About this Study

To better understand the economic and operational conditions in dental practices and public health clinics over time, and to measure the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and other emerging issues in dentistry, the ADA Health Policy Institute launched a tracking poll in January 2022. For this initial wave over the week of January 17, 2022, we invited nearly 80,000 dentists from across the U.S. to join a panel in which they will complete a survey once a month; over 3,000 have opted to participate.

This report features results from the latest wave of this study broken out by the following practice areas/specialties:

- General practice (GP)
- Pediatric dentistry (PED)

Additionally, results are reported for dentists that practice in public health settings (DiPHS), regardless of specialty. (Please note that this group should not be confused with dental public health specialists.) Please note that we only include graphics representing at least 30 responses. Because of this, we were not able to include results for the following specialties in this report: oral and maxillofacial surgery, endodontics, orthodontics and dentofacial orthopedics, periodontics, and prosthodontics. The number of respondents in each practice area/specialty can be found at the end of this report.

This report was published in December 2022 by the American Dental Association’s Health Policy Institute.

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# Economic Confidence

Looking ahead to the next six months, how confident are you in the recovery of:

## General Practice

957 Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very confident</th>
<th>Somewhat confident</th>
<th>Neither confident nor skeptical</th>
<th>Somewhat skeptical</th>
<th>Very skeptical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your particular dental practice?</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>40.3%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The dental care sector in general?</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
<td>42.4%</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The U.S. economy?</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Pediatric Dentistry

68 Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very confident</th>
<th>Somewhat confident</th>
<th>Neither confident nor skeptical</th>
<th>Somewhat skeptical</th>
<th>Very skeptical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your particular dental practice?</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>44.1%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The dental care sector in general?</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>48.5%</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The U.S. economy?</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Dentists in Public Health Settings

56 Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very confident</th>
<th>Somewhat confident</th>
<th>Neither confident nor skeptical</th>
<th>Somewhat skeptical</th>
<th>Very skeptical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your particular dental practice?</td>
<td>33.9%</td>
<td>44.6%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The dental care sector in general?</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The U.S. economy?</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appointment Schedule

How full was your dental practice's appointment schedule last week?

Mean % of schedule filled

Dentists in Private Practice

1125 Responses

GP  84.9
PED  83.9

Dentists in Public Health Settings

53 Responses

DIPHS  88.7
Factors Preventing a Full Schedule

Which of the following factors prevented your dental practice’s appointment schedule from reaching 100% last week? (Select all that apply.)

**General Practice**
803 Responses

- Trouble filling vacant staff positions: 27.6%
- Not enough patients making appts: 39.1%
- COVID safety protocols: 6.1%
- No shows/cancellations < 24 hours: 86.3%
- Cancellations 24+ hours prior: 47.2%
- Other, please specify: 6.0%

**Pediatric Dentistry**
61 Responses

- Trouble filling vacant staff positions: 39.3%
- Not enough patients making appts: 32.8%
- COVID safety protocols: 8.2%
- No shows/cancellations < 24 hours: 82.0%
- Cancellations 24+ hours prior: 44.3%
- Other, please specify: 6.6%

**Dentists in Public Health Settings**
35 Responses

- Trouble filling vacant staff positions: 48.6%
- Not enough patients making appts: 28.6%
- COVID safety protocols: 11.4%
- No shows/cancellations < 24 hours: 80.0%
- Cancellations 24+ hours prior: 45.7%
- Other, please specify: 17.1%
Patient Wait Times

[Owners only] Currently, how many business days does the average patient of record have to wait for an appointment (excluding emergencies)?

Mean number of days

Dentists in Private Practice
1041 Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dentist Type</th>
<th>Mean Days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GP</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PED</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dentists in Public Health Settings
56 Responses

| DiPH         | 24.1      |
Currently, how many business days does the average *new patient* have to wait for an initial appointment (excluding emergencies)?

### Mean number of days

#### Dentists in Private Practice

1041 Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean Number of Days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GP</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PED</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Dentists in Public Health Settings

56 Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean Number of Days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DiPH</td>
<td>38.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Staff Recruitment

General Practice

Have you recently or are you currently recruiting any of the following positions in your dental practice?
957 Responses

- Dental hygienists: 36.2% Yes, 62.3% No, 1.5% Not sure
- Dental assistants: 30.5% Yes, 66.8% No, 2.7% Not sure
- Dentists: 12.7% Yes, 84.1% No, 3.2% Not sure
- Administrative staff: 19.9% Yes, 75.9% No, 4.3% Not sure

How challenging has it been to recruit the position(s) below?
539 Responses

- Dental hygienists: 80.1% Extremely challenging, 14.2% Very challenging, 1.8% Not challenging at all
- Dental assistants: 57.9% Extremely challenging, 28.4% Very challenging, 13.4% Not challenging at all
- Dentists: 63.1% Extremely challenging, 17.2% Very challenging, 12.3% Not challenging at all
- Administrative staff: 46.3% Extremely challenging, 30.0% Very challenging, 19.5% Not challenging at all
**Pediatric Dentistry**

**Have you recently or are you currently recruiting any of the following positions in your dental practice?**

68 Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
<th>No (%)</th>
<th>Not sure (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dental hygienists</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
<td>61.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental assistants</td>
<td>58.8%</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dentists</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>73.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative staff</td>
<td>44.1%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How challenging has it been to recruit the position(s) below?**

53 Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Extremely challenging (%)</th>
<th>Very challenging (%)</th>
<th>Moderately challenging (%)</th>
<th>Slightly challenging (%)</th>
<th>Not challenging at all (%)</th>
<th>Not sure/Not applicable (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dental hygienists</td>
<td>72.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental assistants</td>
<td>55.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>35.0%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dentists</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative staff</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dentists in Public Health Settings

Have you recently or are you currently recruiting any of the following positions in your dental practice?

56 Responses

- **Dental hygienists**: 48.2% Yes, 50.0% No, 1.8% Not sure
- **Dental assistants**: 75.0% Yes, 21.4% No, 3.6% Not sure
- **Dentists**: 50.0% Yes, 48.2% No, 1.8% Not sure
- **Administrative staff**: 48.2% Yes, 42.9% No, 8.9% Not sure

How challenging has it been to recruit the position(s) below?

46 Responses

- **Dental hygienists**: 74.1% Extremely challenging, 14.8% Very challenging, 11.1% Moderately challenging
- **Dental assistants**: 57.1% Extremely challenging, 31.0% Very challenging, 11.9% Moderately challenging
- **Dentists**: 42.9% Extremely challenging, 28.6% Very challenging, 25.0% Moderately challenging
- **Administrative staff**: 25.9% Extremely challenging, 29.6% Very challenging, 33.3% Moderately challenging
Questions of the Week

Online Patient Reviews

Have you ever received any patient reviews online?

Dentists in Private Practice

1138 Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GP</td>
<td>87.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PED</td>
<td>91.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dentists in Public Health Settings

56 Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DPHS</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td>16.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
[If yes] Have you ever responded to an online patient review (i.e., included a reply in the review)?

Dentists in Private Practice
1003 Responses

- GP: 51.9% Yes, 48.1% No
- PED: 58.1% Yes, 41.9% No

Dentists in Public Health Settings
35 Responses

- DiPHS: 17.1% Yes, 82.9% No
[If yes] Have you ever been unable to respond to an online review due to HIPAA regulations?

Dentists in Private Practice
1038 Responses

- GP: 37.6% Yes, 62.4% No
- PED: 64.1% Yes, 35.9% No

Dentists in Public Health Settings
35 Responses

- DiPHS: 60.0% Yes, 40.0% No
Practice Plans for 2023

[Owners only] Do you have plans to do any of the following in 2023? (Check all that apply.)

General Practice
877 Responses

- Hire more staff: 40.5%
- Lay off staff: 3.1%
- Affiliate with large group practice, DSO: 2.6%
- Sell my practice and retire: 12.5%
- Raise my fees: 72.4%
- Lower my fees: 0.0%
- Join more insurance networks: 2.3%
- Drop out of some insurance networks: 36.9%
- Other, please specify: 4.3%
- None of the above: 8.2%

Pediatrics
64 Responses

- Hire more staff: 65.6%
- Lay off staff: 1.6%
- Affiliate with large group practice, DSO: 4.7%
- Sell my practice and retire: 12.5%
- Raise my fees: 67.2%
- Lower my fees: 0.0%
- Join more insurance networks: 1.6%
- Drop out of some insurance networks: 29.7%
- Other, please specify: 4.7%
- None of the above: 4.7%
### Number of Responses by Specialty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dentists In Private Practice</th>
<th>Choice Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Practice (GP)</td>
<td>957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (OMS)</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endodontics (ENDO)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodontics (ORTHO)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pediatric Dentistry (PED)</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periodontics (PERIO)</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosthodontics (PROS)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Setting</th>
<th>Choice Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dentist in private practice</td>
<td>1,138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dentists in public health settings</td>
<td>56</td>
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</tbody>
</table>