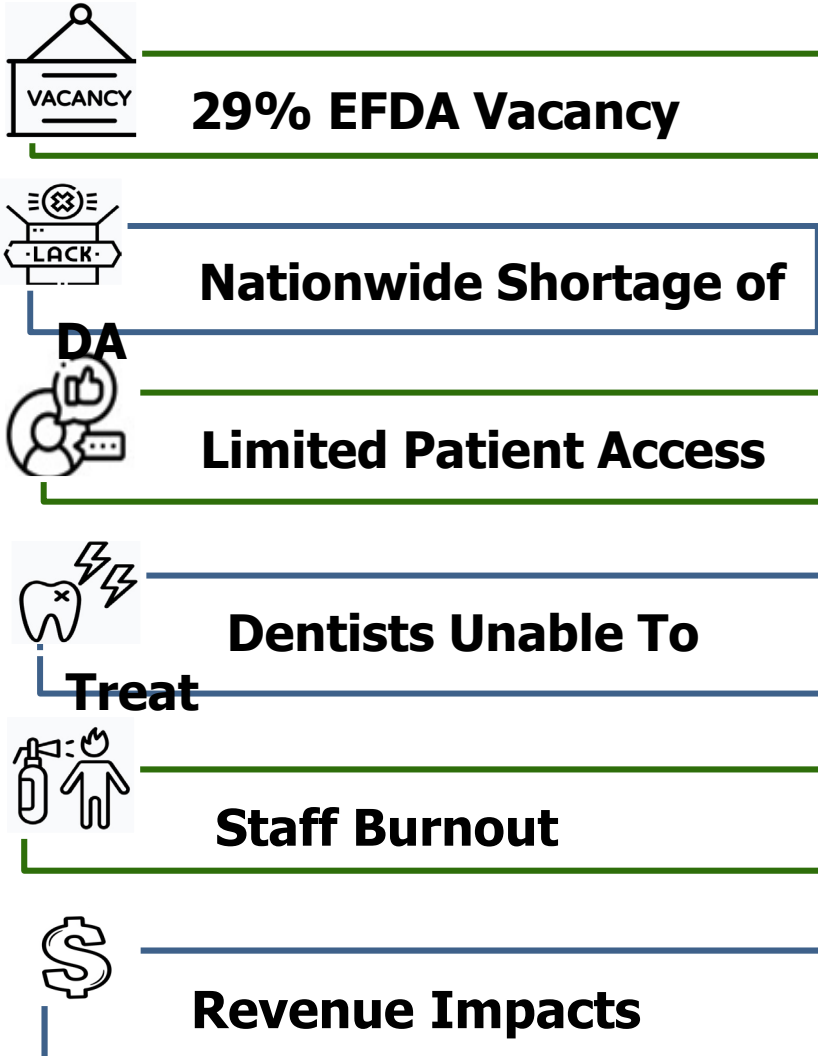
Dental

(8) Comprehensive
Dental Clinics
*98+ Elementary
and middle schools
served in our
School Sealant
Program

Pharmacy

(8) Pharmacies
*340B Pharmacy Services,
Clinical Pharmacy, and
Adherence packaging

The Workforce Problem



Workforce Development: The Dental Edition

Dental Assistant (does not need certification)



Organize, clean, maintain equipment



Record dental history and vital signs

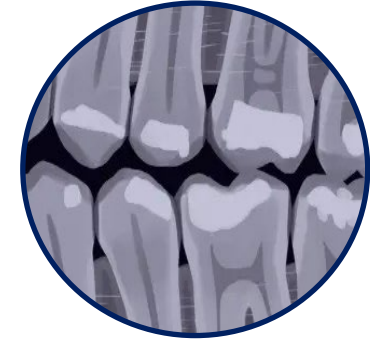


Prepare patients for dental treatment



Preventive services like fluoride varnish, Oral hygiene instructions, motivational interviewing

Dental assistant with Radiology (certification required)



Complete oral radiographs

Expanded Function Dental Assistant (EFDA certification required)



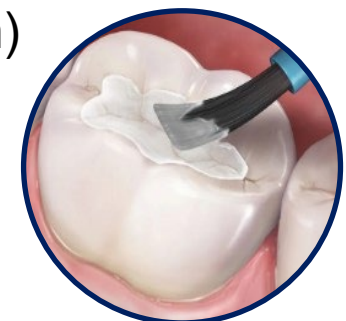
Coronal polishing



Make and place temporary crowns



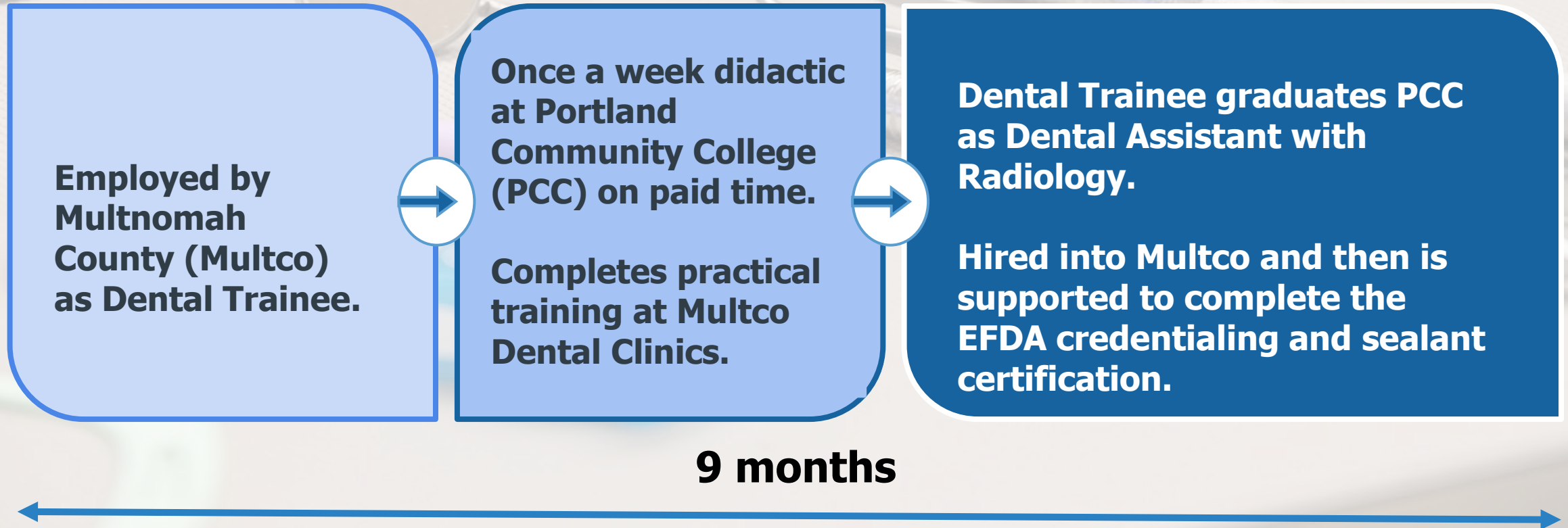
Sealant certified EFDA (Sealant certification)



Place dental sealants

Pathway 1

Recruit individuals for PCC Dental Assisting program from current employees



Pathway 2

Hire DAs (Non - EFDAs) With Radiology & Train Internally To Become EFDAs

**Hire DA
with
Radiology**

**Completes
Training on
Paid Time**

6 Months

**EFDA with
Sealant
Certificatio
n**

**Dental
Assistant
Trainee**



**Dental
Assistant (DA)**



**DA
Radiology**



**Expanded
Functions
Dental
Assistant
(EFDA)**



**Sealant
Certification**



Pathway 3

Help folks through our own EFDA Training Program

12 Months

Recruit Differently

- **Fliers**
 - Internal staff recruitment
 - Community members
- **Virtual informational webinars**
- **Leverage community based organizations**



Making the Model Work

Sustainability



- **Secure the right partnerships and resources**
- **Plan for long-term sustainability**
 - Identify funding sources
- **Internal Champions**
- **Celebrate milestones and successes**
 - Newsletter
 - Staff meetings
 - Graduation ceremony

What We Accomplished

Successes



- **16 Dental trainees supported**
- **14 EFDA Graduates**
 - **2 preparing to take their EFDA**
- **3 Permanent Positions left to fill**
- **Pathway III**
 - **100 Pass rate in all national board examinations (Infection Control, Radiology Health & Safety, Oregon Expanded Functions)**

Future Plans

Evolution



- **Evolving the program to meet workforce needs**
 - Introducing EFPDA training into the workforce pathway
 - Focus on prevention
- **Flexible Career Pathways**
 - Provide two options for trainees
 - Continue to support those who want to advance to EFDA
- **Building Clinical Readiness**
 - Prepare to contribute to clinic sooner
 - Continue mentorship and competency development



Multnomah County Community Health Center • Dental Program

Dental Assistant Pathways

careoregon.org

Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center

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Virginia Garcia Memorial
HEALTH CENTER



CareOregon®



Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center Dental Assistant Pathways Sí Se Puede!

Maddie Jackson, Workforce Development Program Manager
Lisa Bozzetti DDS, Dental Director



About Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center

We serve more than 52,000 individuals all throughout the Portland Metro Area:

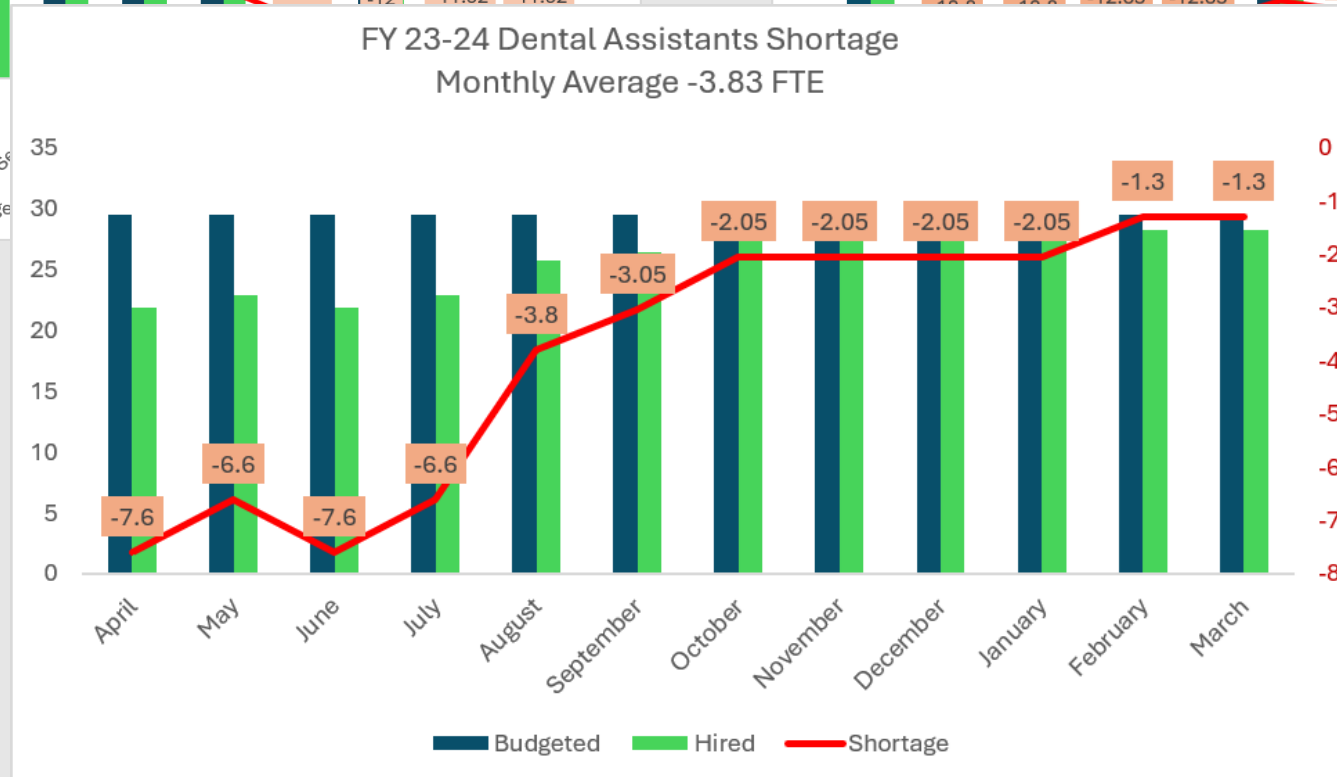
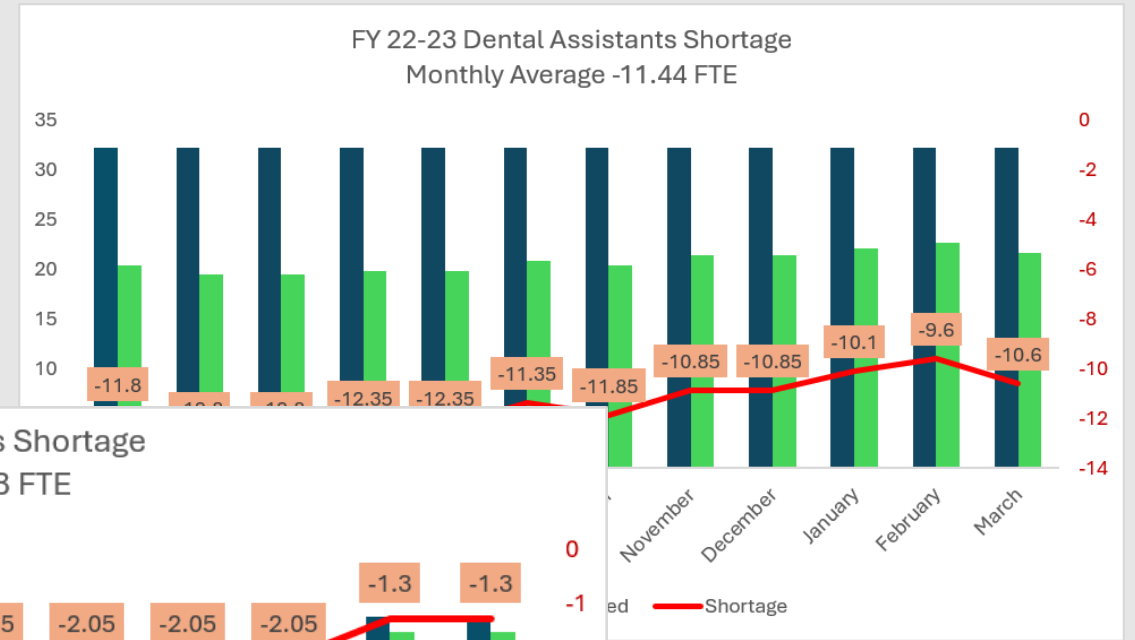
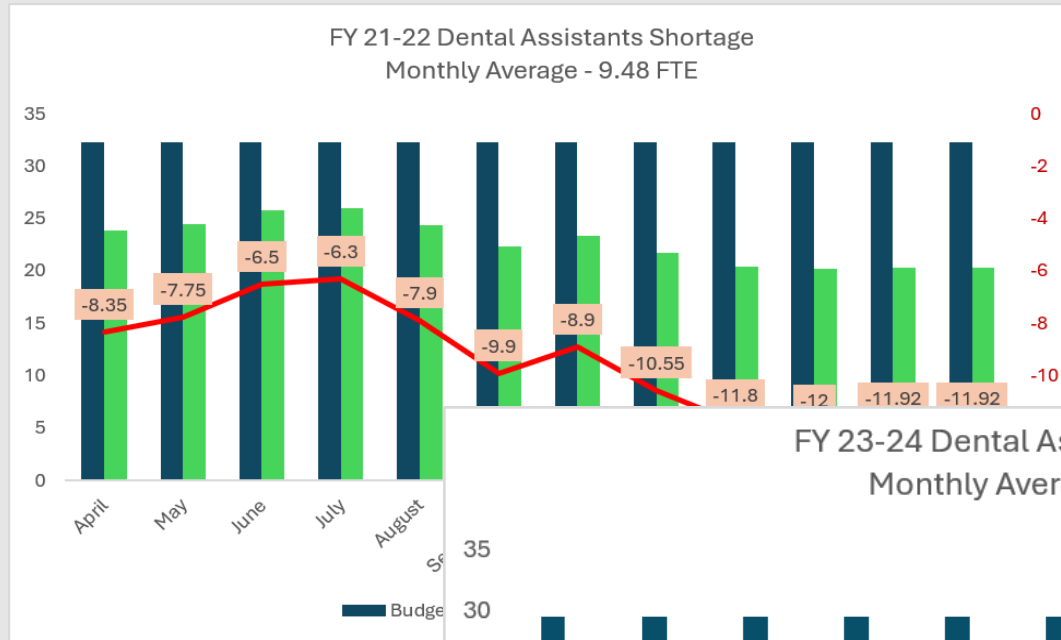
- Serving two counties: Washington and Yamhill
- Six primary care clinics
- Six dental clinics
- Five school-based health centers
- A reproductive health clinic
- Several mobile outreach clinics



Today we serve 1 in every 14 residents of Washington and Yamhill counties.

The best care possible, for those who need it the most.

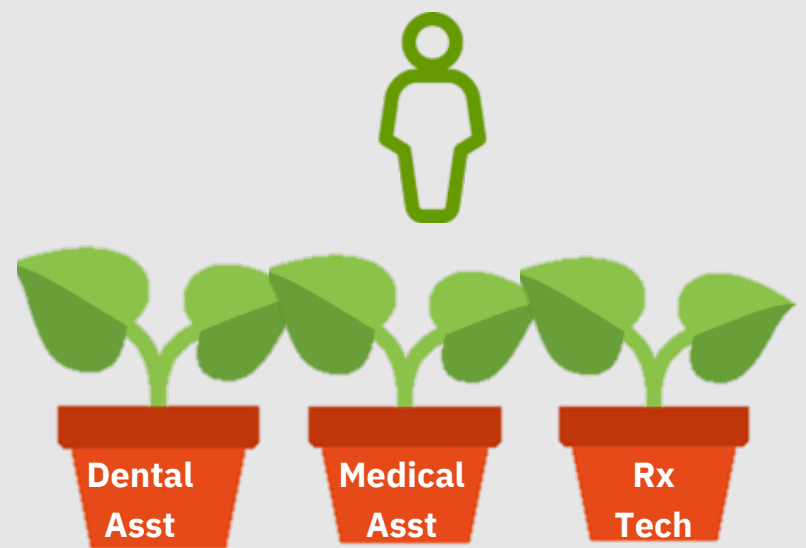
DA Historical Staffing Challenges



 Dedicated Staff for Training and WFD

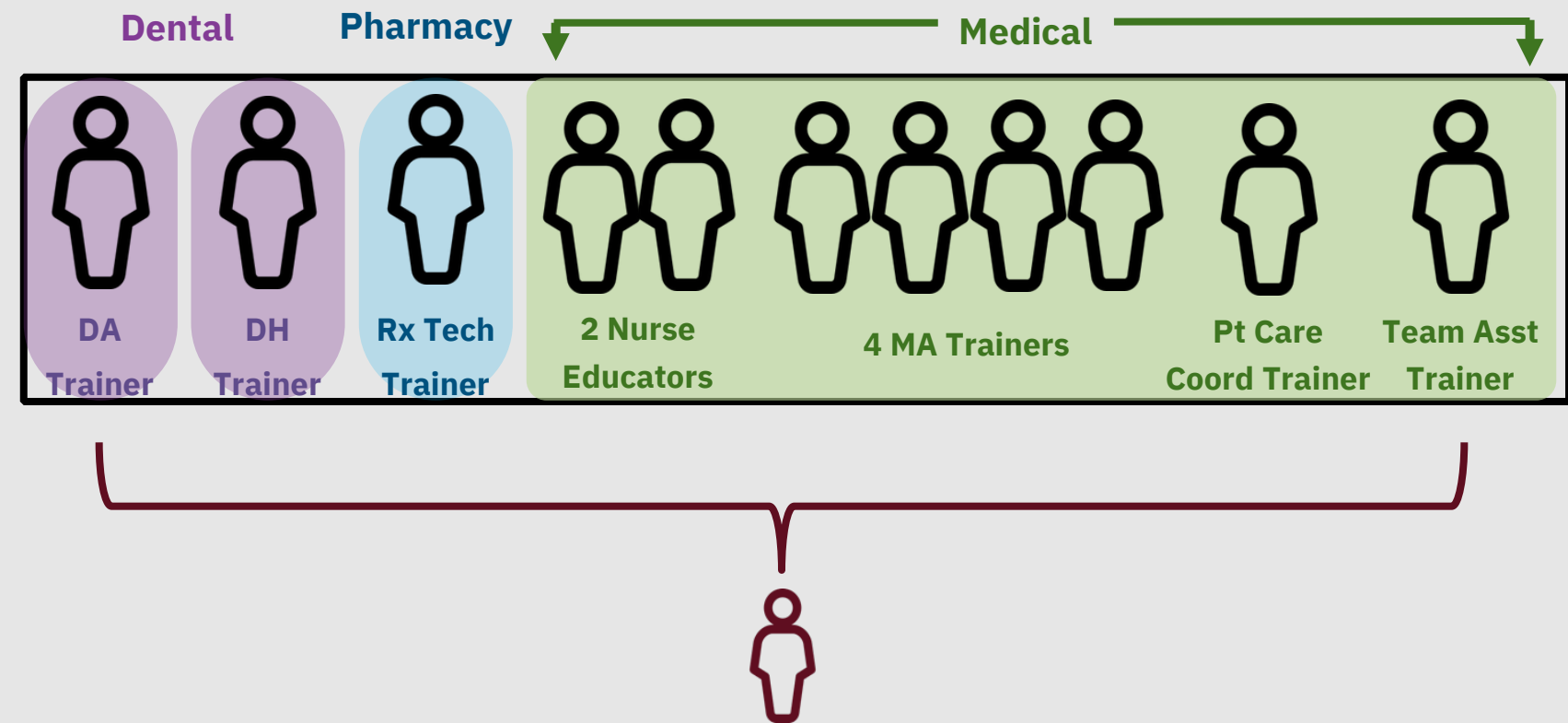
Workforce

Development Manager



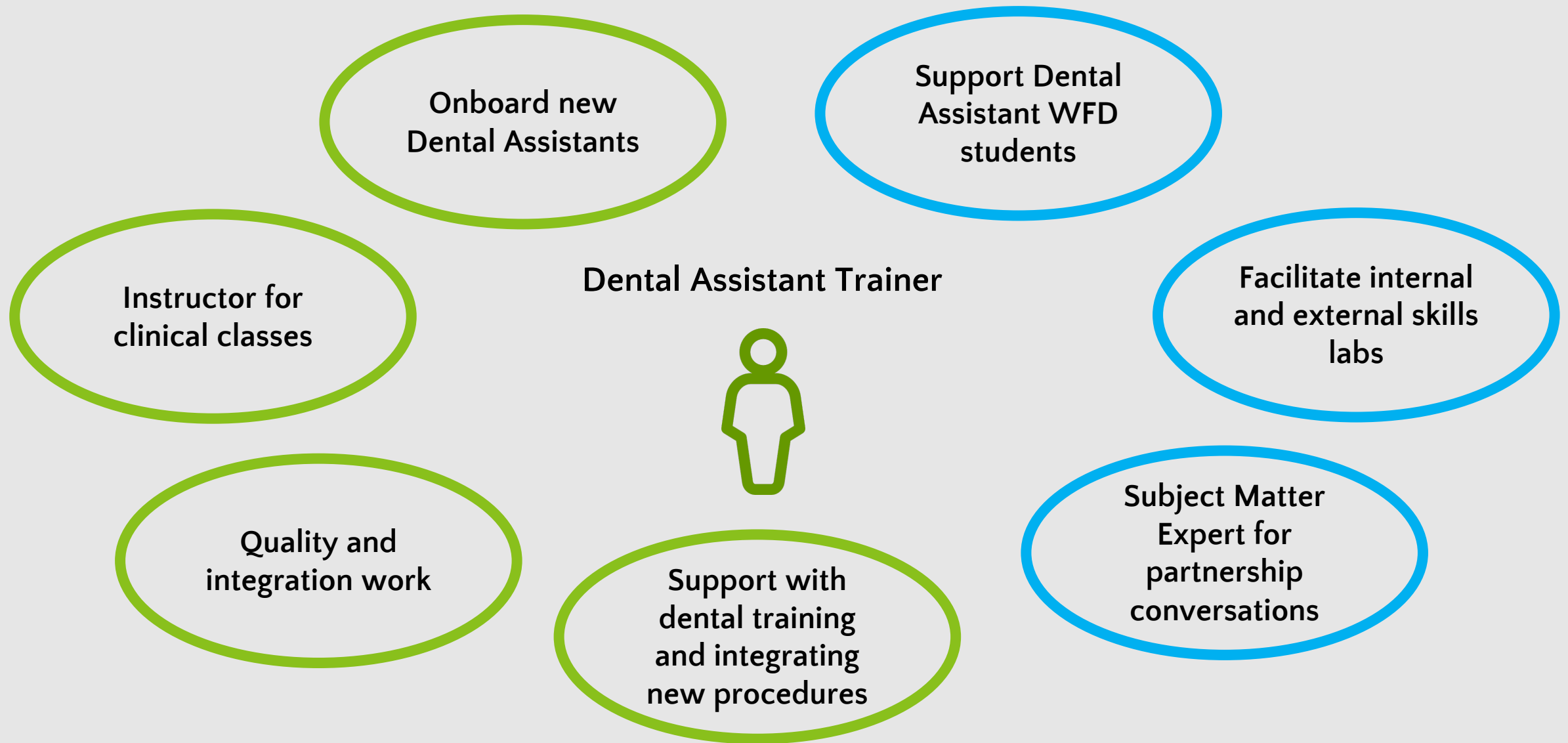
& More

Quality Department - Clinical Training Team



WFD Instructional Designer

Clinical Trainer & Workforce Development Support



Community College Pathway (PCC)

Portland Community College

Dental Assistant Apprentice Role – **Earn While You Learn!**

Accelerated Program – 10 months

Currently paused due to program ending

Dental Assistant Trainer:

- Main point of contact
- Onboarding
- Weekly study group
- Skills lab
- Mentor meetings

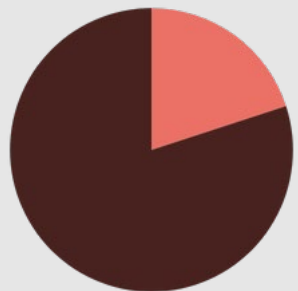




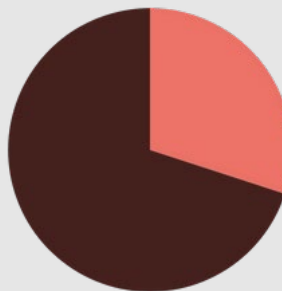
Success Rate for Apprentice Pathway

17 total graduates from PCC program since 2018

12 still working for Virginia Garcia as Dental Assistants



Over 80% of our program participants are bilingual



~70% were Virginia Garcia employees at application

High School Partnership Pathway

Relationship with local School District

- 14 students completed Dental Assisting Program at Glencoe High School with Virginia Garcia acting as their externship site since 2024.
- 8 students currently entering the program

Dental Assistant Trainer:

- Subject Matter Expert
- Curriculum guidance
- Skilling and training





<https://youtu.be/8FDaXkdqIGg>

Combined Skills Lab

Skills Lab support happens throughout the year for both Dental Assistant Apprentices and Glencoe High School students.

These labs are often combined, following the same timeline/curriculum for both programs.

Great mentorship opportunity for both groups



Dental Assistant Apprentices



High School Students



High School Summer Internships

We have hosted 12 of the 14 students from our High School partnership over the past three summers for a paid internship experience. They each received 320 hours of paid experience and their Expanded Functions Dental Assistant skills check offs.

Seven of these students are now DAs at our Dental clinics!



CPFDA-level Dental Assistant Upskilling Pathway

Training Length: 6 months (paid), Up to 2 cohorts per year

Expectation: Completion of CPFDA certification within program timeframe, move into full time DA role at Virginia Garcia

Skills Labs

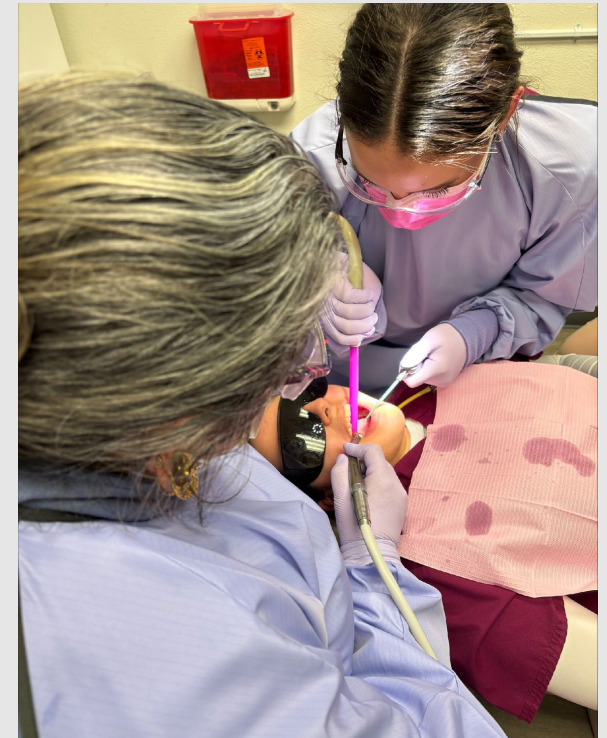
- Months 1–3: Infection Control + Radiology
- Months 4–6: CPFDA Coronal Polishing + Sealant Training

Bi-weekly Study Groups

- Practice exams, Test-taking strategies

Preceptors

- Dental Assistants & Dental Hygienists



Funding Sources for Programs

Federal and State Grant Opportunities

- Apprenticeship funds
- Tuition and Education Costs
- Foundation support

Maria Loreda Workforce Development Fund

- Tuition Assistance Program
- Covers general college including pre-requisites, certification programs related to current job or future role
- Annual assistance is up to \$15,000 per employee for relevant health care programs

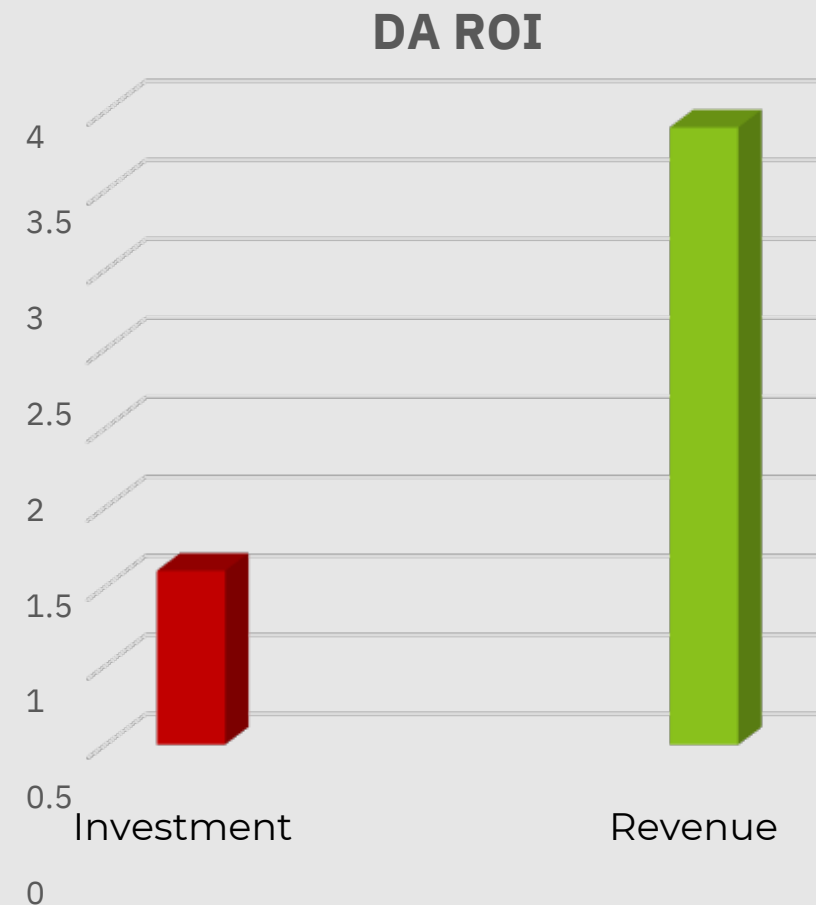


Return on Investment

DAs contribute to 10 patient encounters per day, so...

A day without a DA = ~\$2,000 loss of revenue

Key Takeaway: A substantial **237.87% ROI**



Sustainability

Dedicated Dental Assistant Trainer



15% Training Differential
for Mentors



Workforce Development Manager



6 Dental Clinics to Spread
Training Needs



Supportive Dental Leadership



Teaching Health Center Culture



Follow Up with Me!



Through Virginia Garcia's consulting line of business, **Cultivar Advisory Group**, we provide support to organizations that are building or strengthening workforce development programs, helping share lessons learned and expand the impact of VG's innovative approach.



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Cultivar Advisory Group



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Q & A



Thank you!

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