



# MULTNOMAH COUNTY

## FY 2023 Budget Work Session Follow Up – Health Department Overview

### Health Department - Integrated Clinical Services – May 31, 2022

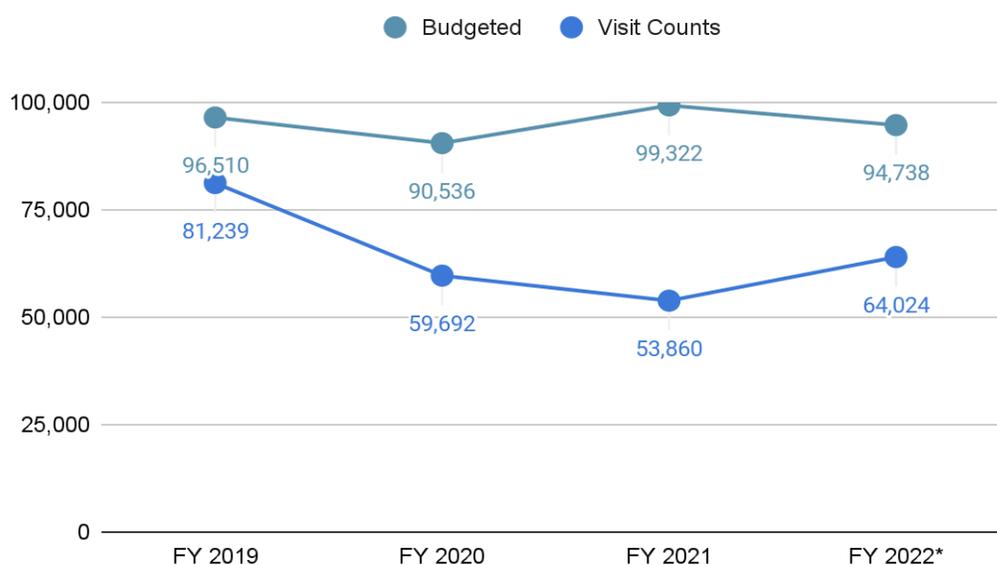
#### Question 1

Commissioner Jayapal (District 2): Can you provide a visualization of the longer term structural deficit that is seen in our dental care (for example, trend information about visits and the workforce)?

#### Response:

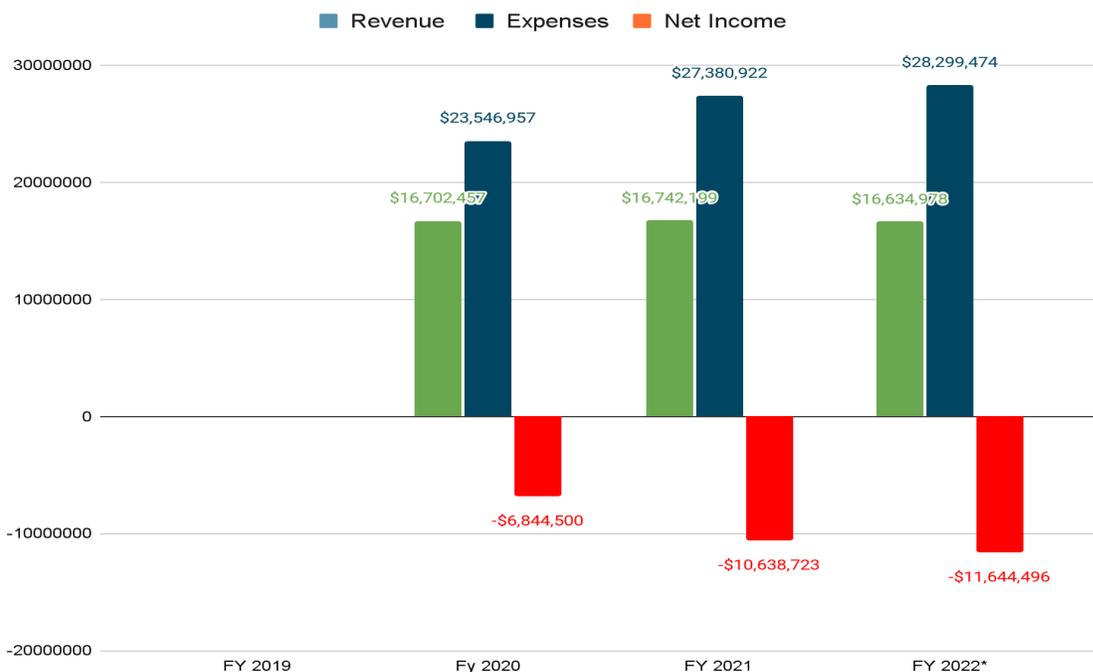
For the past four years, our dental program set a goal to see between 90,000 - 99,000 visits per year based on anticipated staffing and patient demand. While we have nearly 50K dental patients who are assigned for our dental services, we have been unable to see this anticipated total due to reduced volume of patients year over year and the ongoing workforce shortages in the expanded function dental assistant (EFDA) classification. When we are unable to maintain our dental workforce with this key role, we are not able to fully provide services, resulting in a gap between budgeted and actual dental visit counts.

#### Budgeted vs Actual Visits





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In 2021-2022, we had over 16 vacancies in the EDFA role. On average, these positions were vacant for more than 306 days. Seven positions have been vacant for more than a year. A national shortage in this classification has persisted for years, driven by declining training enrollments.

The graph below is from ADA's (American Dental Association) Health Policy institute - which tracks trends across the dental industry. The graph shows the declining Dental Assistant program enrollments across multiple years; the result is nationwide shortages. 2019 shows a small uptick, however the great resignation has delivered a blow that we have not recovered from.

A [May 2021 poll](#) that HPI conducted found that 35.8% of dental offices nationwide have open dental assistant positions on the team. The report also shows that the majority of hiring dentists have raised the pay rates for dental assistants since the pandemic began, with 73.1% of dentists increasing pay for assistants.



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