

# Exploring How MCH Training Programs Incorporate Transition to Adulthood for YSCHN in Their Curricula

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## Background

The Life Course perspective highlights the transition to adulthood as a critical period of human development when the balance between risk and protective factors can have lifelong implications for health and quality of life.

The Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) identifies the transition to adulthood for youth with special health care needs (YSHCN) as a priority with its goal, "YSHCN will receive the necessary services to make the transition to adult life, including adult health care, work, and independence." Yet, in contrast to other MCHB goals for children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN) where considerable progress has been made, progress towards the transition goal has been remarkably difficult to achieve. According to the 2009-10 National Survey of Children with Special Health Care Needs, this goal is met for only 40% of YSHCN and this level has not changed since it was last assessed in 2005-06.

Progress towards achieving the transition goal for YSHCN will require an integration of efforts aimed at public policy and systems change, quality improvement in clinical and direct services, and education and training for youth, families, and professionals. In the area of training, little is known about the range of activities that Maternal and Child Health (MCH) training programs are engaged in to address the transition for YSHCN specifically through the preparation of the next generation of MCH professionals.

## Methods

The Directors of 99 long-term interdisciplinary and single-discipline training programs funded by MCHB were sent an electronic survey via e-mail to gather information and perceptions about each program's training related to transition to adulthood for YSHCN.

### MCHB-Funded Training Programs Surveyed

Training Program Type	Number of Programs
Communication Disorders	3
Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics (DBP)	10
Leadership Education in Adolescent Health (LEAH)	7
Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND)	43
Nursing	5
Nutrition	6
Pediatric Dentistry	3
Pediatric Pulmonary Centers (PPC)	6
Schools of Public Health (SPH)	13
Social Work	2
Total	99

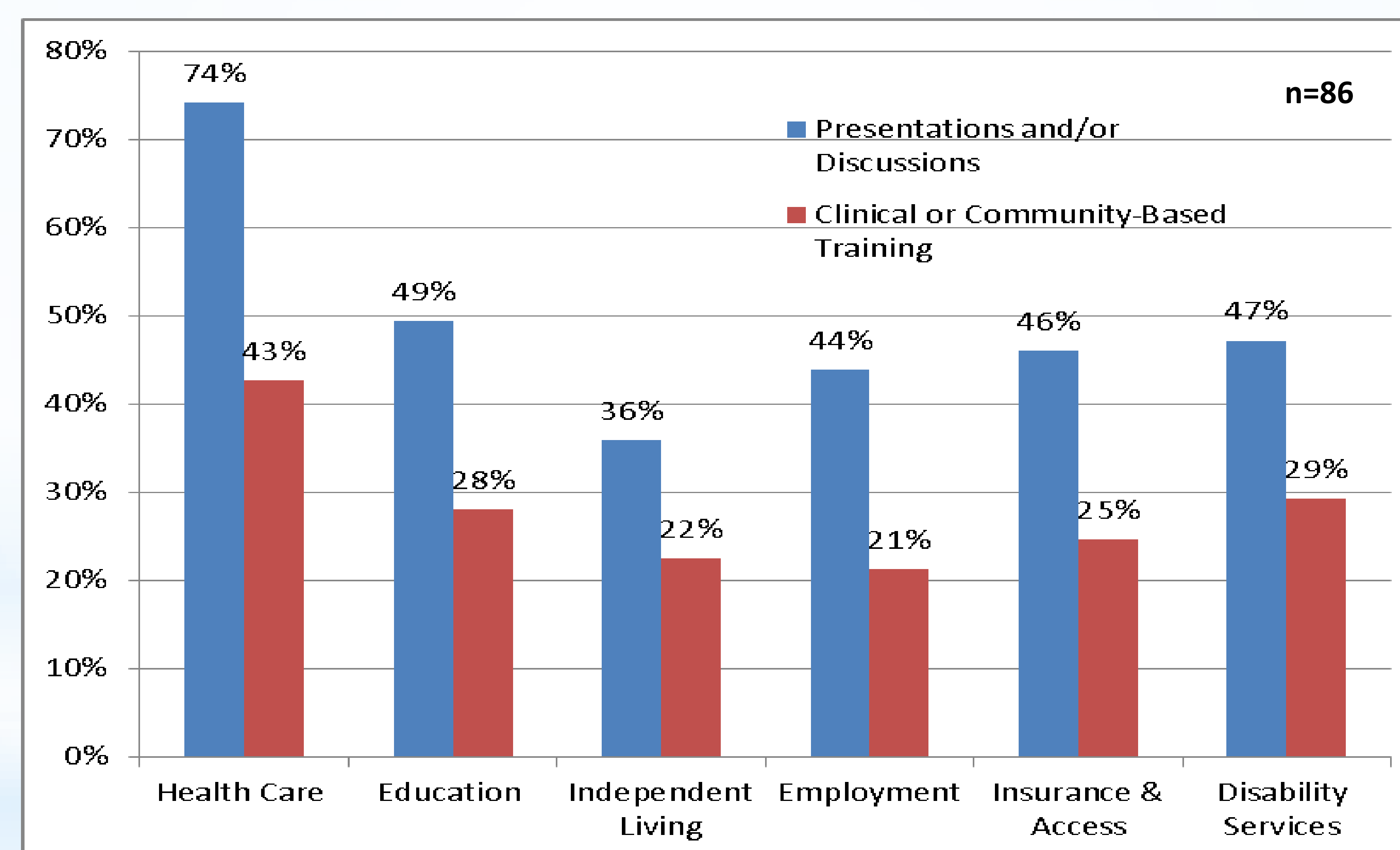
Of the 90 responses received, 4 were removed due to incomplete data or presumed duplicate data within a program. The remaining 86 responses were analyzed using STATA for a **response rate of 87%**.

## Results

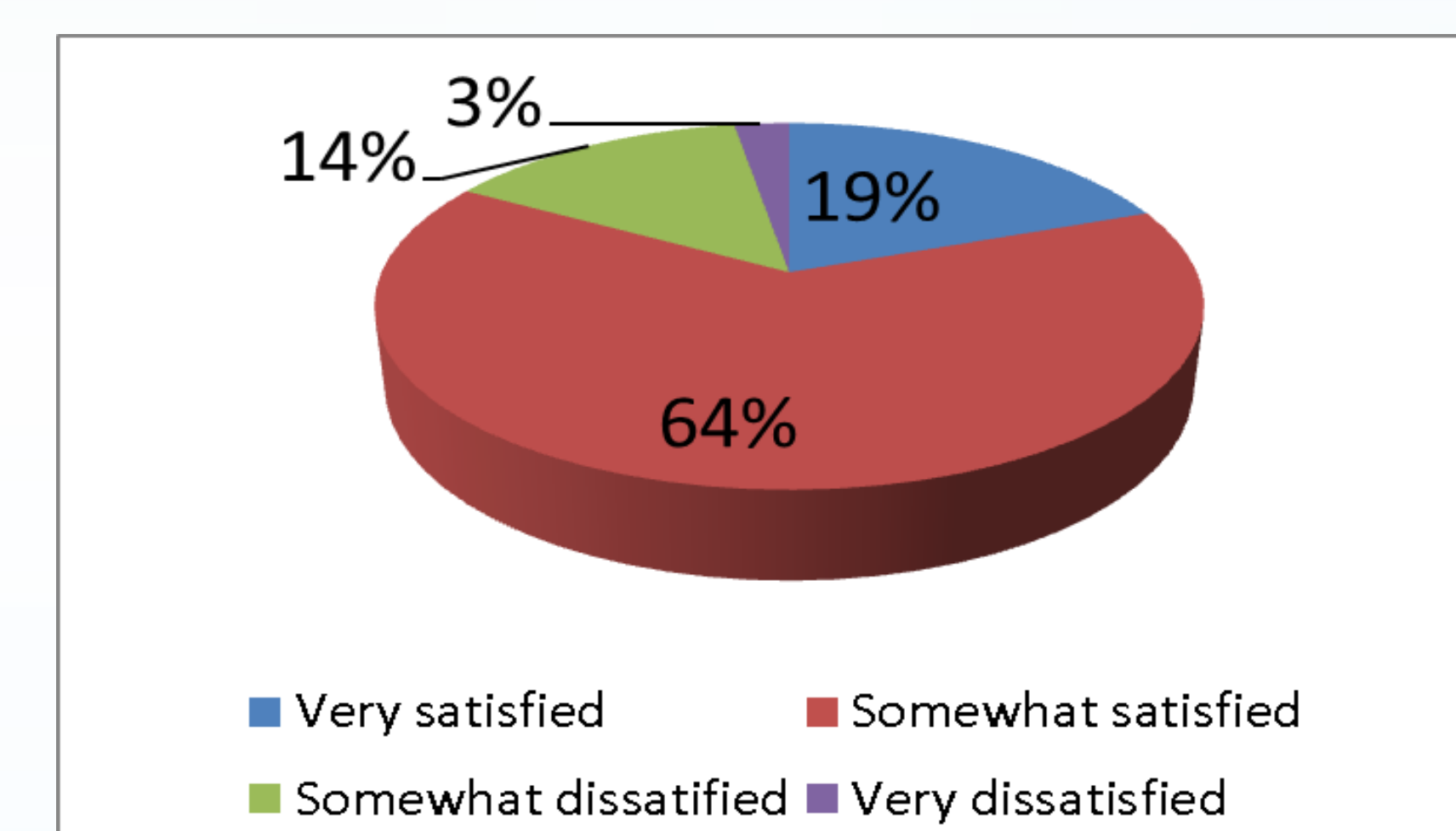
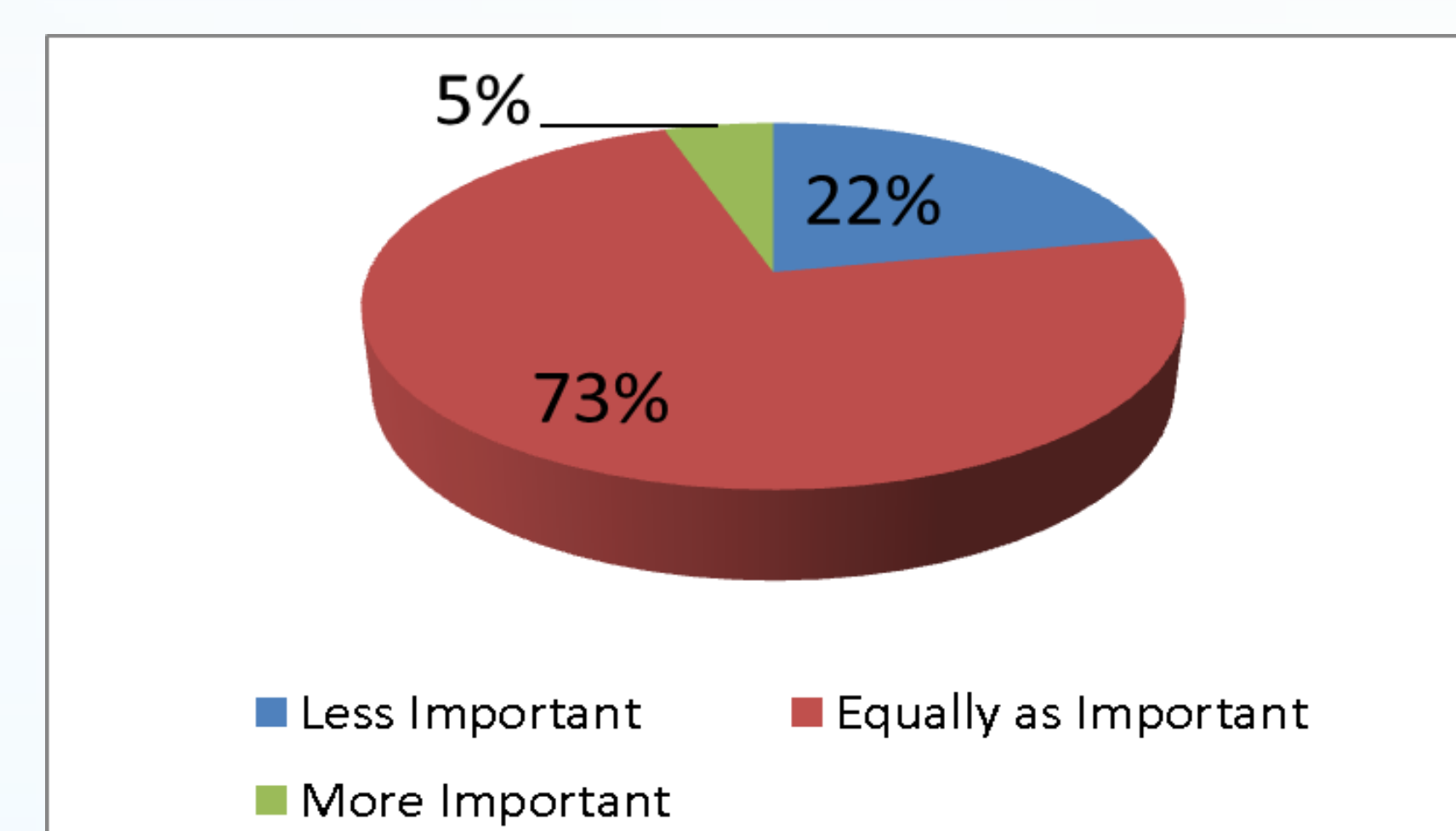
### How Programs Provide Training About Transition for YSHCN by Training Program Type

Training program type	Program has very little or nothing in curriculum	Program incorporates in a general way within curriculum	Program has specific presentations and/or discussions	Program has training opportunities in clinical or community venues	Total number of programs responding
Communication Disorders		2 (67%)	1 (33%)	1 (33%)	3
DBP		2 (29%)	6 (86%)	3 (43%)	7
LEAH		1 (14%)	4 (57%)	6 (86%)	7
LEND	2 (5%)	16 (38%)	32 (76%)	21 (50%)	42
Nursing		2 (50%)	4 (100%)	2 (50%)	4
Nutrition	1 (17%)	5 (83%)			6
Dentistry		1 (100%)	1 (100%)	1 (100%)	1
PPC		2 (29%)	5 (83%)	4 (67%)	6
SPH	1 (13%)	4 (50%)	3 (38%)		8
Social Work		2 (100%)		1 (50%)	2
Total	4 (5%)	37 (43%)	56 (65%)	39 (45%)	86

### Specific Transition Topics Addressed Through Presentations/Discussions and Clinical/Experiential Activities



### Importance of Transition and Satisfaction with Training



## Results (Cont'd)

### Challenges to Incorporating Transition within Curriculum

Of 72 Directors responding to open-ended questions:

- 57% cited **curricular and logistical factors** (time, competing priorities within the curriculum, and identifying critical content);
- 15% cited **faculty and trainee factors** (lack of faculty expertise, lack of faculty and trainee interest);
- 15% cited **clinical resource factors** (lack of clinical models, limited exposure to adolescents).

## Conclusions

Though identified as one of the key MCHB goals for CYSHCN and a topic of importance to the majority of Directors responding, less than 2/3 of all programs incorporate transition to adulthood for YSHCN in their curricula in a deliberate way, and fewer than half provide an experiential learning component on transition.

Health care transition is by far the transition topic most commonly addressed in MCH training programs, while other topics identified from a Life Course perspective as important to lifelong health and well-being such as education, employment, and independent living are much less frequently included in the curriculum and in experiential activities.

The transition to adulthood for YSHCN is an MCHB priority with content applicable across all currently funded training programs. This survey data demonstrates that there is a gap between the MCHB priority and the extent to which transition is incorporated within training.

### Implications and Opportunities

MCH training programs provided long-term training to over 2200 future MCH leaders in FY2010 and reached thousands more YSHCN and their families. These programs have an unparalleled opportunity to shape the health care system and public health practitioners of today and tomorrow.

Options for assuring that the leadership and workforce of tomorrow is prepared to support a healthy transition to adulthood include:

- Development of discipline specific competencies and entrustable professional activities;
- Inter-institution collaboration to develop training strategies;
- Intra-institution MCH program collaboration for cross program and interprofessional training, service and research.

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