

Brief Report on Massachusetts Dental Intern Limited License & Dental Faculty License, 2025

Background

In order to obtain a full dental license, Massachusetts, like most U.S. states, requires graduation from a dental school accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA), which includes schools in the U.S. and Canada, and several additional schools. Those who have graduated from schools outside the U.S. and Canada which are not CODA-accredited, often referred to as foreign-trained dentists must pursue an advanced standing program, typically two years leading to a DDS or DMD, to obtain a full license.¹ Currently, Massachusetts has a unique model in place for more than 20 years which allows foreign-trained dentists to work at community health centers or dental schools. This model has helped address the significant shortage of dentists within community clinics and help improve access to oral care among vulnerable populations in Massachusetts. In 2021, foreign-trained dentists helped provide over 600,000 patient visits a year at community health centers to help those in need.² Foreign-trained dentists serve as faculty at many dental institutions in Massachusetts and continue to fill in critical roles educating budding dental professionals.

Foreign-trained dentists can apply for the dental intern limited license in Massachusetts to work as a dentist in community health centers without requiring an additional US dental degree. Additionally, they could be appointed as faculty at universities/institutions within Massachusetts and apply for the full-time dental faculty license. **This is a brief report highlighting the details of dental intern limited license holders and faculty dental license holders within Massachusetts.** This report will help us understand the extent of current data on foreign-trained dentists in Massachusetts. The report would also potentially serve as an example to other states on how expanding dental licenses to foreign-trained dentists can help fill in the dental provider gaps.

Methods

Dental license records were accessed from the Massachusetts Health Professions License Verification Site (<https://checkahealthlicense.mass.gov/export>). This

public verification site provides information on health licenses and registrations issued by the Bureau of Health Professions Licensure (BHPL) of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH). The dental intern limited license report includes data until August 8, 2025. The dental full-time faculty license report was accessed on September 9, 2025. The data was analyzed using MS Excel and R Studio.

Results

Dental Intern Limited License

From July 2001 to August 2025, there were a total of 7,786 one-year dental intern limited licenses provided in MA to 3295 foreign-trained dentists (*Table 1 and 2*). Out of those, 470 dentists held a current license for the year of 2025 (*Table 1*) and 205 professionals practiced in community health centers providing dental treatment (*Table 2*). As the dental intern limited license is only issued for one year, the dentists had to renew their license every year in order to continue practice. We looked at how many times did each current dentist working at community health center renew their license in order to understand how long they practiced. While majority of the dentists tend to renew their license for either 1 year (34.7%) or 2-5 years (34.2%), some of them have also renewed it for 16+ years (16.1%) (*Table 4*), with the maximum renewal time being 22 years. As some dentists might change their job and work at different health center, we also observed how long did they practice at the same health center they currently hold their license at. We noticed a similar pattern with most of them working at their current health center for either 1 year (37.6%) or 2-5 years (37.6%) (*Table 5*). Out of the 31 dentists holding the license for 16+ years, 14 of them have been practicing at the same health center for 16+ years. Further, we also analyzed how many dental intern limited license holders practice at each community health center within MA (*See appendix*). Community Health Connections has the most dental providers with the dental intern limited license (N=24; 11.7%).

Table 1. License status for all professionals with dental intern limited license (includes CHCs, University clinics and others as well).

License Status	Overall (N = 7786)	CHC (N=2624)
Expired	6091	2058
Void	1215	357
Current	470	205
Deceased	8	2
Suspension, Expired	1	1
Non-Disciplinary Condition, Expired	1	1

Table 2. Types of clinics where dental intern limited license holders work.

Clinic Type	All Licenses July 2001- Aug 2025 (N = 7682*)	License holders (actual number of individuals) (N=3295)	Current License holders as of Aug 2025 (N = 470)
University clinic	4183	2086	215 (45.7%)
CHC (Community Health Center)	2624	753	205 (43.6%)
Hospital	748	393	30 (6.4%)
Private clinic	72	43	14 (3.0%)
Research Center	45	17	2 (0.4%)
Other County or city programs	10	3	1 (0.2%)

*Missing values due to missing clinical address.

Table 2. Number of years licenses renewed* and number of years working at current clinic for current dental intern limited license holders at CHCs.

License renewal	Years Licenses Renewed (N=193) ^	Years at Current Clinic (N=205)
Mean (SD)	5.83 (6.51)	4.45 (5.06)
Median [Min, Max]	2.00 [1.00, 22.0]	2.00 [1.00, 22.0]
1 year	67 (34.7%)	77 (37.6%)
2-5 years	66 (34.2%)	77 (37.6%)
6-10 years	20 (10.4%)	23 (11.2%)

11-15 years	9 (4.7%)	14 (6.8%)
16+ years	31 (16.1%)	14 (6.8%)

* Defined as how many times did the current license holders renew their license/how many years did they have a license.

^ Includes only unique current license holders (removed duplicates who have two current licenses).

Dental Full-Time Faculty License

There were a total of 1,880 professionals with a dental full-time faculty license from the period November 2003 to September 2025 (*Table 7*). Out of those, 117 currently hold a faculty license for the year 2025 (*Table 8*). The data initially included professionals who held a faculty license at universities, research institute as well as community health centers. After excluding licensees at community health centers, there are 113 professionals with faculty license at universities and research institutions (*Table 9*). Out of those, majority (36.3%) work at Boston University School of Dental Medicine followed by Tufts University School of Dental Medicine (35.4%) (*Table 9*). The faculty license is also only issued for one year. Majority of the dentists renewed their license for either 2-5 years (38.9%) or 1 year (34.5%) (*Table 10*). Some of them have also renewed it for 16+ years (7.1%) with the maximum renewal time being 19 years (*Table 10*). Similarly, most of the professionals work at their current university for 2-5 years (40.7%) (*Table 11*).

Table 3. License status for all professionals with dental full-time faculty license (includes all clinic types).

License Status	Overall (N = 1887)
Expired	1507 (79.9%)
Void	245 (13%)
Current	117 (6.2%)
Deceased	18 (1.0%)

Table 4. Types of clinics for dental full-time faculty license holders working only at university clinics and affiliated locations.

University	All licenses Nov 2003 – Sept 2025 (N = 1880)*	License holders (actual number of individuals) (N = 455)	Current dental full-time faculty license holders as of Sept 2025 (N=117)
Boston Children's Hospital	40	12	5
Boston Medical Center	2	-	1
Boston University - Charles River Medical Practice	3	-	2
Boston University School of Medicine	2	1	2
Boston University SDM	663	153	41
Brigham & Women's Hospital	22	3	2
Forsyth Institute	100	21	4
Harvard School of Dental Medicine	253	56	16
Tufts University SDM	684	187	40
Other (details in appendix)	111	22	4

* Excluded individuals with missing/inaccurate addresses reported for dental clinics.

Table 5. Number of years licenses renewed* and number of years working at current clinic for current faculty license holders at universities.

	Years Licenses Renewed (N=113)	Years at Current Clinic (N=113)
License renewal		
Mean (SD)	4.54 (4.78)	4.11 (4.44)
Median [Min, Max]	3.00 [1.00, 19.0]	2.00 [1.00, 19.0]
1 year	39 (34.5%)	41 (36.3%)
2-5 years	44 (38.9%)	46 (40.7%)
6-10 years	15 (13.3%)	14 (12.4%)
11-15 years	7 (6.2%)	6 (5.3%)
16+ years	8 (7.1%)	6 (5.3%)

* Defined as how many times did the current license holders renew their license/how many years did they have a license.

Discussion

In 2025, there were 205 dentists with a Massachusetts dental intern limited license practicing at community health centers. Most of them tend to renew their license for 1-5 years but some of them have also renewed it for 16+ years. While some chose to work at the same community health center for 16+ years, others transitioned to another health center. Some dentists also held two current dental licenses to work at two different community health centers at the same time.

The universities and research institutions in Massachusetts employed 113 dentists with Massachusetts faculty license in 2025. Majority worked at Boston University School of Dental Medicine followed by Tufts University School of Dental Medicine, both located in Boston. There was similar pattern of renewal for faculty licenses as dental intern limited licenses – with most of them renewing their license for 1-5 years and preferring to be employed at the same institution for that period.

There are certain limitations with this study. As any dental professional (graduates from CODA accredited, non-CODA accredited programs, or foreign-trained dentists) with confirmation of faculty appointment at an institution can apply for faculty license, we are unable to know specifically how many of those were foreign-trained dentists with a faculty license.

Appendix

Table 1. CHCs with current dental intern limited license holders.

Parent CHC	No. of dental centers	Limited license holders (N = 205)
Brockton Neighborhood Health Center https://www.bnhc.org	2	10 (4.9%)
Cambridge Health Alliance https://www.challiance.org	3	7 (3.4%)
Caring Health Center https://caringhealth.org	5	10 (4.9%)
Charles River Community Health https://www.charlesriverhealth.org	2	7 (3.4%)
CHP Berkshires https://chpberkshires.org	3	7 (3.4%)
Codman Square Health Center https://www.codman.org	1	5 (2.4%)
Community Health Center of Cape Cod	3	3 (1.5%)

https://chcofcapecod.org		
Community Health Center of Franklin County https://www.chcfc.org	3	6 (2.9%)
Community Health Connections https://chcfhc.org	5	24 (11.7%)
Dimock Community Health Center https://dimock.org	1	4 (2.0%)
DotHouse Health https://www.dorchesterhouse.org	1	1 (0.5%)
Edward M Kennedy Community Health Center https://www.kennedychc.org	4	10 (4.9%)
Family Health Center of Worcester https://fhcw.org	1	4 (2.0%)
Fenway Health https://fenwayhealth.org	1	6 (2.9%)
Harbor Health Services https://hhsi.us	4	11 (5.4%)
Harvard Street Neighborhood Health Center https://harvardstreet.org	2	3 (1.5%)
HealthFirst Family Care Center https://www.healthfirstfr.org	1	5 (2.4%)
Hilltown Community Health Center https://www.hchcweb.org	4	5 (2.4%)
Holyoke Health https://hhcinc.org/dental/	4	16 (7.8%)
Island Health Care https://www.ihimv.org	1	2 (1.0%)
Lowell Community Health Center https://www.lchealth.org	1	4 (2.0%)
Lynn Community Health Center https://lynnchc.org	1	20 (9.8%)
Mattapan Community Health Center https://www.mattapanchc.org/services/dental	1	2 (1.0%)
NeighborHealth https://neighborhealth.com/en/	2	5 (2.4%)
New Bedford Community Health https://gnbchc.org	1	4 (2.0%)
New Health https://newhealthcenter.org	2	3 (1.5%)
North Shore Community Health https://www.nschi.org	3	4 (2.0%)
Upham's Corner Health Center https://uphamscornerhealthcenter.org/services-programs/dental/	1	5 (2.4%)
Whittier Street Health Center	2	12 (5.9%)

https://www.wshc.org		
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Highlighted have additional school-based centers providing dental services as well.

Table 2. Types of clinics where all professionals held their dental full-time faculty licenses. (appendix)

Clinic type	Overall license holders Nov 2003 – Sept 2025 (N = 1880)*	License holders (actual number of individuals)	Current license holders as of Sept 2025 (N = 117)
Tufts University SDM	684	187	40
Boston University SDM	663	154	41
Harvard School of Dental Medicine	253	56	16
Forsyth Institute	100	21	4
Boston Children's Hospital	40	12	5
Geiger Gibson Community Health Center	29	5	3
Brigham & Women's Hospital	22	3	2
Harvard Street Neighborhood Health Center	17	1	1
Family Health Center	13	1	-
Codman Square Health Center	11	2	-
Dorchester House Health Center	11	3	-
Lynn Community Health Center	8	3	-
Mid Upper Cape Community Health Center	5	1	-
Uphams Corner Health Center	4	1	-
Boston University - Charles River Medical Practice	3	-	2
Chelsea School Dental Center	3	-	-
Caring Health Center	3	-	-
Boston University School of Medicine	2	1	2
Holyoke Health Center	2	2	-
Whittier Street Health Center	2	1	-
Massachusetts General Hospital	2	1	-
Boston Medical Center	2	-	1
Harbor Health Services	1	1	-

* Excluded individuals with missing/inaccurate addresses reported for dental clinics.

References:

1. Foreign-Educated Students. Default. Accessed February 23, 2026.
<https://www.adea.org/godental/Apply/admissions-process/nontraditional-applicants/foreign-educated-dentists>
2. Myron Allukian Jr. Foreign Educated Dentists (FEDs)- An Untapped National Resource. *J Hisp Dent Assoc.* 2021;Volume 1(Issue 1):Pages 19-32.

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