

A man in a dark suit and white face mask is looking towards a woman with curly hair who is smiling and looking to the right. They appear to be in a professional meeting. The background is slightly blurred, showing what might be a computer monitor. The image has a dark green overlay and is decorated with large, semi-transparent green and blue circular shapes on the left and right sides.

ADA Communications Trend Report: 2024

Council on Communications

This Trend Report is intended to:



Help identify emerging issues from dentists and the public that may impact the reputation of the profession.



Serve as an additional input to national, state, and local dental society decision-makers engaged in reputation management and communications planning.



Help identify communication gaps between ADA efforts and member perceptions.

Methodology

The list below summarizes the surveys that were deployed by the ADA in late 2024. Key learnings from those surveys are highlighted in this report. More comprehensive results from these surveys are available upon request.

Dentist survey:

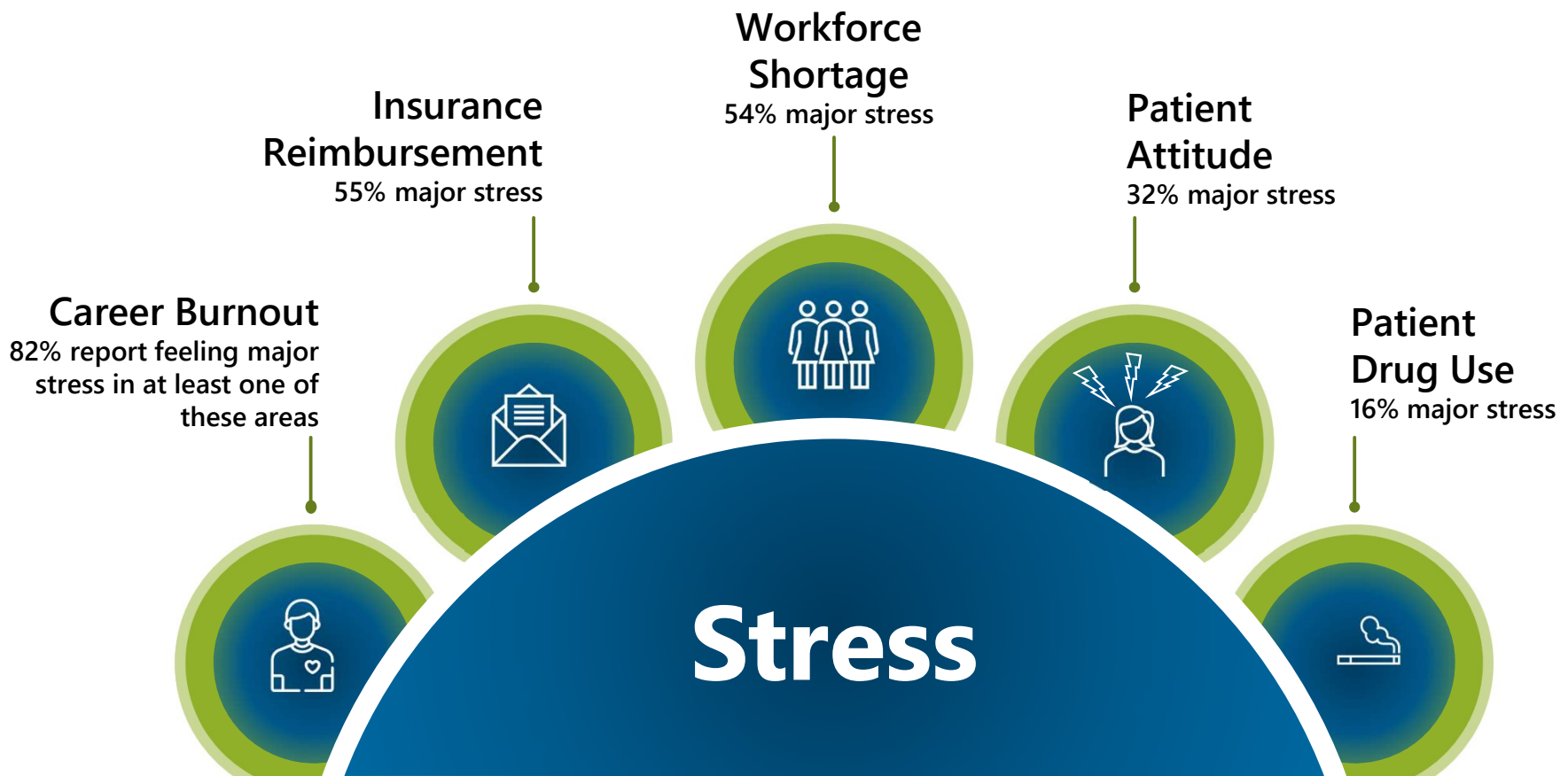
- **Dentist Trend Report Survey** – Online survey to the Advisory Circle research panel of ADA member dentists. Fielded in March-April 2024 with 560 respondents and a margin of error of +/- 4%.

Consumer survey:

- **Consumer Trend Report Survey** – Online survey to 1,008 consumers fielded in March 2024 with a margin of error +/- 3%. Responses were balanced to be representative of the U.S. population as a whole.



Practice Trends to Watch

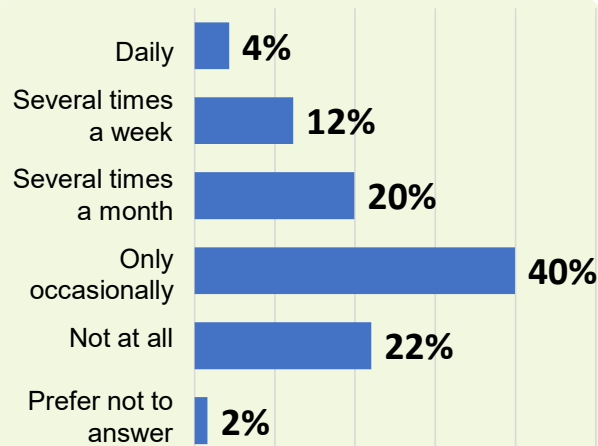




Career Burnout

82% of respondents reported feeling some type of “**major**” stress in their career.

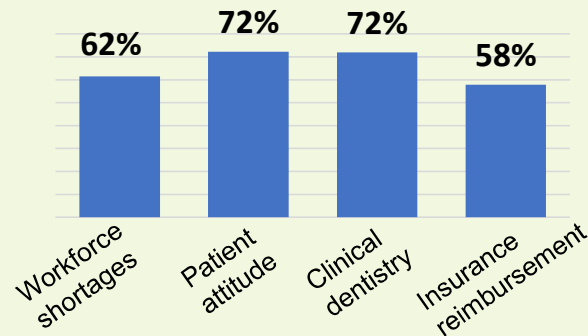
Over the past six months, how often have you felt defeated, wanted to quit dentistry or did not want to go to work?



58%

of dentists who reported ‘major’ career stress said they are considering changing careers or retiring early.

Stress Triggers



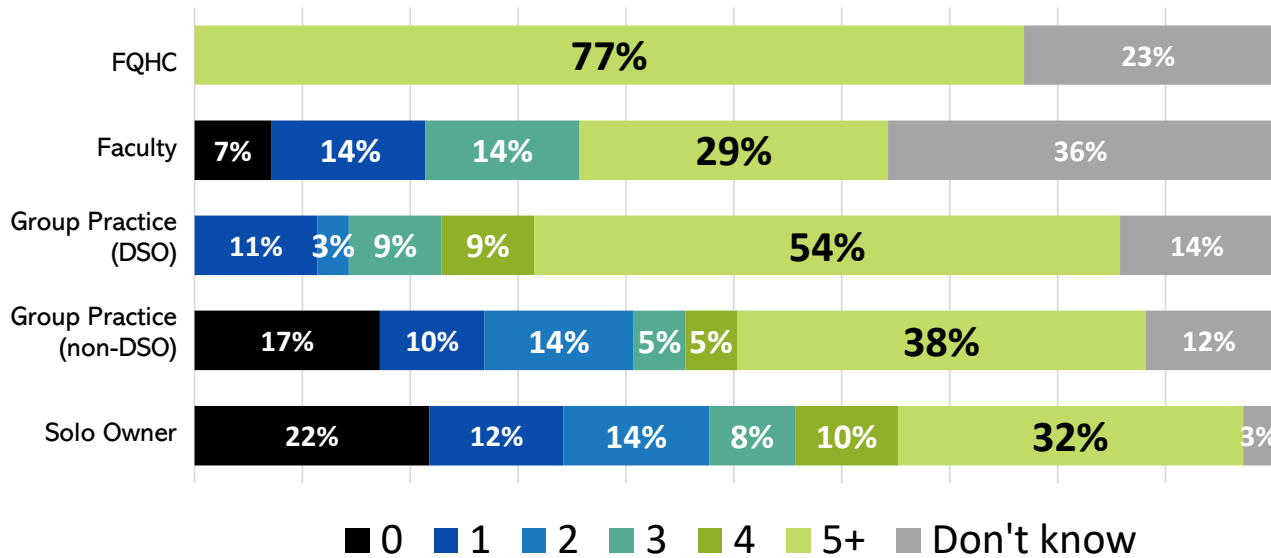
Visit
ADA.org/wellness
for mental, physical
and wellness support
and resources



Insurance Reimbursement

55% of respondents reported feeling “**major**” stress about insurance reimbursement.

How many insurance contracts are you in network with? - by Practice Setting



#1 stressor for dentists



36% have dropped one or more networks in the past year



#1 request for resource support from the ADA



Check out the Dental Insurance Resources on the [ADA website](#)





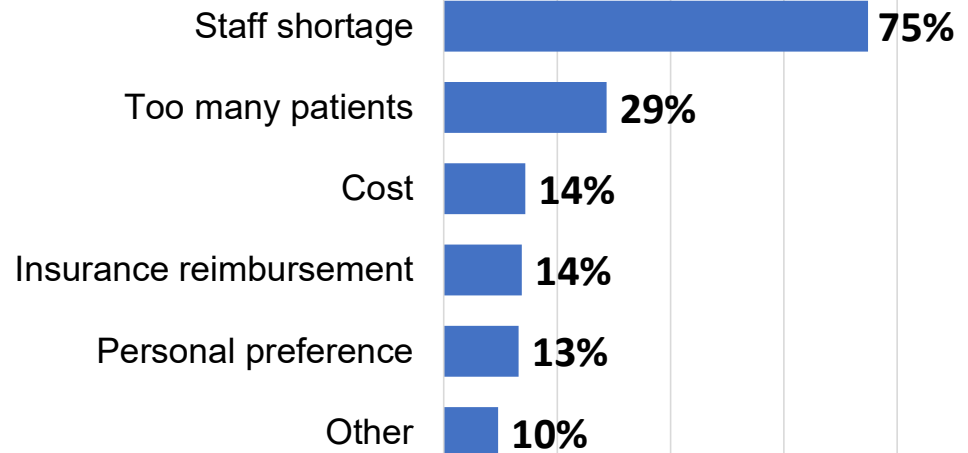
Workforce Shortage

According to HPI's Economic Outlook and Emerging Issues in Dentistry quarterly survey, over **72%** of dentists find it extremely challenging to recruit a dental hygienist, and **46%** find it extremely challenging to recruit a dental assistant.



30% of dentists are doing more hygiene procedures than before the pandemic

Why?

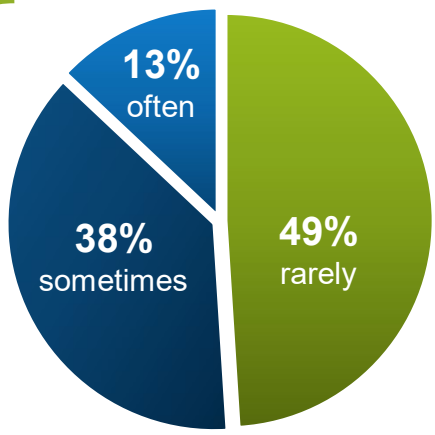




Patient Attitude

Dentists report experiencing increasingly aggressive behavior from patients since the pandemic. In this year's survey we examined the prevalence and solutions being explored by those most affected.

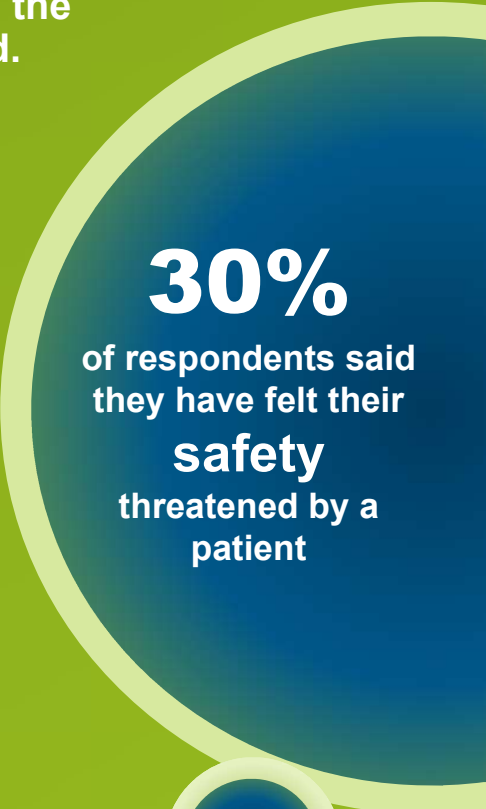
51%
of dentists
encounter
aggressive
patients in
their office



FQHCs, faculty and dentists in DSO settings experience it significantly more than other practice settings

How they handle aggressive patients:

1. Ask them to leave, seek service elsewhere
2. Diffuse with empathy and patience
3. Remain calm, respectful and professional
4. Accommodate as much as possible



Learn more about patient de-escalation on [ADA.org](https://www.ada.org)





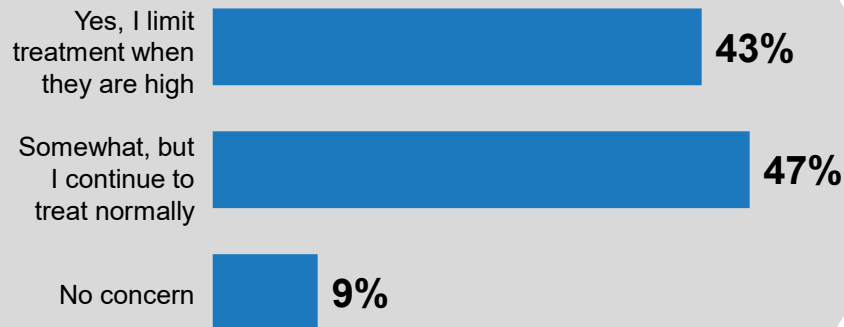
Patients Under the Influence of a Drug

60% of respondents report marijuana being legal in their state, which is impacting the practice of dentistry.

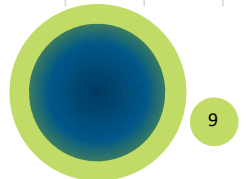
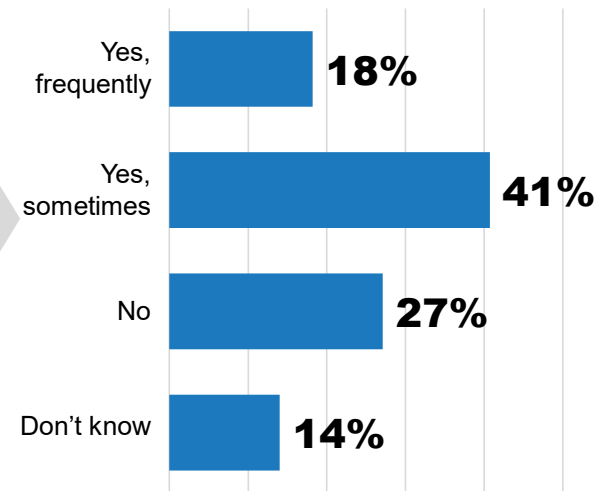
38%
reported seeing more patients under the influence than a year ago

56%
Now ask about marijuana use on their medical history form

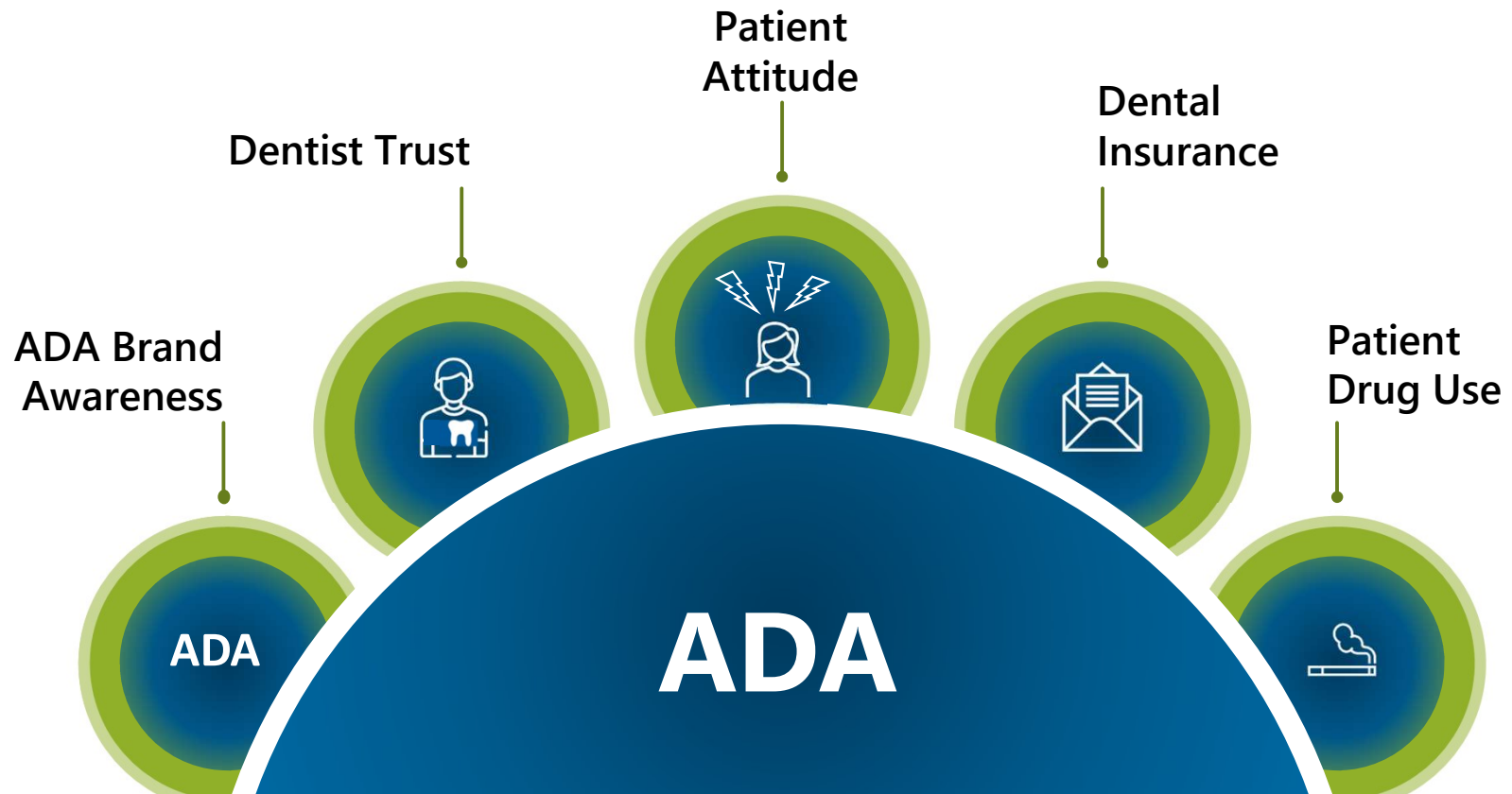
Does this cause you any concern regarding liability on consent for treatment?



Do you have to alter/increase anesthesia in order to effectively treat these patients?



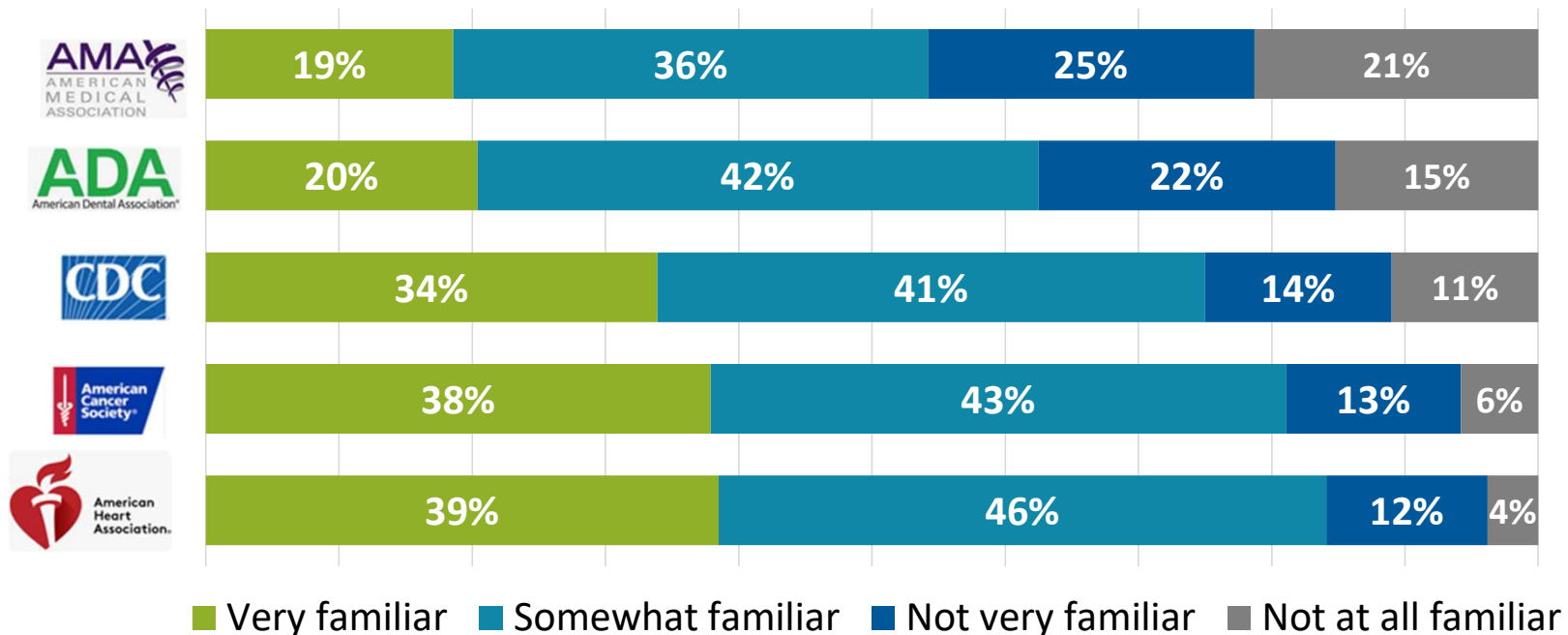
Consumer Trends to Watch



ADA

Opportunity to Increase Awareness of ADA

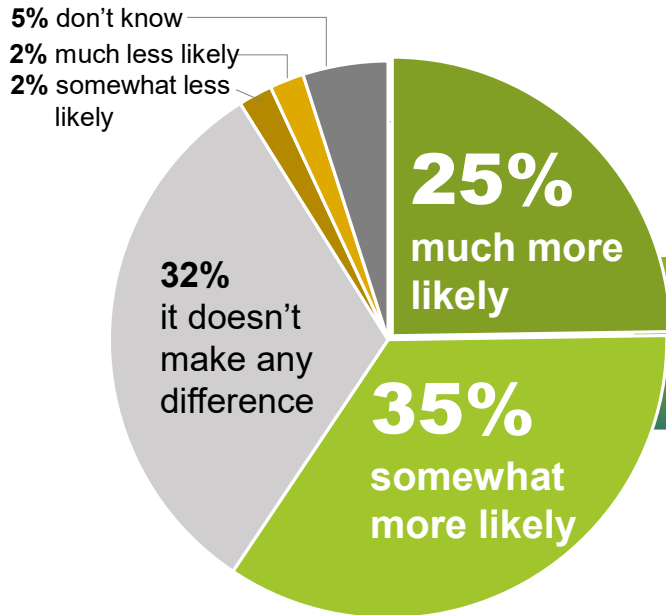
Consumers were shown logos and asked to select the top 2-3 brands they are most familiar with. Awareness of the ADA increased over 2023 results, but it's still relatively low compared to other brands.



ADA

ADA Seal

60% of consumers are more likely to buy a product with the ADA Seal.



Why?

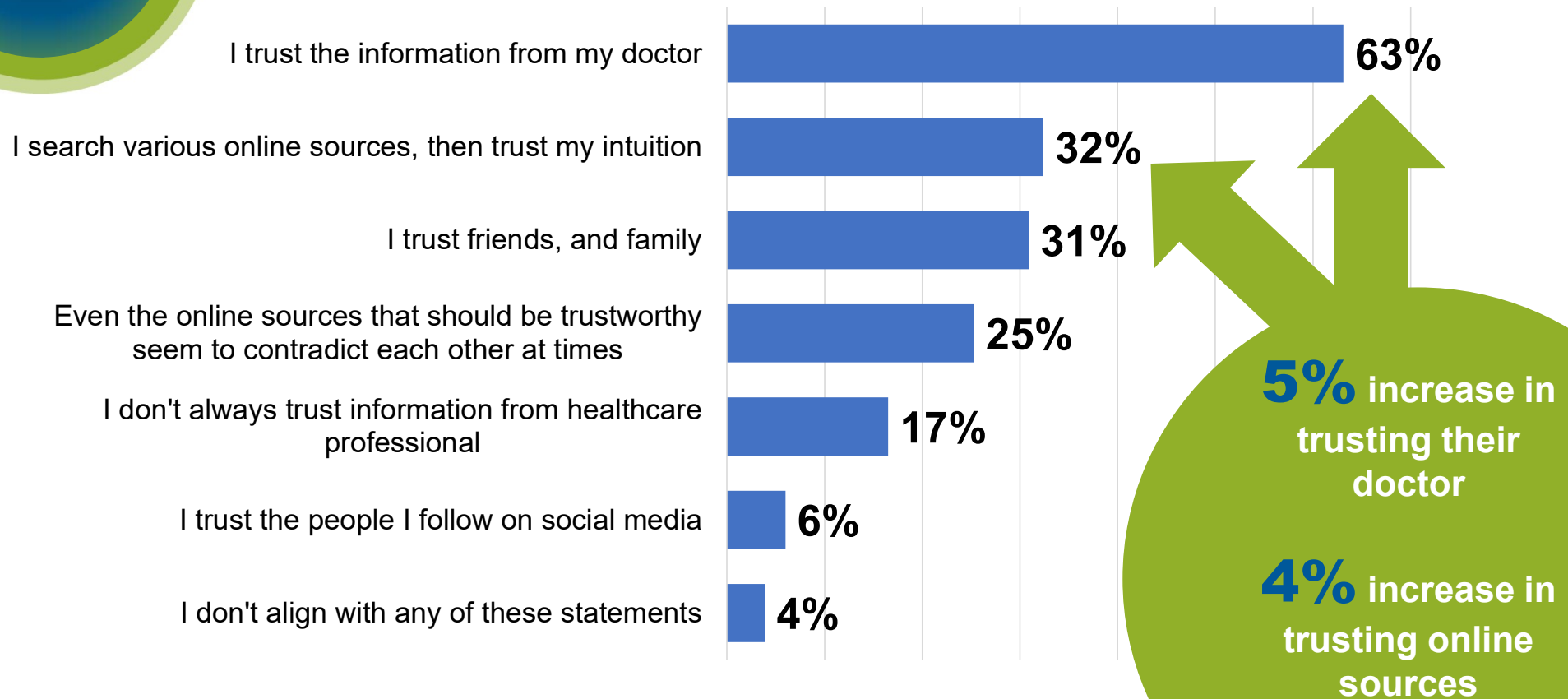


1. Trust the ADA approval/endorsement
2. It's supported by research
3. It's dentist approved
4. It's safe and authentic



Where Consumers Seek Health Information

(They could select all that apply)





Choosing and Retaining a Dentist

57% of respondents say they have a preferred dentist
44% say they have visited a dentist in the past 6 months
19% say they have visited a dentist in the past 7-12 months

Older, more affluent and higher educated patients see a dentist significantly more than others

Choose a dentist through friends and family referral

36%

Have not seen a dentist in 2 years
Cost is the #1 reason

47%

48%

Have visited their dentist's website

Say reviews impact their choice in selecting a dentist
73% trust Google

59%

#1 reason they stay with their dentist

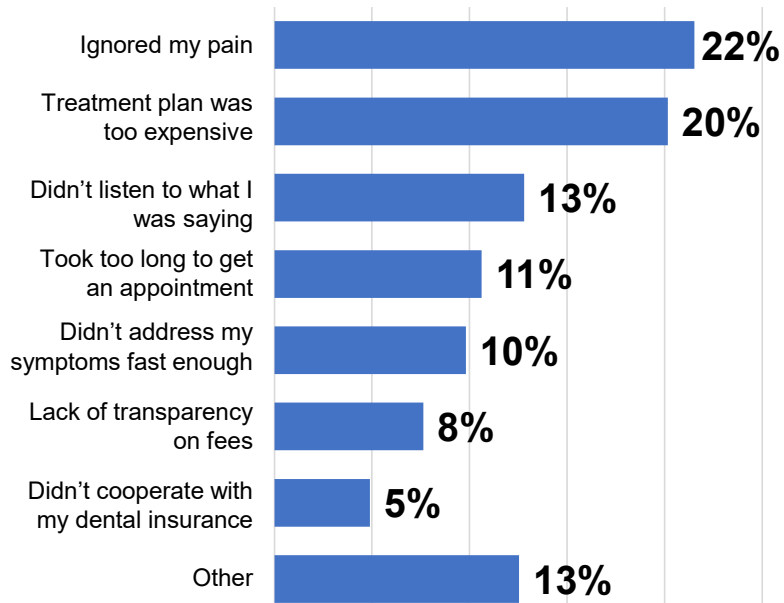
Trust



Patient Attitude

Consumer feedback validated dentists' perception of patient frustration, although consumers self-reported less than what dentists experience

What was the cause of your frustration?



How did you address your frustration?

1. Switched to a different dentist
2. Tried to talk it over in person
3. I did nothing
4. I complained about the issue
5. I got over it

36%
of consumers
report having
been frustrated
with their
dentist

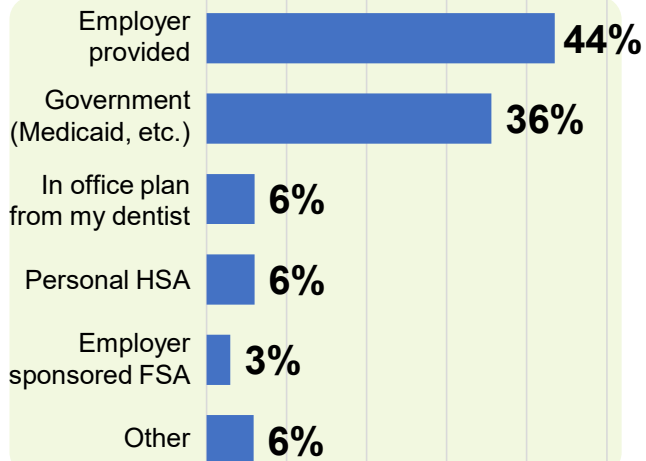


Dental Insurance

There continues to be a disconnect between consumers' perception of their dental insurance and the impact of a dental emergency

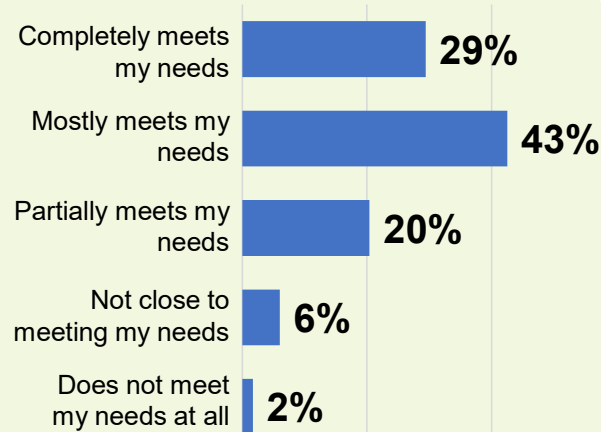
66%

report having some type of dental insurance or benefit (4% less than last year)



72%

Say their insurance completely or mostly meets their needs



Yet

39%

who have insurance that "completely" meets their needs and

48%

who have insurance that "mostly" meets their needs say **a dental emergency would cause them moderate to substantial hardship**



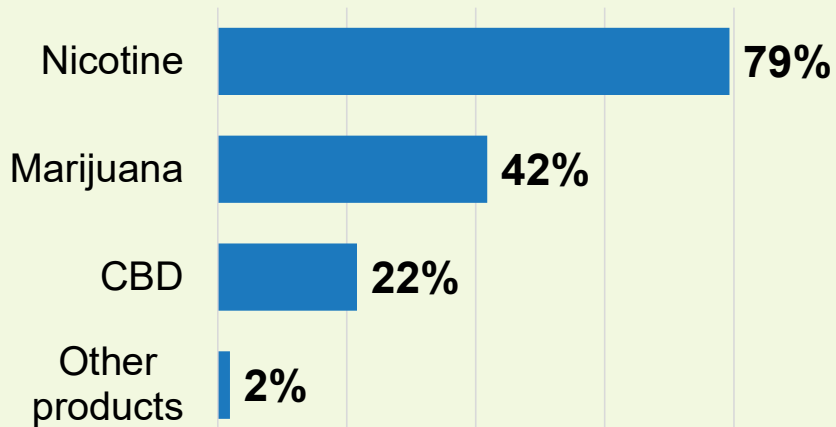
Patients Under the Influence of a Drug

32% of consumers report using marijuana in states where it is legal

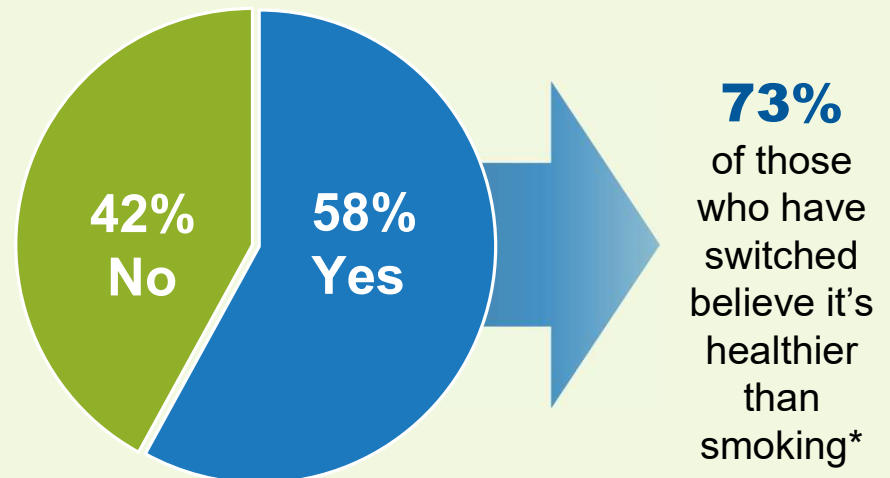
17% report using marijuana in states where it is illegal

21% of consumers report vaping

What substance(s) are you vaping?
(select all that apply)



Have you switched from smoking to vaping?



*Caregivers, younger and ethnically diverse patients are significantly more likely to believe this

Key Learnings

- **STRESS** is emerging as the new normal post-pandemic – with **82% of dentists** reporting some type of major stress relating to their profession
 - Insurance reimbursement and workforce shortage issues continue to cause the greatest pain points – and they want the ADA to help address them
- **PATIENT ATTITUDE** and **DRUG USE** are also impacting the practice of dentistry
 - Over half of dentists surveyed report dealing with aggressive patients, and nearly a third felt their safety was threatened
 - 38% of dentists report seeing more patients under the influence of a drug over last year, which is leading 59% to alter their treatment plan

For a copy of
the report visit:

[ADA.org/2024
TrendReport](https://ada.org/2024-TrendReport)