

Oral Health

Snapshot:

- Oral health professions include dentists, dental hygienists, dental assistants and dental laboratory technicians. Substantial concerns are seen in Georgia’s dental workforce.
- Georgia appears to have a small workforce of dentists, compared to the population it serves.
- Many needing dental care may have difficulty accessing this workforce and the care it provides.
- The USG operates the only dental school in Georgia at MCG, making it the conduit through which the public benefits from actions taken by the school to address the dental workforce shortage. Steps taken by the school include expanding student rotations from 3 to 9 weeks and performing over 5,000 dental procedures at 23 dental clinics all over the state. In addition, 30-40% of applicants are chosen from health shortage areas. These are some of many ways the school is helping to address those unmet needs.
- The USG has implemented key enhancements to dental education in Georgia by supporting the construction of a new dental school building which will be completed by July 2011.
- Ongoing work, including funding of new faculty positions and construction of an Education Commons facility, remains to be completed to ensure that Georgia’s enhancement to dentistry education has the needed impact.

Current dental workforce – Concerns exist about the size and distribution of Georgia’s dental workforce

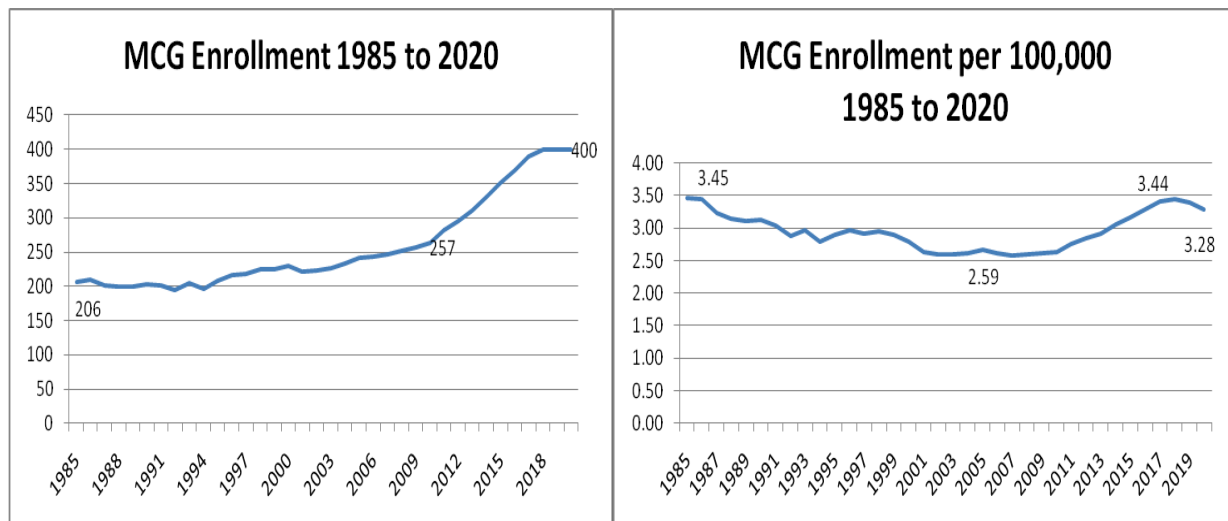
- As of 2009, Georgia had 56.2 dentists per 100,000 population¹
 - Georgia ranks 48th in the US
 - 30% below national rate of 80.7/100,000
 - Georgia would need 2,400 additional dentists to reach the national rate
- Many communities face challenges in accessing dental care
 - Nearly 1 in 7 GA counties has no dentist
 - 6.9% of GA counties have only 1 dentist
 - 99 counties have received some form of federal designation as a dental professional shortage area
- MCG graduates enough dentists to fill ⅓ to ½ of the annual replacement need of dentists for Georgia
 - Dept. of Labor estimates indicate Georgia needs to fill an average of 160 dental positions per year². (NOTE: Will likely continue to be filled by 50% MCG and 50% outside dentists. MCG currently retains approximately 83% of its graduates to practice in Georgia. That percentage is not likely to change in the near future since the school currently enrolls only Georgia residents.)

Distribution of Dentists in Georgia		
# of Active Dentists ²	# of Counties	% of Counties
0	23	14.5%
1	11	6.9%
2	16	10.1%
3	4	2.5%
4	21	13.2%
5	5	3.1%
greater than 5	79	49.7%

¹ Kaiser Foundation (2010). Statehealthfacts.org Number of Dentists, 2009

² Georgia Department of Labor: Long-Term Occupational Projections, Statewide, 2006-2016

- MCG graduates on average 66 dentists per year and will be able to expand to 80 per year in 2011 and 100 per year by 2015 assuming the Education Commons is in place.
- MCG has expanded enrollment in recent years, but total enrollment remains well below achievable levels
 - 28% increase between 1985 and 2010
 - 52% increase from 2010 to 2015
- Per capita enrollment has declined but will recover when MCG's enrollment peaks at 100 per year
 - Despite growth in enrollment in recent years between 1985 and 2009, a total 24% loss in enrollment occurred when factoring for population growth.



Expansion of MCG dental education to date:

- The USG has committed to expanding dental education to 100 dental students per class per year by 2015, creating a total enrollment at MCG of 400 pre-doctoral students, representing a 52% increase over 2010 enrollment.
 - Assuming population projections for Georgia in 2020 are accurate, this expansion would achieve a 3.28 ratio of dentistry student to 100,000 population, near the peak of MCG productivity in the mid-1980s.
- Numerous efforts are under way to enable this expansion
 - Expansion of teaching space
 - Construction of a new dental school building is under way, which will provide roughly 100,000 more square footage than the present building. Ribbon cutting is set for September 23, 2011.
 - Architectural renderings of an MCG Education Commons building include dental school classrooms.