


Benefits of Medical-Dental Integration for Medical Residents, Providers, and Patients



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BACKGROUND

Integration of dental providers into primary care improves access to dental care for underserved populations and reinforces that oral health is a part of overall health. The North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services (NDHHS) Oral Health Program (OHP) placed a public health hygienist (PHH) into the University of North Dakota (UND) Center for Family Medicine (CFM) residency program to address patients’ oral health needs and to educate medical residents on the importance of clinical dental screenings and referrals.

METHODS

Medical residents were surveyed before and after participating in the program. The deidentified patient data measured the clinical reach of the program by tracking patients screened, referred, and with a dental home.

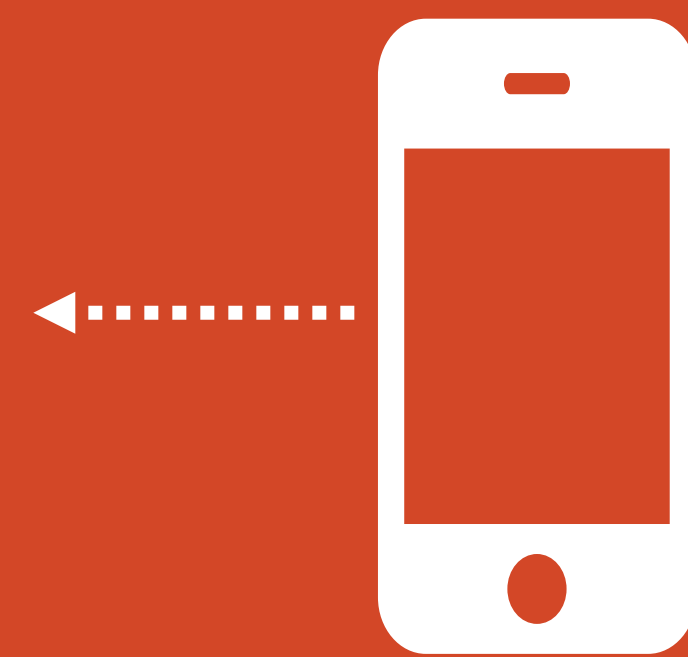
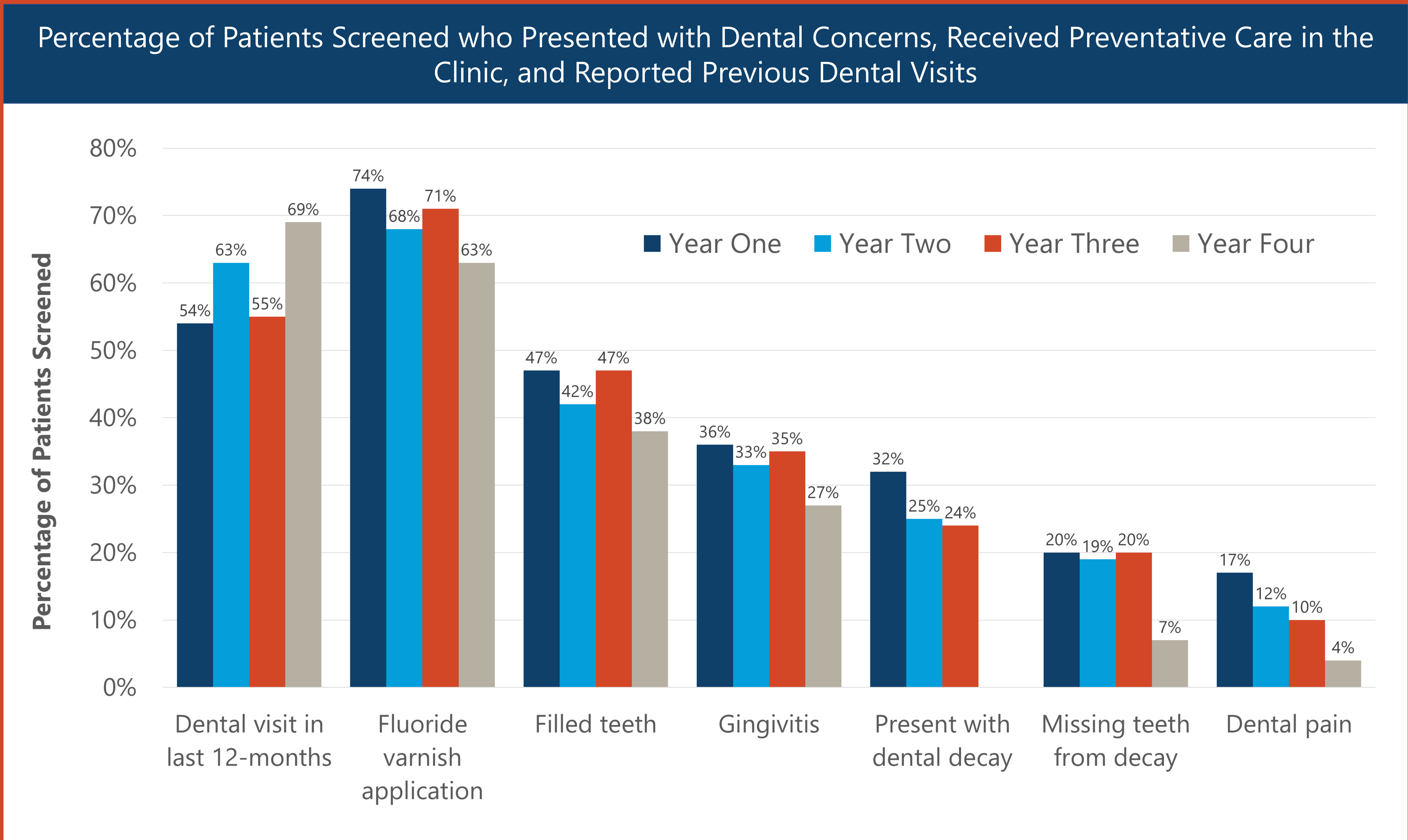
CLINICAL RESULTS

In 30 months of service, the PHH completed dental screenings in the primary care clinic. Over four years of grant activities, the PHH was actively providing preventative oral health services. In that time:

- 1,385 patients received an oral health screen, 22% had never visited a dental office
- 1,320 received dental hygiene education from the PHH
- 465 of the patients were referred for follow-up dental care



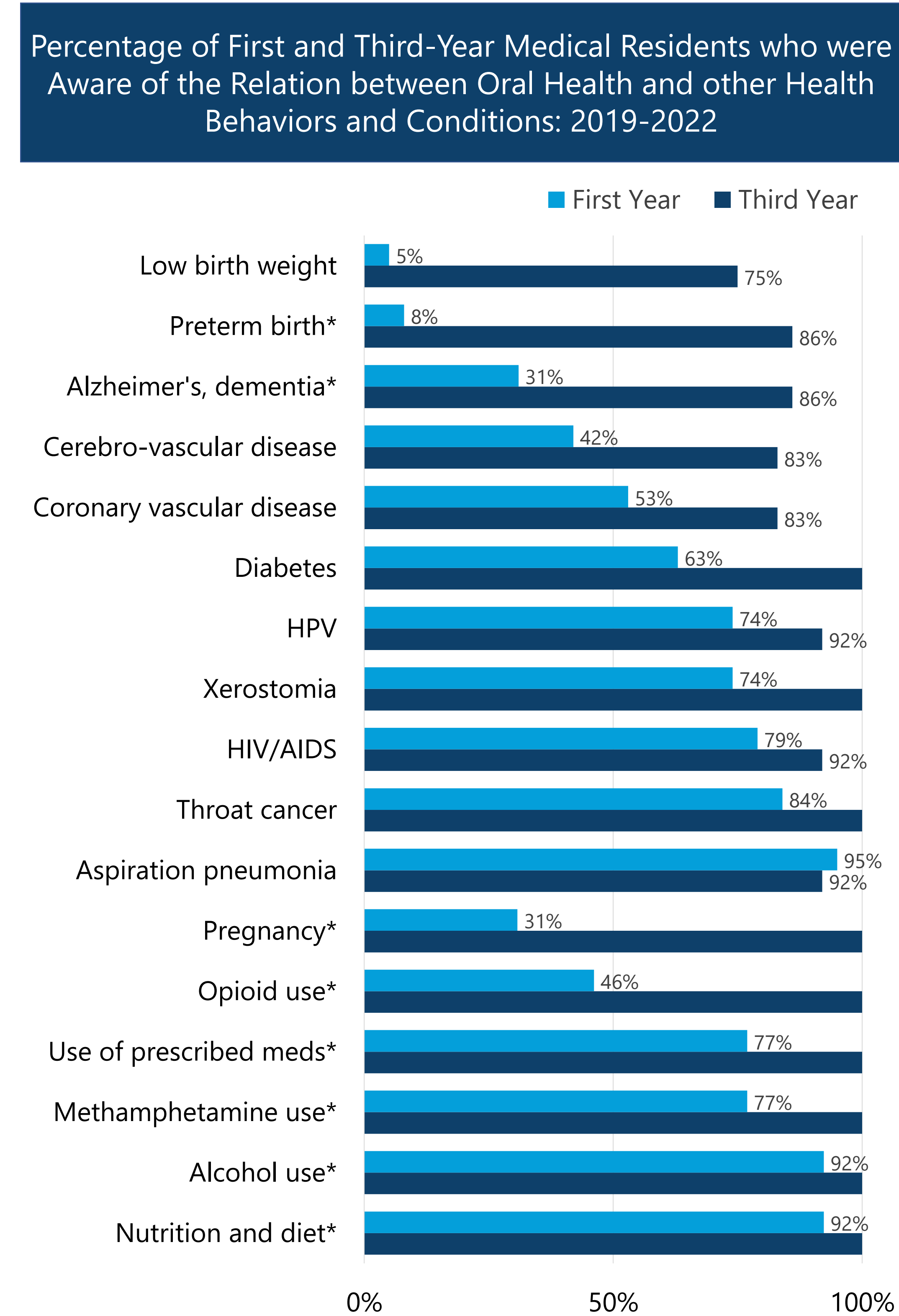
The medical-dental integration project **increased access** to dental screenings, fluoride varnish, and oral health education for patients, as well as **increased oral health knowledge among medical residents** practicing at the facility.



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TRAINING RESULTS

Completing medical residency in a facility that integrates medical and dental care had a positive impact on the oral health knowledge and experience of medical providers. Third-year residents indicated they were either confident or somewhat confident in their ability to now identify cavities, gingivitis, periodontal disease, and gingival hyperplasia.



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