

Improving oral health services for people with HIV through provider training and needs assessments in Arizona

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Introduction

Maintaining good oral Health is an important part of maintaining overall health, especially for people with HIV.

The Arizona and Los Angeles AETCs have been improving training and technical assistance efforts through collaborations for more than 15 years, including programs that assess and address the needs of HIV oral health providers.

Activities & Methods

A standard 3-hour training for Arizona-based oral health care providers was delivered in bi-annually, first in May of 2018 in Tucson and then in February of 2020 in Phoenix.

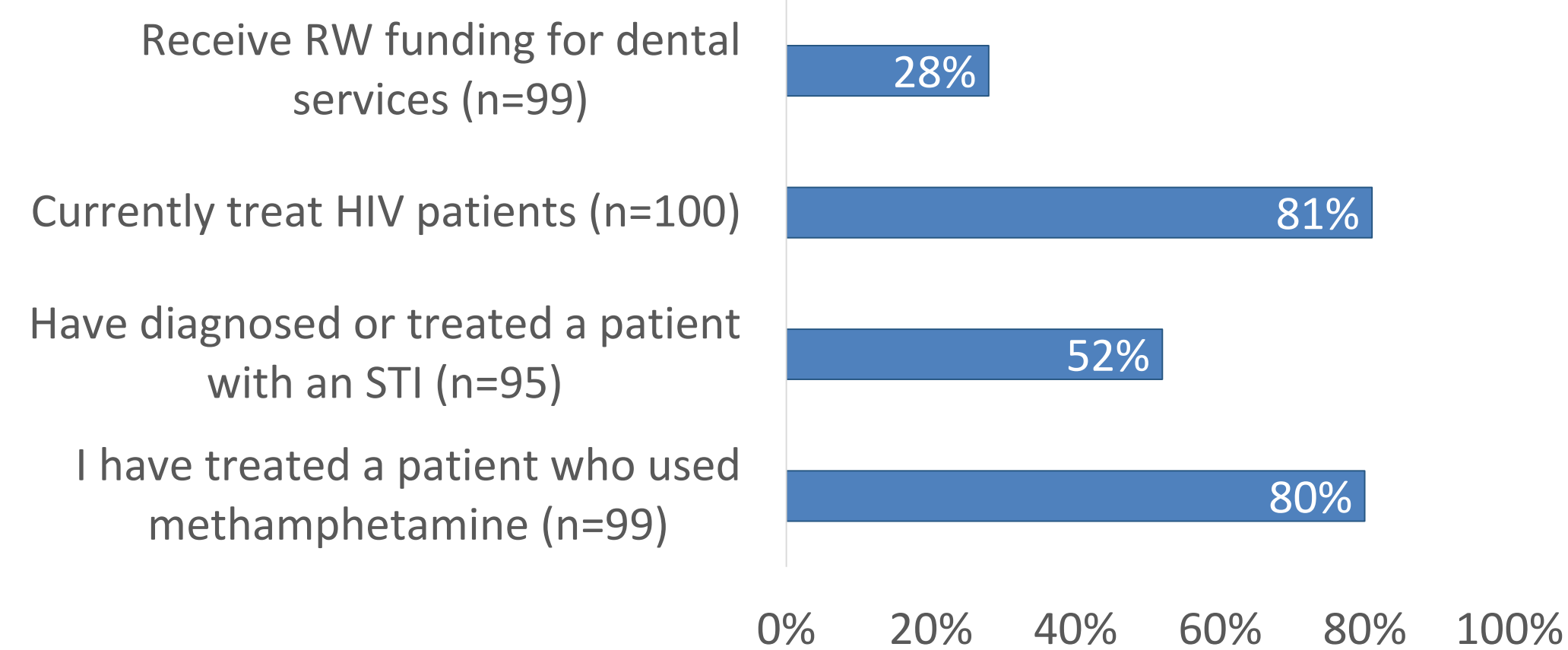
Dr. Fariba Younai DDS, PAETC Oral Health Training Director, presented a workshop on HIV and co-morbidities which covered topics on the role of the oral health provider in the prevention and management of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). A local representative shared information on Ryan White benefits and resources for medical and support services within the community.

Dinner and dental Continuing Education Credits (CEUs) were provided to all in attendance free of charge.

A short needs assessment was conducted with participants, using audience response software to anonymously poll the providers in attendance.

Results

Provider Type	Tucson, 2018 (n=59)	Phoenix, 2020 (n=42)
Dentist	15%	60%
Dental Hygienist	69%	33%
Dental Assistant	10%	2%
Other	6%	5%



67%
agree that oral health providers should refer patients to PrEP services (n=100)

19%
Know of PrEP providers to whom they can refer patients (n=96)

79%
agree that oral health providers should refer patients to substance use treatment services. (n=101)

37%
Know of substance use treatment services to whom they can refer patients. (n=99)

Challenges & Limitations

These data were collected anonymously through Audience Response System (ARS) electronic 'clickers' before both training events and represent information and opinions of providers motivated to attend a HIV training.

As the 2018 and 2020 trainings were held in Tucson and Phoenix, respectively, these responses are not representative of the entire state of Arizona and largely exclude oral health providers from rural areas.

Lessons Learned/Next Steps

- 1) There is an interest in and need for HIV trainings among oral health providers.
- 2) AETCs have a role in assessing and addressing HIV-related training needs of oral health providers.
- 3) Oral health providers can improve the HIV care continuum by referring patients to PrEP, STI treatment, and testing services. There is a need for linkage between oral health and HIV and STI prevention services.
- 4) Oral health providers could contribute to improvements in the HIV care continuum by referring patients to services Substance Use Disorder treatment (including MAT) and prevention services.
- 5) Results of this assessment underscore the importance of AETC efforts to continue to provide updated trainings for dental providers and identify needs to be considered in future trainings and prevention services.