

# Dental Workforce Shortages: Data to Navigate Today's Labor Market



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## BACKGROUND

The dental sector is facing a serious workforce shortage. Vacant positions in dental assisting and dental hygiene have reduced dental practice capacity by an estimated 10% nationally. One in three dentists who do not have full appointment schedules indicate that trouble filling staffing positions is a contributing factor. Workforce shortages were initially attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. We now know that is just part of the story. Enrollment in dental assisting programs has been trending downward since 2015, and the pandemic had a negative impact on dental hygiene program enrollment. While there has been some recovery of enrollment in dental hygiene programs, data suggest that dental assisting program enrollment will not rebound in the near future. As a result, workforce shortages are likely to remain an issue for years to come.

To identify strategies for shoring up the workforce, a deeper understanding of the various factors contributing to workplace satisfaction and retention is needed. Stakeholders must ask the following: Among dental assistants and dental hygienists satisfied in their positions, what keeps them coming to work each day? What workplace conditions are to blame for dental assistants and dental hygienists leaving their positions? The ADA Health Policy Institute (HPI) engaged with partners at the American Dental Assistants Association (ADAA), American Dental Hygienists' Association (ADHA), the Dental Assisting National Board (DANB), and IgniteDA to conduct primary research on these issues. Using data collected from thousands of dental assistants, dental hygienists, and dentists in 2022, this report offers a comprehensive outlook on the levers available to sustain and improve workplace satisfaction among dental practice personnel. These levers can enhance the recruitment and development of a high-quality workforce within the dental sector.

## WHAT THE RESEARCH TELLS US

- Approximately one-third of the dental assistant (33.7%) and dental hygienist (31.4%) workforce indicate they expect to retire in five years or less.
- The majority of dental assistants and dental hygienists are satisfied in their current job.
- Roughly half of dental assistants and dental hygienists indicate they have received a raise within the past year. The majority of wage increases are in the 1-3% range.
- The majority of dental assistants and dental hygienists indicated that they receive dental benefits, paid holidays, paid vacation, and retirement savings from their employers. Health insurance, paid sick time, paid leave, and continuing education or professional development funds are rare overall. These benefits matter for recruitment and retention.
- Factors associated with retention include work-life balance, positive workplace culture, and ability to help patients.
- Factors associated with attrition include negative workplace culture, insufficient pay, lack of growth opportunity, inadequate benefits, and feeling overworked.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR DENTAL EMPLOYERS AS WE LOOK TO THE FUTURE



**Dental practices need to remain competitive as employers when it comes to employee benefits.** Paid vacation and paid holidays are now the norm in dentistry. The majority of dental practice employees are also offered retirement savings options and paid sick time. However, in order to recruit and retain a robust workforce, dental employers need to offer health insurance and paid leave. Within dentistry, these benefits are much more common in public health and dental service organization (DSO) work settings.



**Responsive compensation is a must.** Wages need to be assessed annually. Ideally, raises should incorporate performance measurement, which may help dental team members feel more connected to practice goals and offer a sense of professional fulfillment.



**Workplace culture cannot be overlooked.** Among employees who are satisfied in their roles, positive workplace culture, work-life balance, and ability to patients are the most commonly cited contributing factors. Poor communication in dental practices is one of the top risks to retention. Traditional dental practices are small businesses that typically lack a dedicated human resources team to evaluate and improve upon these aspects of the work environment.



**Consolidated dental practices have an edge when it comes to employee benefits.** Dental service organizations and group practices are better positioned to offer employee benefits. However, there are lower levels of overall workplace satisfaction among dental assistants and dental hygienists working in these practices, likely driven by differences in other aspects of the workplace. This merits further research.



**Shoring up the workforce pipeline will require long-term changes.** The numbers of new dental hygienists and dental assistants graduating from allied education programs may not be enough to compensate the losses of team members who permanently left the profession during the pandemic. There may be another wave of retirements in the next few years that will put additional pressure on the workforce pipeline. Innovations are necessary to shore up the pipeline for long-term sustainability of the dental workforce.

# WHY THIS MATTERS

## ABOUT THIS STUDY

The ADA Health Policy Institute (HPI) engaged with multiple partners to better understand dental assistant and dental hygienist employment patterns and identify factors associated with both the attrition and retention of dental team members. Partners included the American Dental Assistants Association (ADAA), American Dental Hygienists' Association (ADHA), Dental Assisting National Board (DANB), and IgniteDA. Other organizations have contributed informative key insights on the impact of pay rates and workplace benefits on job satisfaction, such as the Dental Salary Survey administered by DentalPost, Dental Assistants Salary and Satisfaction Survey, and the National Network for Oral Health Access Community Health Center Workforce Survey.<sup>1,2,3</sup> For instance, the DentalPost report revealed that pay rates and benefits offerings are more substantial in corporate settings than in private practices and that the most common dissatisfying feature of jobs among dental hygienists is inadequate pay. **Using data collected from thousands of dental assistants, dental hygienists, and dentists in 2022, this report offers a comprehensive outlook on the levers available to sustain and improve workplace satisfaction among dental practice personnel. These levers can enhance the recruitment and development of a high-quality workforce within the dental sector.**

## PUTTING THE CHALLENGE IN CONTEXT

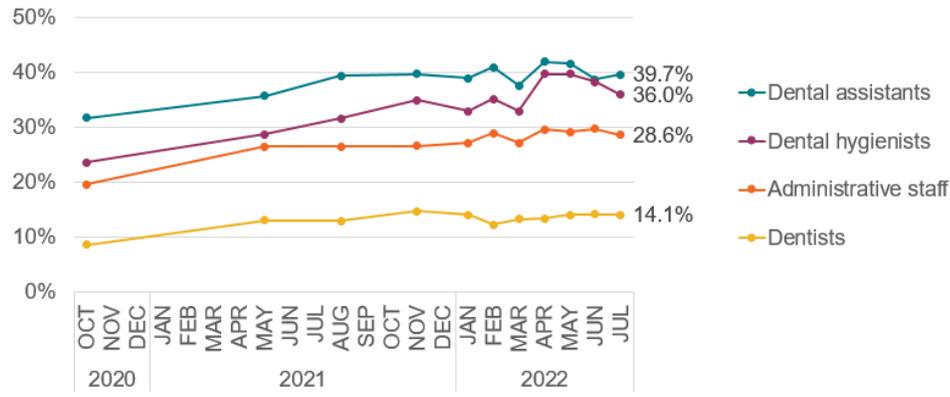
U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy released the *Addressing Health Worker Burnout* report in May 2022, sounding the alarm for more supportive workplaces for all who are “engaged in protecting and improving the health of individuals” in order to sustain a robust workforce.<sup>4</sup> Health workers such as nurses, long-term care facility staff, and many others have left their jobs in droves over the past few years, some rejecting their field entirely. If not addressed, the health worker burnout crisis could impede patient access to care, cause health care costs to rise, hinder the nation’s ability to prepare for the next public health emergency, and worsen health disparities.

Dentistry is not exempt from these workforce challenges. The dental sector is subject to the same labor market forces faced in other sectors of health care and in other industries, such as The Great Resignation and The Great Retirement. The disruptions and pressures caused by the pandemic have also taken their toll on workers’ mental health. In late 2020, more than one-quarter (28%) of dental hygienists experienced symptoms of anxiety, and 17% reported symptoms of depression.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, the dental sector is experiencing a phase of accelerated practice consolidation and shifts in practice patterns, dentist demographics, and workplace culture.<sup>6,7,8</sup>



# WHY THIS MATTERS

**Have you recently or are you currently recruiting any of the following positions in your dental practice? (Percentages indicating “Yes.”)**

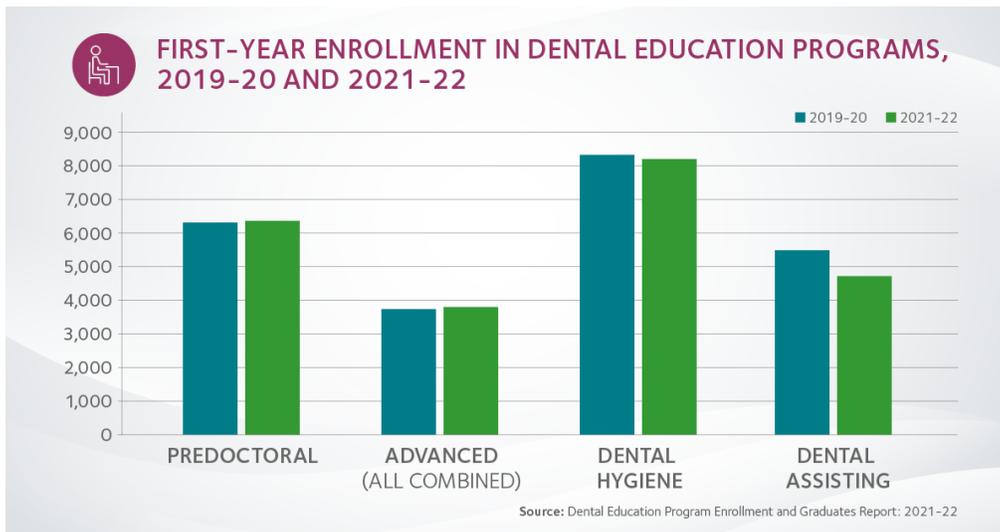


## WHAT'S BEHIND THE SHORTAGE? GREATER OUTFLOWS, SLOWER INFLOWS

**Greater outflows:** Due to a multi-year partnership between the ADA and ADHA, we know that fewer than half of dental hygienists who left employment early in the COVID-19 pandemic returned to the workforce in 2021.<sup>13</sup> Further, an estimated 3.75% of dental hygienists voluntarily left the workforce in 2021, including 1.6% who permanently left due to retirement or a career change. The most common reasons cited for not returning to work – aside from “waiting until the COVID-19 pandemic is under control” – included concerns about workplace safety and insufficient childcare.

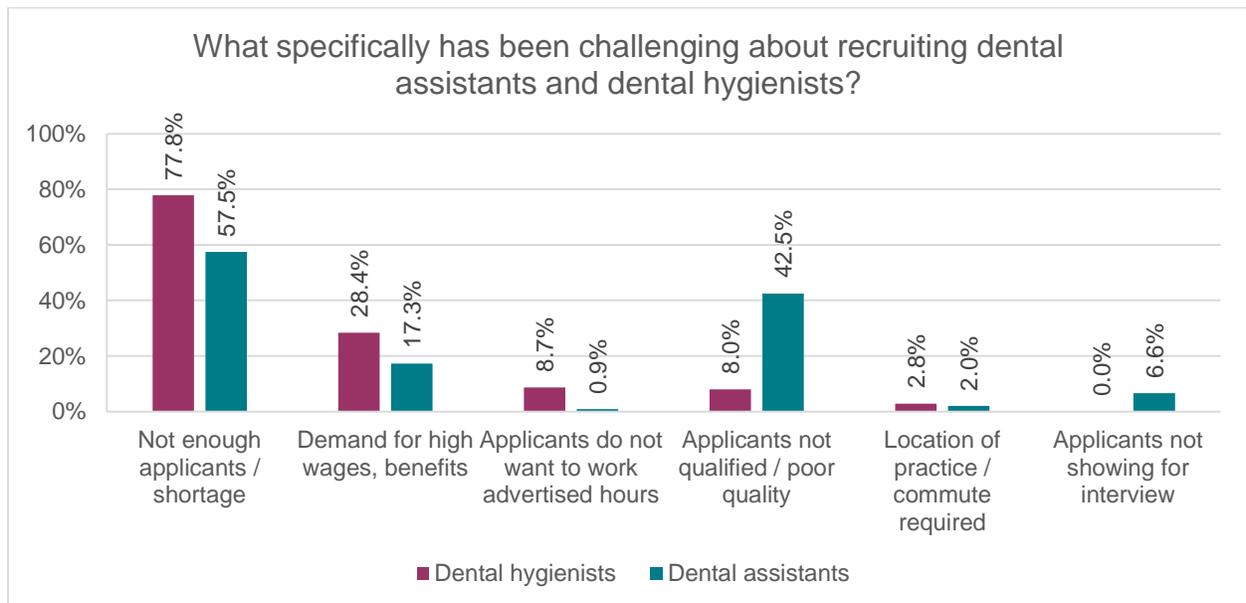
**Slower inflows:** Enrollment in dental hygiene and dental assisting programs declined from pre-pandemic levels in 2021-22, with a downward trend in accredited dental assisting programs that started prior to the pandemic.<sup>14</sup> There was about a 7% drop in first-year enrollment in dental hygiene programs nationwide in the 2020-21 academic year, which was the first cohort to enroll since the start of the pandemic. That drop is due in part to more programs not enrolling first year classes that year because of the pandemic. There was about a 4% drop in the number of graduates in 2020 compared to 2019. The most recent data indicate that both first-year enrollment and graduates are rebounding in dental hygiene. However, enrollment declines in dental assisting seem to be part of a long-term downward trend, as is the number of accredited dental assisting programs in operation.

# WHY THIS MATTERS



## PREPARING FOR THE LONG ROAD AHEAD

When dentists were asked about the specific challenges they were experiencing with respect to recruitment, a lack of applicants for dental assisting and dental hygiene positions was the most common reason for the struggle. For open hygienist positions, the wage and benefit requirements of the applicants has also been a challenge for dentists. Dentists also indicated a lack of qualified assistant applicants. Increasing the supply and/or qualifications of dental team members could take years to address.<sup>12</sup>



## WHY THIS MATTERS

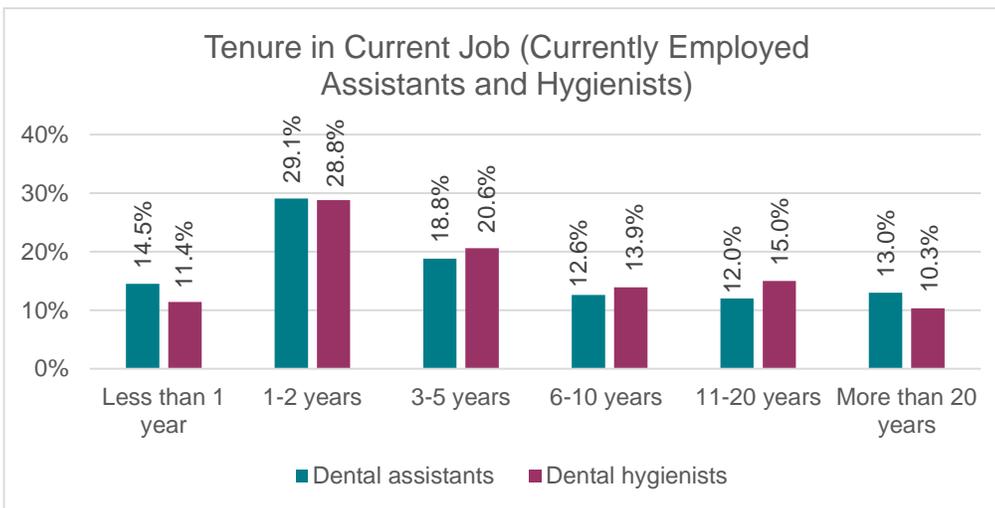
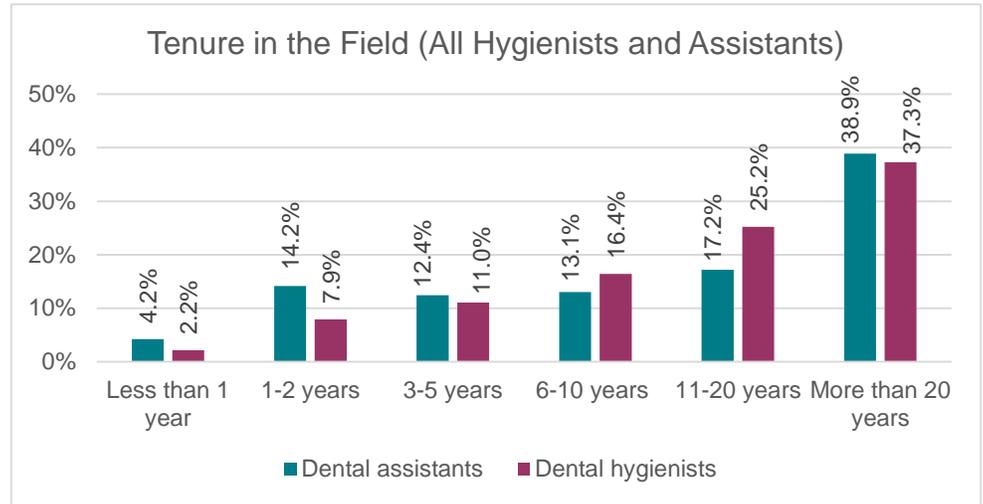
Dentists have been relying heavily on online recruitment and word of mouth to bring new employees into their offices. Fewer are turning to local hygiene and assisting programs, and about 1 in 4 are using staffing agencies or recruiters. To ease recruitment woes, more than 8 out of 10 dentists who are recruiting dental hygienists or assistants have raised their starting pay rates. About 45% of recruiting dentists have also changed hours to meet applicant needs. Dentists facing “extreme” challenges in hiring are being even more proactive on their recruitment approach, relying on a wider range of recruitment outlets and being more willing to offer recruitment perks.<sup>15</sup> Despite these measures, recruitment challenges persist.

The 2020-2030 job growth outlook for both dental assistants and dental hygienists (11% for both occupations) exceeds that of the national average across all occupations (8%), according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).<sup>16,17</sup> BLS data also indicate that as of July 2022, employment in dental offices was 105.3% of what it was in January 2020.<sup>18</sup> While the number of jobs (not necessarily employees) in dental offices is greater than it was pre-pandemic, the data are clear that plenty of room remains within dental teams. Given the projected increase in demand over the coming years and stagnant or declining supply of these dental team members, it is safe to assume that these workforce challenges will be a longer-term challenge.

# RESULTS

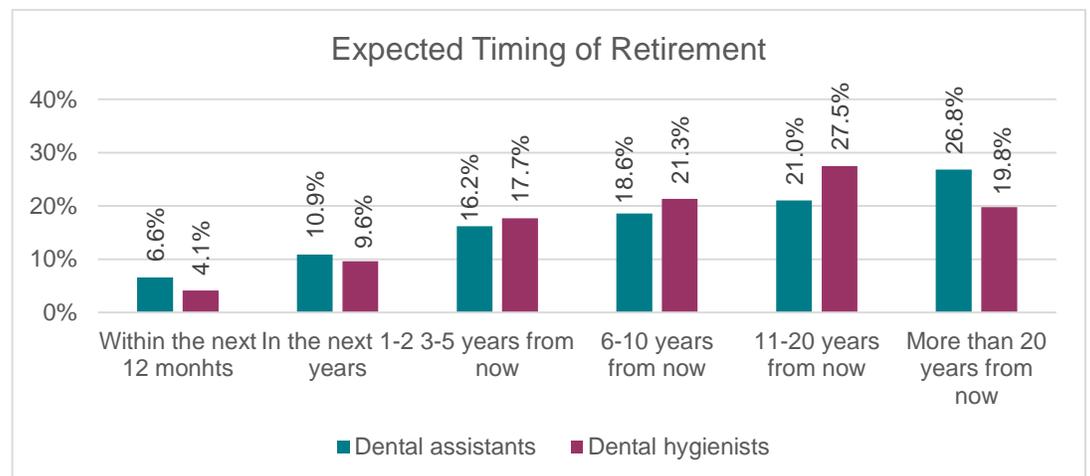
## TENURE

More than half of the dental assistant and dental hygienist workforce has been or was in the field for at least 11 years.



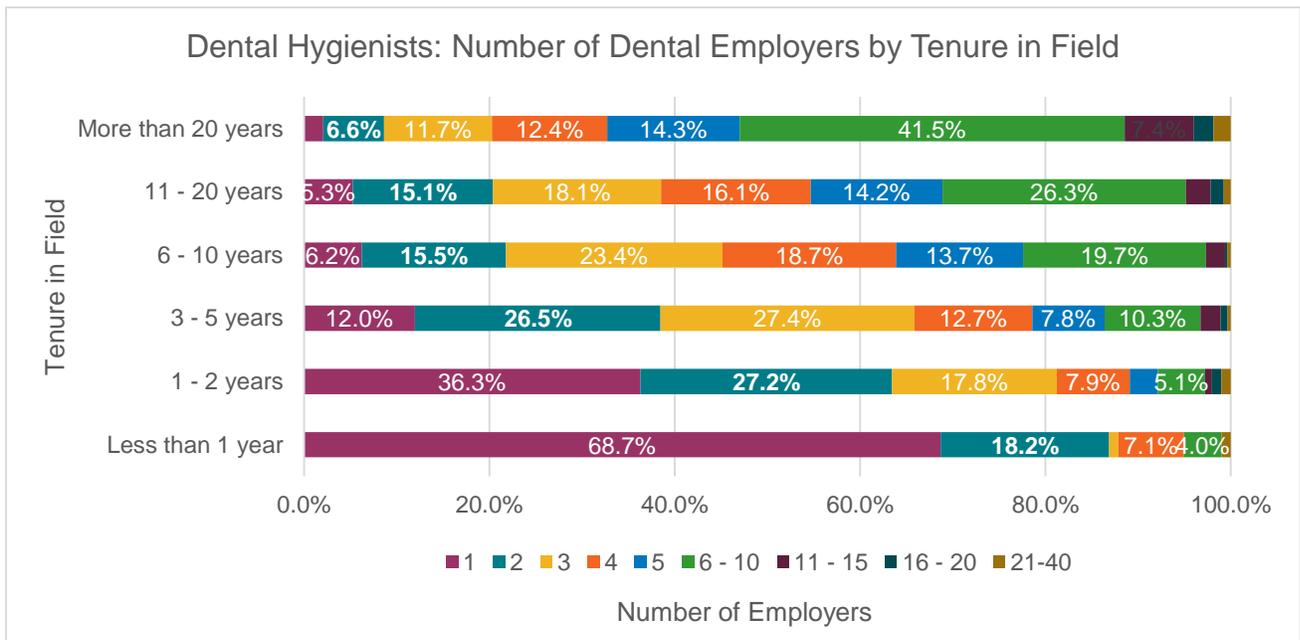
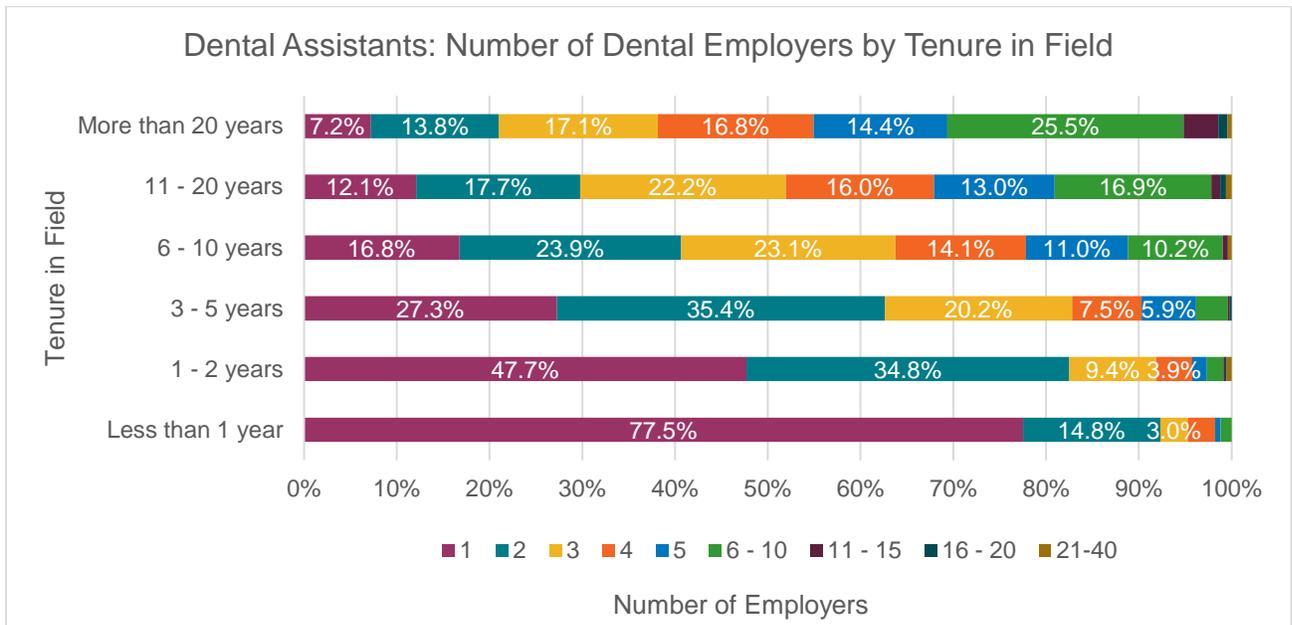
The majority of currently employed dental assistants and dental hygienists indicate they have been in their current position for 5 years or less.

Approximately one-third of both the dental assistant and dental hygienist workforce indicate they expect to retire in 5 years or less.



# RESULTS

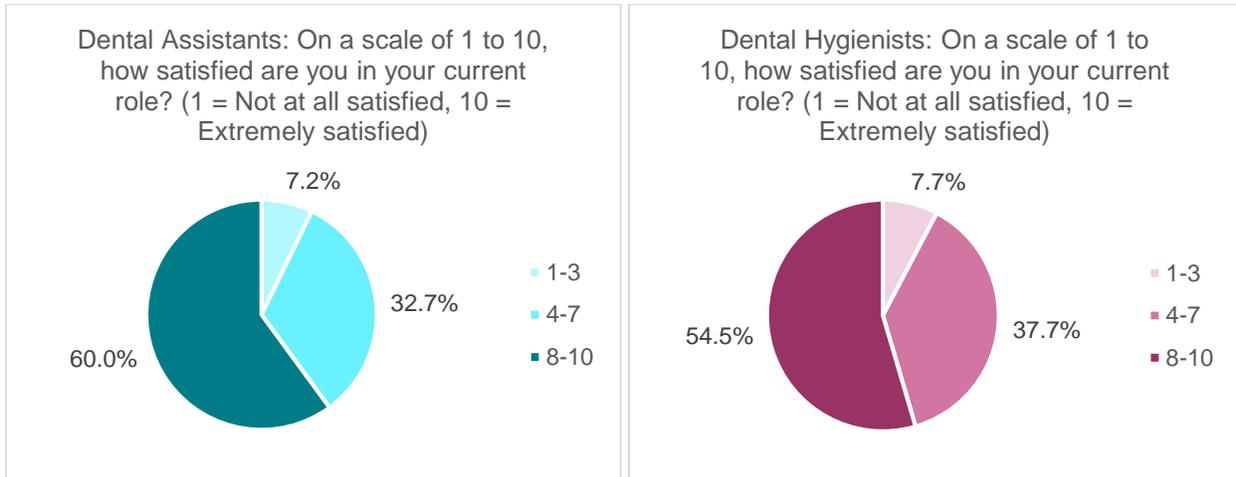
The number of employers a dental assistant or dental hygienist have naturally increases with their tenure in the field. For instance, among dental hygienists who have been in the field for 1-2 years, 36% have been with the same single employer for that duration whereas only 2% of dental hygienists who have been in the field for more than 20 years are still with the same single employer.



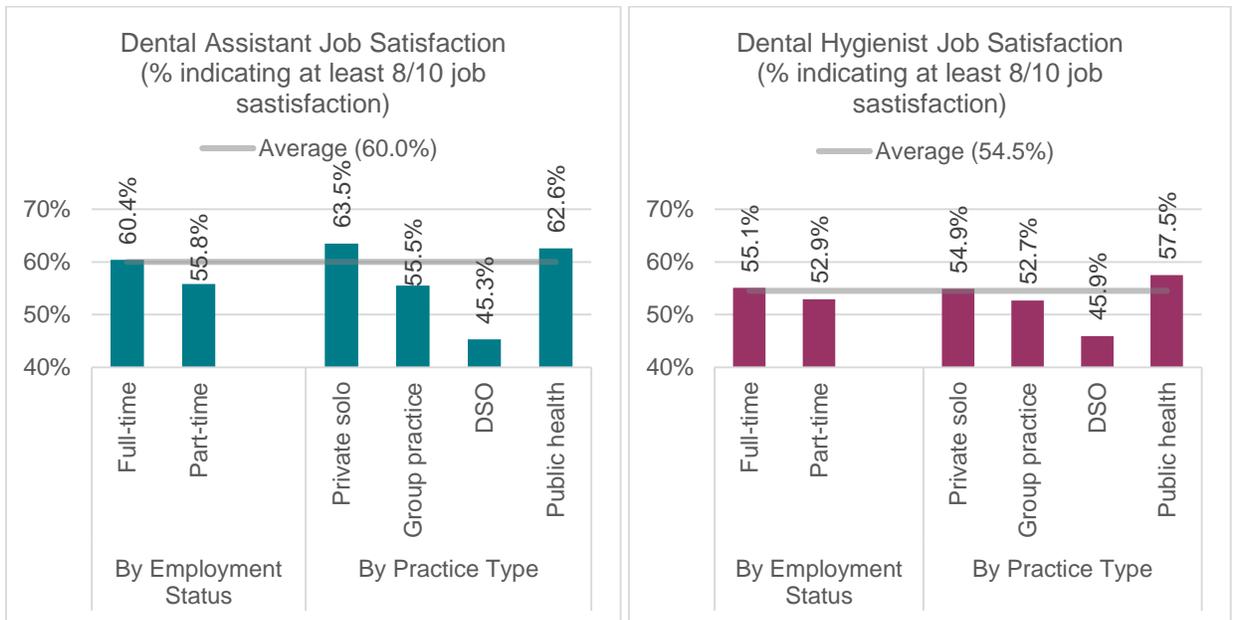
# RESULTS

## JOB SATISFACTION

The majority of currently employed dental assistants (60.0%) and dental hygienists (54.5%) indicate they are satisfied in their role (rating satisfaction in the 8 to 10 range on a 10-point scale). Less than 1 in 10 (DA: 7.2%, DH: 7.7%) indicate a low level of satisfaction (rating satisfaction in the 1 to 3 range on a scale of 10) in their roles.



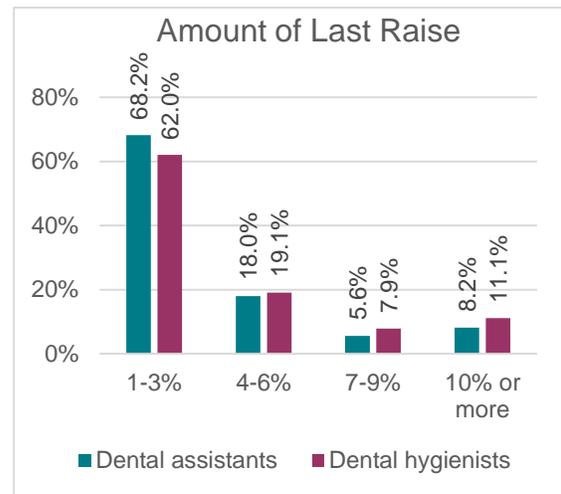
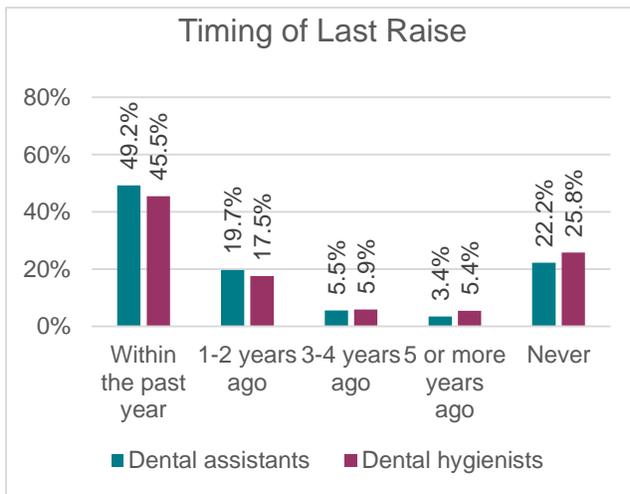
Among both dental assistants and dental hygienists, a lesser share of dental service organization (DSO) employees and part-time employees indicate high job satisfaction. Dental hygienists working in public health indicate higher levels of satisfaction than their private sector peers.



# RESULTS

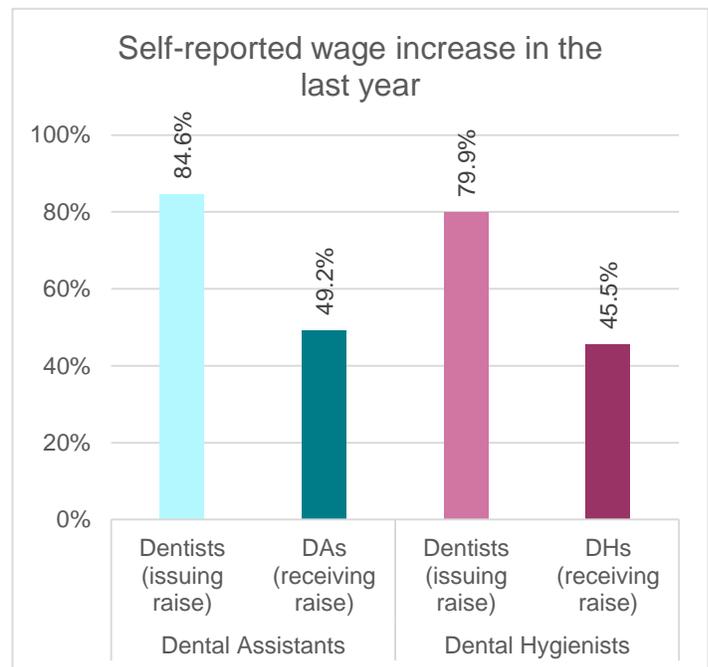
## PAY RAISES

Most dental assistants and dental hygienists indicate that they received wage increases within the past year (DA: 49.2%, DH: 45.5%) or 1-2 years ago (DA: 19.7%, DH: 17.5%). Among those who indicated they have never received a raise at their current place of employment, the majority (DA: 78.0%, DH: 89.2%) indicate they have been working with their employer for less than three years. Among those who indicated they have received a raise, it was most commonly an increase in the 1-3% range.



## Employer Dentists' vs. Employee Dental Assistants' and Dental Hygienists' Perceptions on Pay Raises

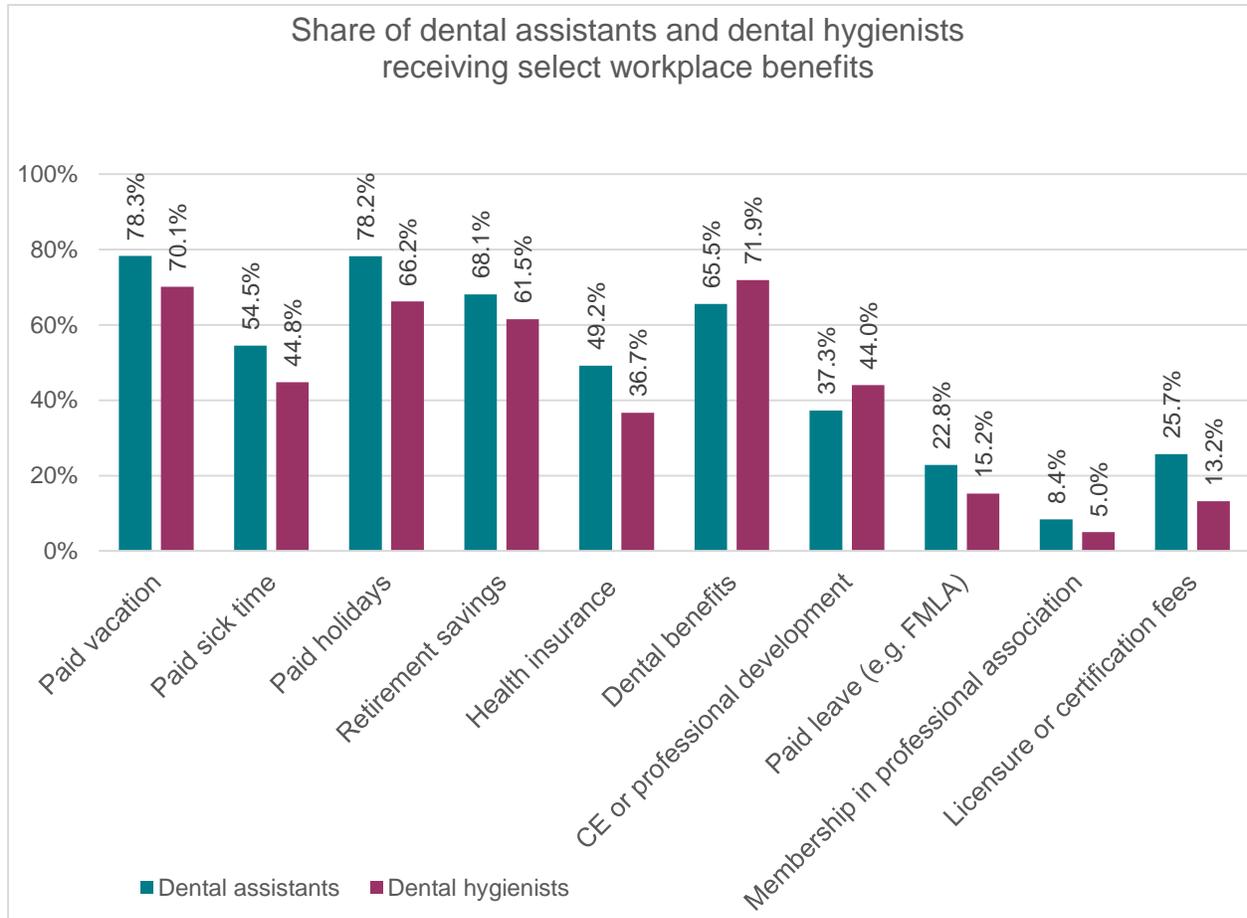
The pay raise results from dental assistants and dental hygienists were not consistent with results from employer dentists. In June 2022, the majority of dentists indicated they had issued pay raises to dental assistants (84.6%) and dental hygienists (79.9%) within the past year.<sup>19</sup> It is worth noting that the dentist, dental assistant, and dental hygienist participating in the study are all from separate cohorts; they do not represent the same places of employment. It is possible that there is an inflated sense of generosity with respect to benefits offered from the employer dentist's perspective and/or a deflated sense of generosity from the employee's (dental assistant or dental hygienist) perspective.



# RESULTS

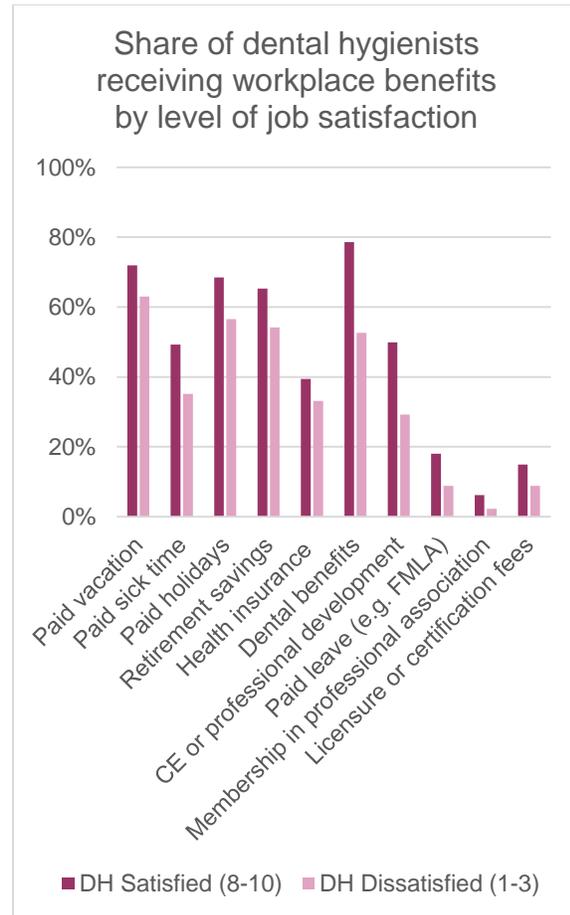
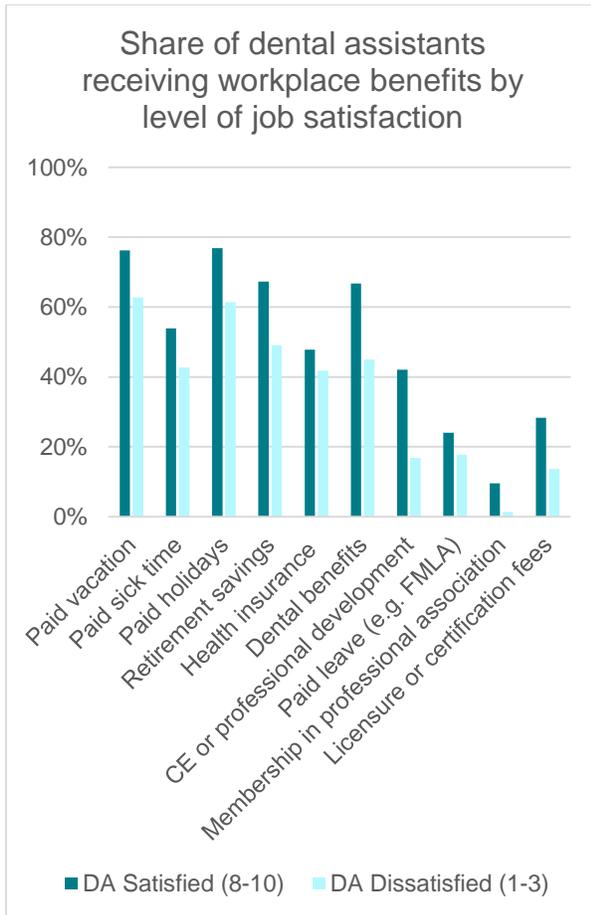
## BENEFITS

Dental assistants and dental hygienists were asked which workplace benefits they receive. The majority indicated that they receive dental benefits, paid holidays, paid vacation, and retirement savings. Most benefits were slightly more common to be offered to dental assistants, though continuing education funding was more prominent among dental hygienists.



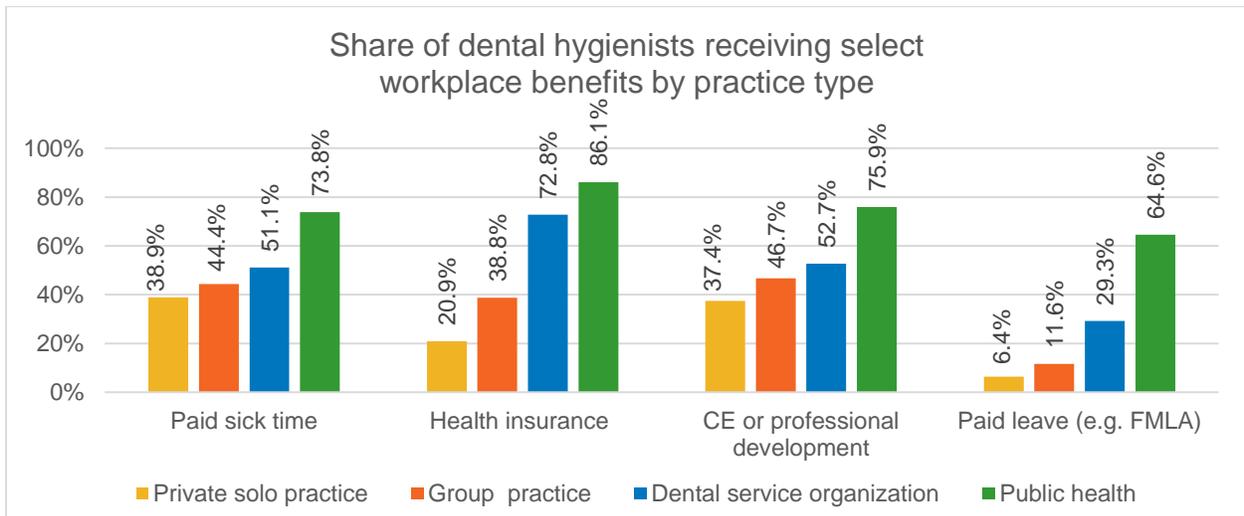
# RESULTS

Dental assistants and dental hygienists who indicated a high level of workplace satisfaction (8 to 10 on a 10-point scale) receive more workplace benefits than their colleagues who indicated low levels of satisfaction in their roles (1 to 3 on a 10-point scale).

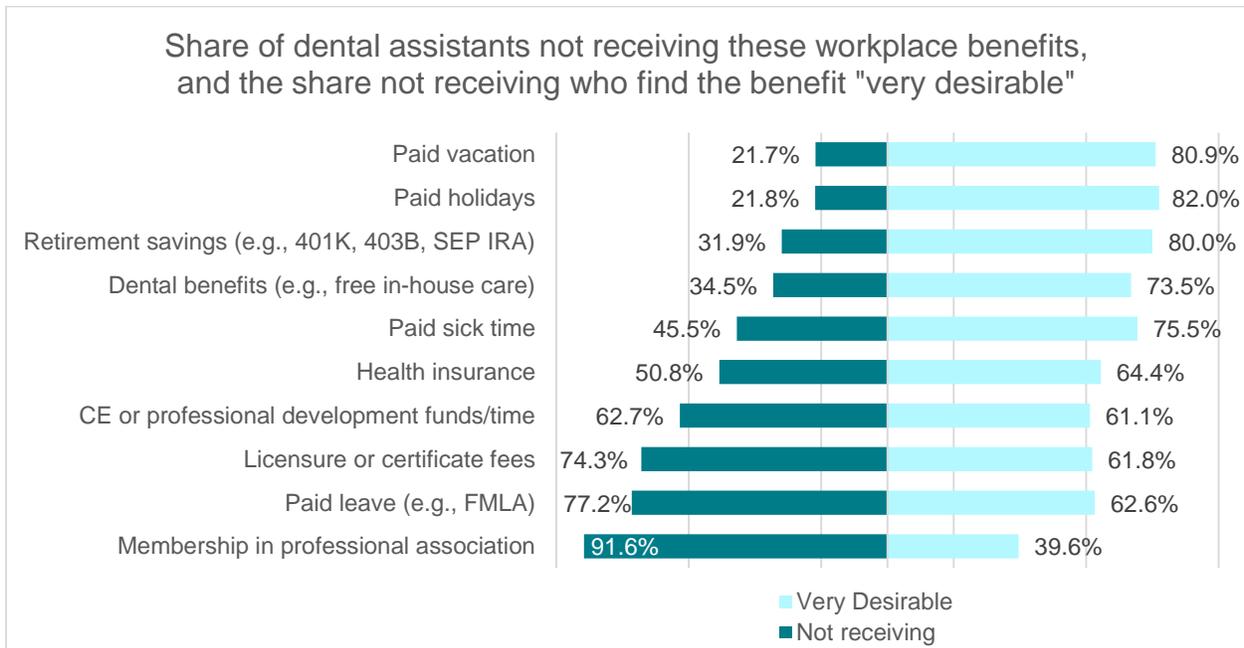


# RESULTS

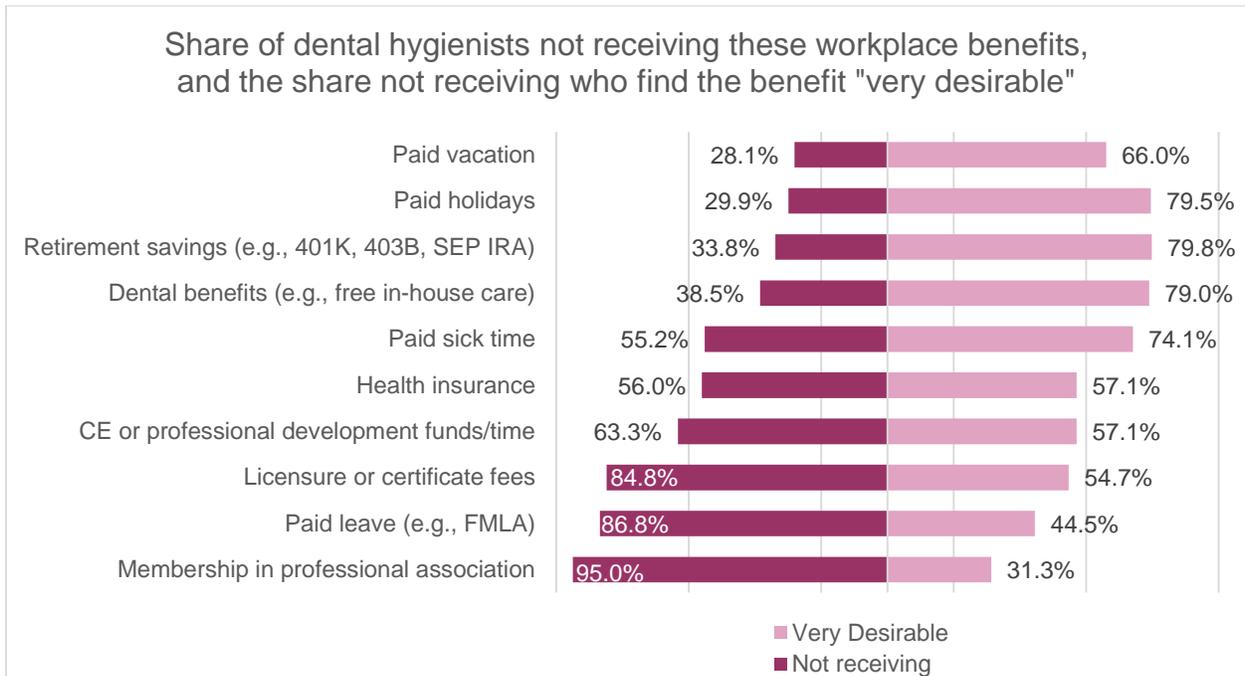
Health insurance, paid sick time, paid leave, and continuing education or professional development funds – while rare overall – are available to the majority of dental hygienists working in public health settings. These benefits are also more common in DSOs and group practices than in private solo practices. Similar trends are true for dental assistants.



Among the dental assistants and dental hygienists *not* receiving these workplace benefits, the majority indicate that almost all of these benefits are “very desirable.” Less than half of dental assistants and dental hygienists not receiving membership association dues indicated this as a “very desirable” benefit, and less than half of dental assistants find licensure or certificate fees to be “very desirable.”



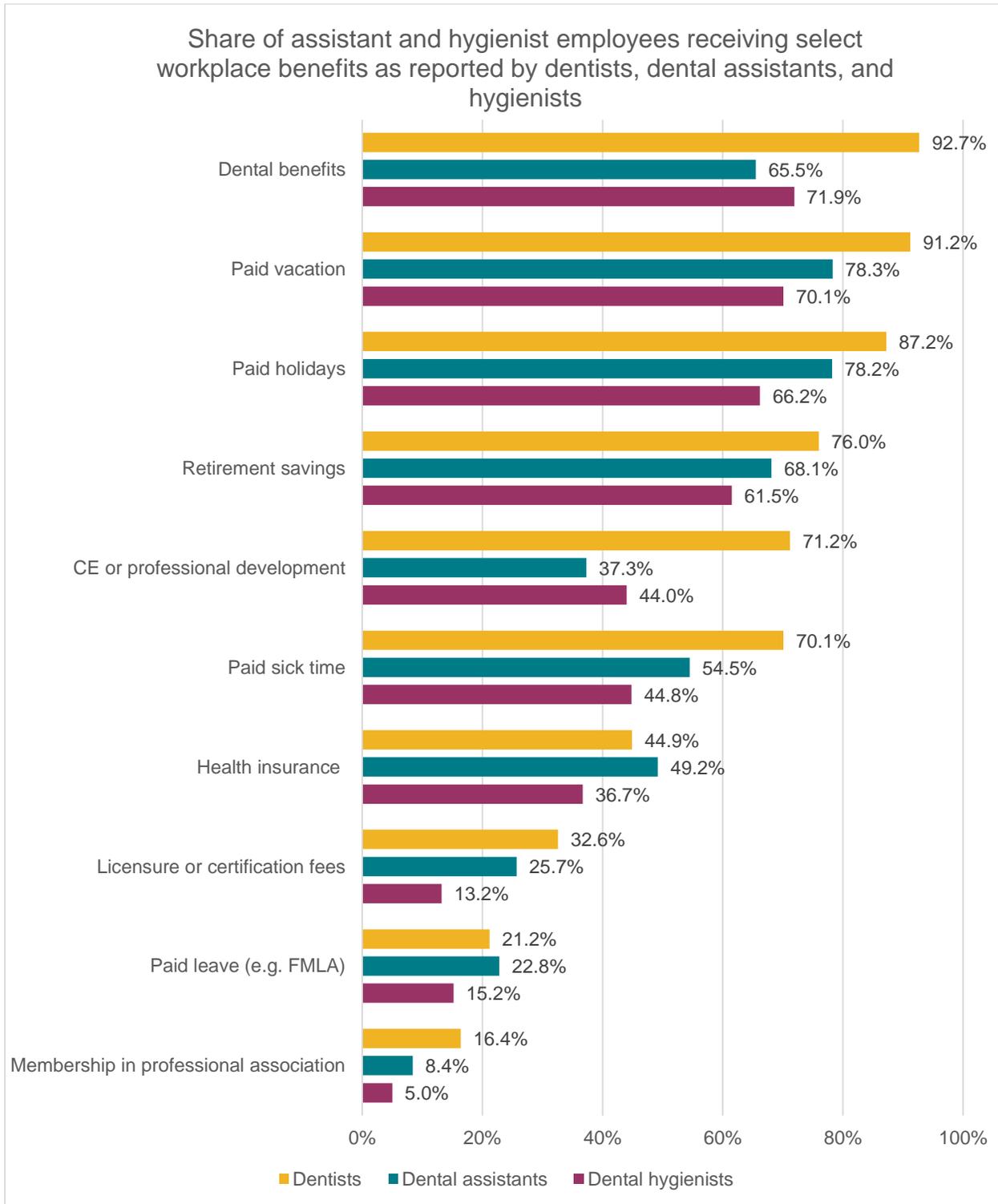
# RESULTS



## EMPLOYER DENTISTS' VS. EMPLOYEE DENTAL ASSISTANTS' AND DENTAL HYGIENISTS' TAKE ON BENEFITS OFFERED

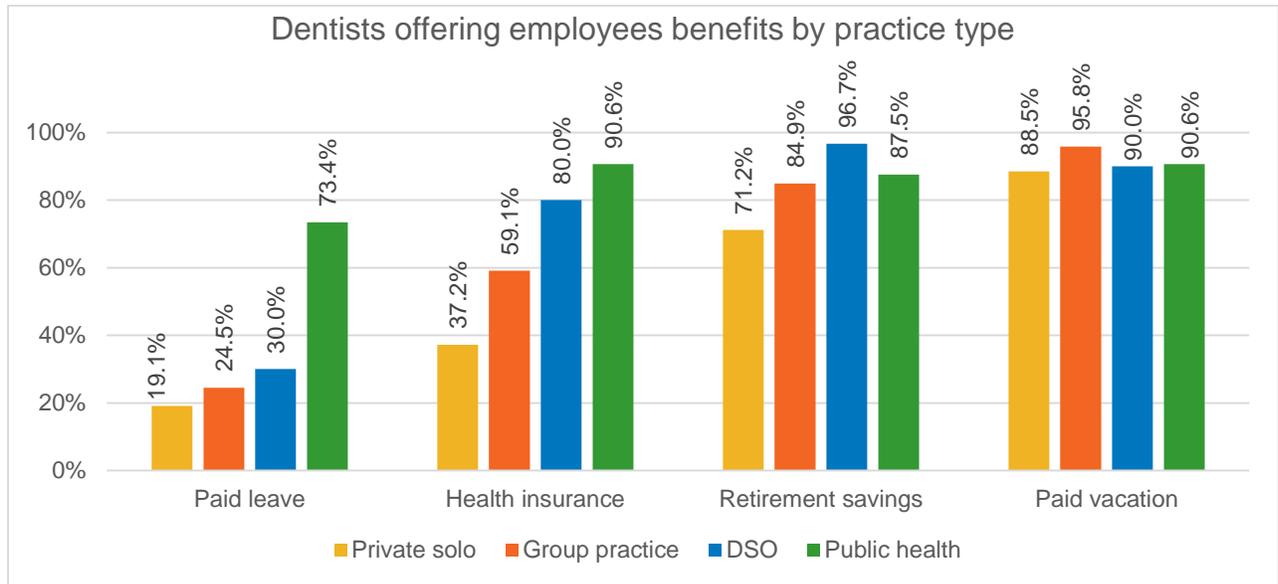
We also polled dentists on the benefits they offer their employees.<sup>19</sup> The results were not consistent with the findings from the dental assistant and dental hygienist surveys. While more dentists indicated they were offering these benefits to their employees than was reported by dental assistants and dental hygienists, the relative availability of these benefits was consistent. In other words, dentists, dental assistants, and dental hygienists all indicated that dental benefits, paid vacation, paid holidays, and retirement savings were the most common benefits being offered, while benefits like health insurance and paid leave were less common. It is difficult to interpret the variations in data collected from dentists and that from dental assistants and dental hygienists, as these were not matched samples (i.e., not employer-employee pairs). However, as with pay raises, it could indicate different perceptions about the generosity of the benefits. Further, self-selection bias could be a factor in these discrepancies. Dentist employers who are proud of their practices and who offer benefits may be more likely to participate regularly in HPI polling. Conversely, dental assistant and dental hygienist employees who do not have such workplace benefits may have more readily chosen to participate in this study to voice these shortcomings.

# RESULTS

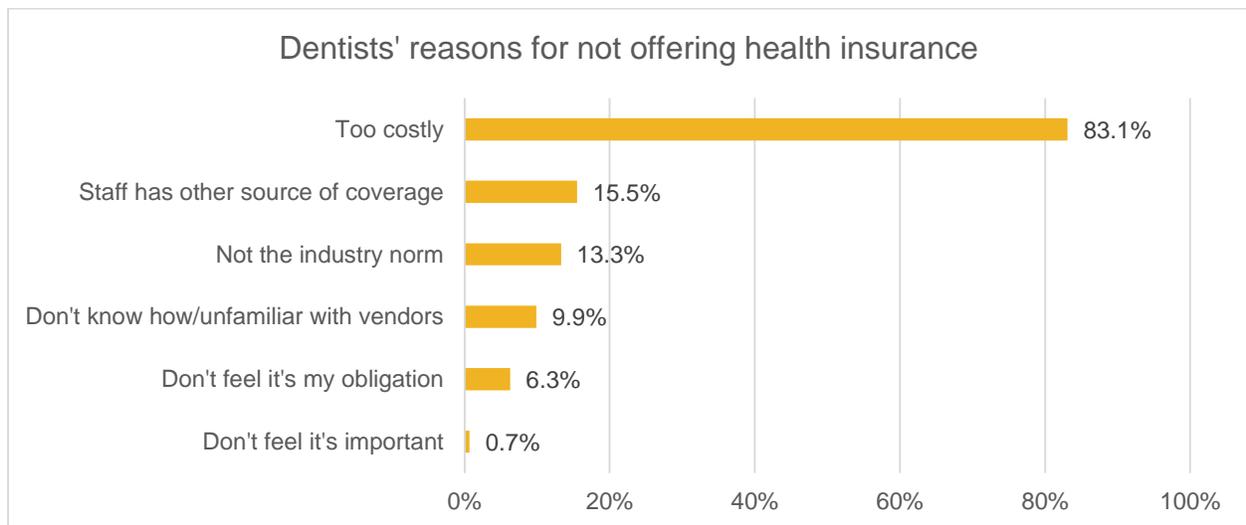


# RESULTS

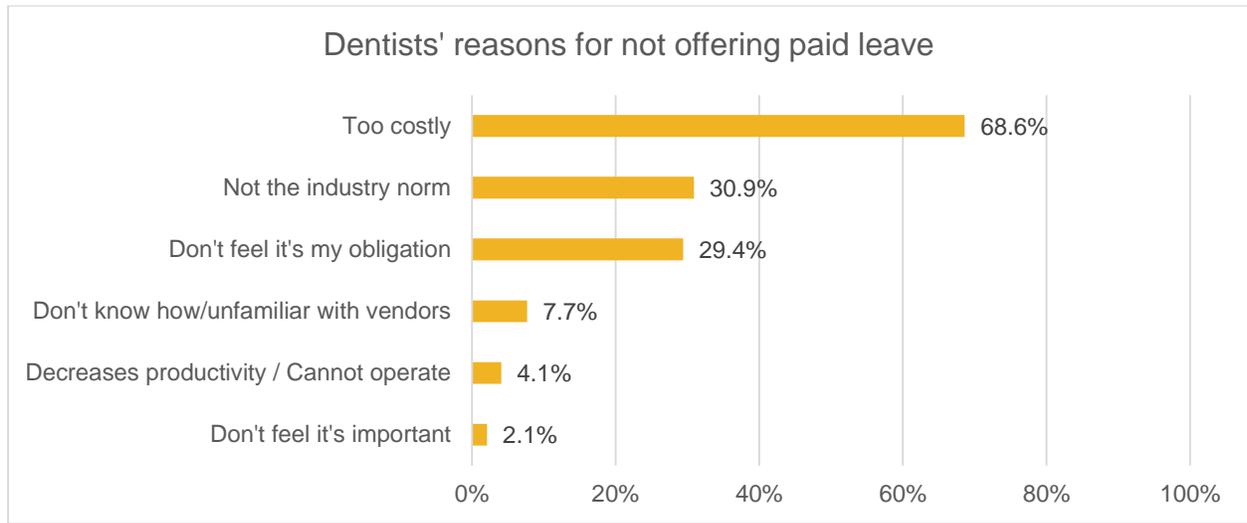
Similar to reports by dental assistants and dental hygienists, a greater share of dentists in public health settings and DSOs offer health insurance than their colleagues in private solo practice.



Dentists who do not offer their employed dental assistants and dental hygienists health insurance were asked why, and the overwhelming majority indicated cost as a reason. While cost was also the predominant reason among dentists not offering paid leave, nearly 1 in 3 also indicated that they do not offer the benefit because it is not the industry norm and/or not their obligation.



# RESULTS



## ATTRITION FACTORS

Dental assistants and dental hygienists who indicated low levels of job satisfaction were asked what contributed to their dissatisfaction. The top three reasons (in order) among dental assistants were insufficient pay, feeling overworked, and negative workplace culture. The top three factors contributing to dissatisfaction among dental hygienists were negative workplace culture, insufficient pay, and feeling overworked. These factors held true regardless of employment status or practice type.

# RESULTS

## TOP 3 REASONS FOR DISSATISFACTION AT WORK

### DENTAL ASSISTANTS

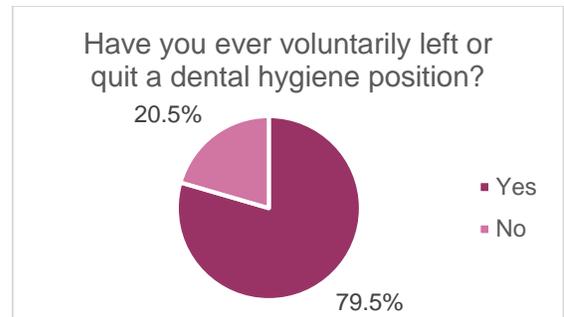
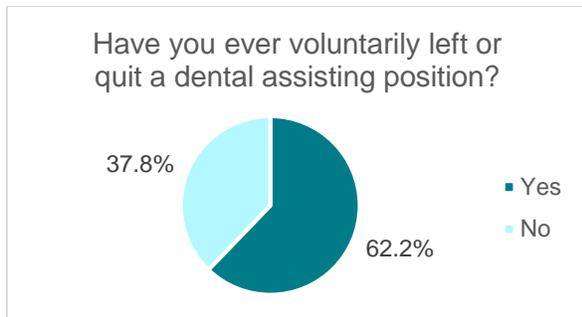
1. Insufficient pay
2. Overworked
3. Workplace culture

### DENTAL HYGIENISTS

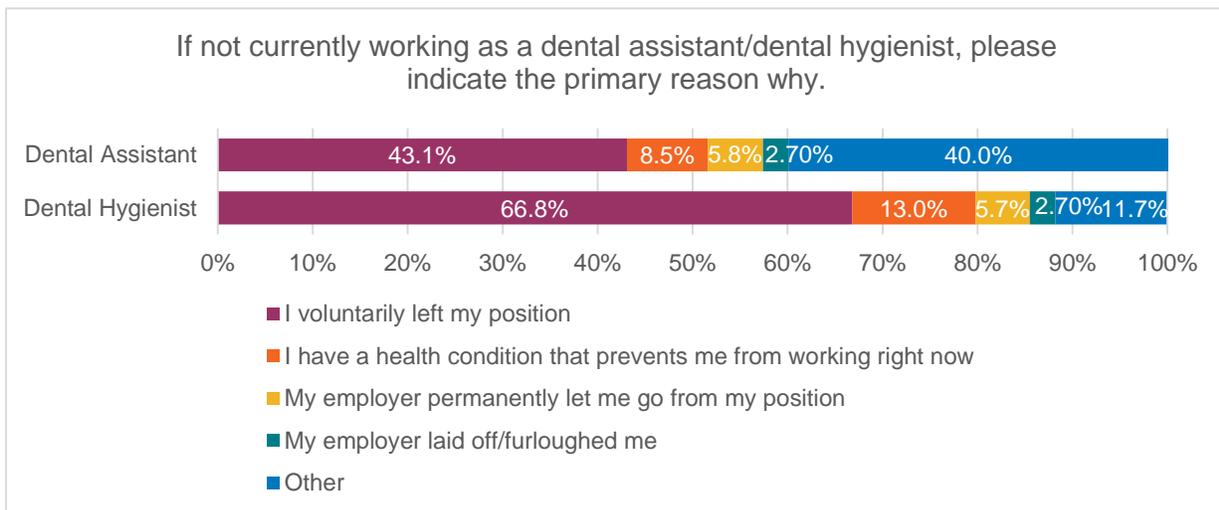
1. Workplace culture
2. Insufficient pay
3. Overworked



About 62% of dental assistants and 80% of dental hygienists indicated they have voluntarily left a dental assisting or dental hygiene position, respectively, in the past.

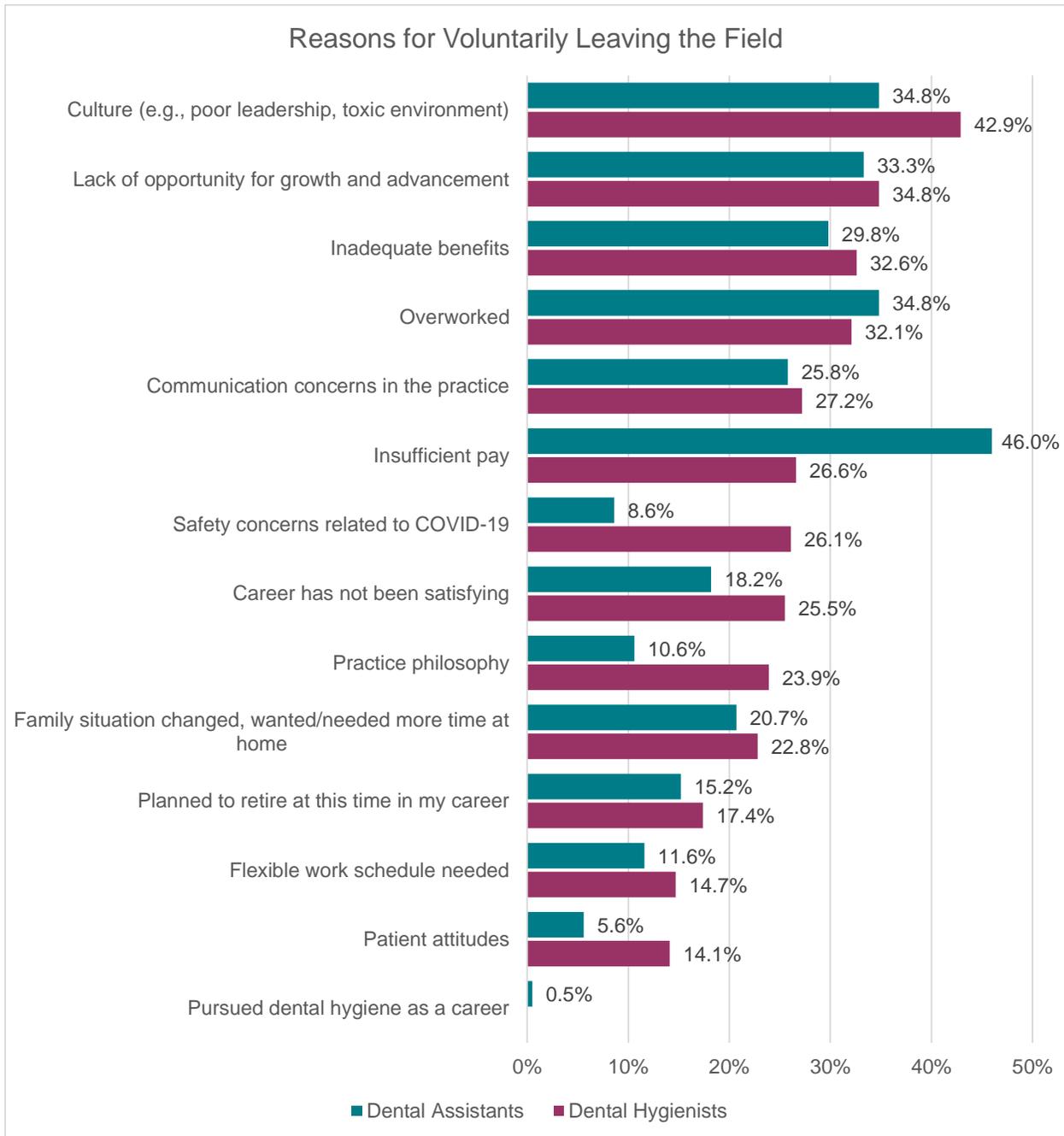


Among dental assistants and dental hygienists who are no longer working in the field, voluntary departures were most common.



# RESULTS

Dental assistants and dental hygienists who are no longer working in the field and opted to leave voluntarily were asked why they stopped working in assisting or hygiene, respectively. The most common reasons among dental hygienists were negative workplace culture, lack of growth opportunity, and inadequate benefits. The most common reasons among dental assistants were insufficient pay, negative workplace culture, and feeling overworked.





# RESULTS

## RETENTION FACTORS

Dental assistants and dental hygienists who indicated high levels of satisfaction in their current role were asked what contributes to this satisfaction. Overall, both dental assistants and dental hygienists attributed their satisfaction to positive workplace culture, ability to help patients, and work-life balance. There is some variation in the order of these benefits by employment status and practice type. For instance, part-time and DSO-employed dental assistants rate flexible scheduling highly. Among both dental assistants and dental hygienists working in DSO and public health settings, “helping patients” is the top reason for workplace satisfaction. Fair pay and adequate benefits ranked highly among dental hygienists in DSOs and public health as well as dental assistants in public health.

### TOP THREE RETENTION FACTORS



1. **Work-life balance**



2. **Positive workplace culture**



3. **Ability to help patients**

# RETENTION STRATEGIES

## RISKS TO RETENTION

From this research, we have identified **six significant risks to retention for dental practices**. The top six reasons for voluntarily leaving the field correspond to the top six reasons for being dissatisfied in one's role. Further, the top six reasons for dissatisfaction or leaving the field align between dental assistants and dental hygienists.

### DENTAL ASSISTANTS



1. Insufficient pay



2. Negative workplace culture



3. Overworked



4. Lack of growth opportunity



5. Inadequate benefits



6. Communication concerns

### DENTAL HYGIENISTS



1. Negative workplace culture



2. Lack of growth opportunity



3. Inadequate benefits



4. Overworked



5. Communication concerns



6. Insufficient pay

# RETENTION STRATEGIES

## RETENTION STRATEGIES



**Benefits offerings need to get up to speed with other industries.** Dental offices are generally offering a basic set of benefits to employees, including paid vacation, paid holidays, and retirement savings. The next challenge to remain a competitive employer and recruiter is to offer health insurance and paid leave. These are widely available in other industries (71% of U.S. workers have health insurance available to them),<sup>20</sup> and dentistry risks losing existing and prospective incoming dental team members if the sector fails to make this adjustment. One dental assistant respondent commented, “I loved the work. I worked hard for 19 years [but] was often left with no health insurance or retirement. I have joined a labor union with incredible benefits, and I encourage other dental assistants to leave and find better workplaces.” The U.S. Chamber of Commerce issued a report in August 2022, conducted by Avalere Health, indicating a significant return on investment of employer-sponsored insurance driven by improved productivity, a reduction in direct medical costs, tax benefits, and retention of employees.<sup>21</sup>



**Wages should make sense in current economic environment.** Wages should be assessed on at least an annual basis, as is done in most other industries. In the current economic environment, inflation is outpacing growing wages.<sup>22</sup> Dentists and other dental employers need to look outside their own practices to ensure their wages are fair. The Bureau of Labor Statistics produces state-level employment and wage statistics to guide these decisions.<sup>23,24</sup>



**Practice personnel crave growth opportunities.** Just as dentists often seek to learn new clinical skills and keep up with the latest technology, other members of the dental team have a similar inclination to keep growing professionally. However, to some, the career pathway in a dental practice can seem like less of an exciting ladder and more like a flat, narrow road. One respondent commented, “Dental hygiene is a dead-end job with no room for growth.” Others cited “monotony in the job” and “not working at the highest skill level” as their reasons for leaving the field. Most members of the team are seeking challenge. When they reach new goals, they feel further connected to their work and workplace. Dentists can engage employees by setting performance goals and identifying skillsets outside of their traditional roles that they could contribute to the practice.

# RETENTION STRATEGIES



## **Employers must encourage a positive workplace culture and work-life balance.**

Fostering a positive environment with healthy team relationships and good communication is paramount. When asked why they were not currently working in dental assisting or dental hygiene, some respondents stated they felt unappreciated, disrespected, overworked, and/or underpaid by their employers. Conversely, those who have high levels of satisfaction commented, “The dentist verbally appreciates our hard work,” and “The dentist does great work and the atmosphere is very pleasant.” Creating this type of atmosphere takes time and energy, and it is not as clear-cut as adding a benefit to the employee package. The payout to the employer and the employees is invaluable.<sup>25</sup> Workers are also demanding that their professional lives complement rather than detract from their personal lives. They need workplace conditions that align with their lifestyle and offer flexibility.

As stated in Milbank’s *Getting Health Care Workers Back to Work and Other Workforce Shortage Challenges* report, “Responses to the health care worker shortages can most usefully be viewed in two categories: those that can be implemented in the short term versus those that will require more time before they can be implemented.”<sup>26</sup> There are a few levers available to dental employers that will have impact in the short term; many of these challenges will require long-term innovations and investments working with seasoned and new partners. As leaders of the dental team, dentists need to embrace these opportunities to support and grow their teams.

# METHODS

## METHODS

This research had two primary study populations: dental assistants and dental hygienists. Any individual at least 18 years old who is or had ever been a dental assistant or clinical dental hygienist was eligible to participate. Study participants were recruited via email invitation to participate in the survey research.

The American Dental Assistants Association (ADAA), Dental Assisting National Board (DANB), and IgniteDA distributed the survey invitation to their contact lists. Approximately 133,000 emails were sent to current or past dental assistants in the initial recruitment effort: 15,000 from ADAA; 100,000 from DANB; and 18,000 from IgniteDA. The American Dental Hygienists' Association (ADHA) distributed the survey invitation to its contact list of roughly 124,000 current or past dental hygienists.

The Dental Team Workforce Shortages survey included questions on workplace satisfaction, factors contributing to satisfaction or dissatisfaction, timing and amount of most recent wage increase, benefits received and the importance of these benefits, and reasons for leaving past jobs.

The contact lists for these organizations were comprised of members, past members, examination applicants, and educational event attendees. The contact lists for the dental assisting organizations involved in participant recruitment were not necessarily mutually exclusive; there are individuals who are on multiples of these email lists. To maintain anonymity of the sample, the contact lists were not compared, and therefore the unique number of current or past dental assistants who received the invitation is not known. Each organization also had the option of posting the survey opportunity to their social media accounts and conference attendee apps.

The survey was administered anonymously and exclusively online in June 2022 using the Qualtrics (Provo, UT) platform. Qualtrics functionality was used to identify and manage suspected duplicate responses on a case-by-case basis, generally by disposal of the less complete observation. There was no incentive for participating in the survey. The project was deemed exempt from ongoing review by the American Dental Association Institutional Review Board.

The dental assistant and dental hygienist survey research was supplemented by polling research of dentists. Questions that complemented the dental assistant and dental hygiene surveys were fielded as modular components of the Economic Outlook and Emerging Issues in Dentistry monthly poll administered by HPI. The dentist polling research had been deemed exempt from review by the American Dental Association Institutional Review Board in the past.

# METHODS

## SAMPLE

A total of 4,255 dental assistants (DA) and 5,122 dental hygienists (DH) participated in the Dental Team Workforce Shortages surveys. Respondents were predominantly female (DA: 96.3%, DH: 97.5%), White (DA: 79.0%, DH: 86.8%), and non-Hispanic (DA: 87.0%, DH: 90.5%). The majority were employed full time in the field (DA: 63.6%, DH: 53.7%) and working in private solo (DA: 39.4%, DH: 50.4%) or group (DA: 22.0%, DH: 24.0%) dental practices. Additional sample characteristics are included in Table 1.

**Table 1: Sample Characteristics**

		Dental Assistants n=4225	Dental Hygienists n=5122
Gender	Female	96.3%	97.5%
	Male	2.5%	1.6%
	Non-binary/Other description	1.2%	0.9%
Age	Under 35	31.4%	23.7%
	35-44	20.0%	25.6%
	45-54	19.3%	22.4%
	55-64	22.2%	20.2%
	65 and over	7.1%	8.1%
Race	White	79.0%	86.8%
	Black or African American	6.5%	2.9%
	Asian	3.6%	3.5%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	2.0%	0.5%
	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.2%	0.3%
	Other or missing	8.8%	6.0%
Ethnicity	Latino or Hispanic	13.0%	9.5%
	Not Latino or Hispanic	87.0%	90.5%
Employment Status	Full-time (as a DA or DH, 32 hours or more per week)	63.6%	53.7%
	Part-time (as a DA or DH, fewer than 32 hours per week)	10.4%	28.8%
	Employed in a different occupation in dentistry	11.1%	4.5%
	Employed in a different occupation outside dentistry	4.3%	2.3%
	Semi-retired/limited work	2.4%	4.7%
	Fully retired	3.9%	3.0%
	Not employed	4.1%	3.0%
Primary Practice Setting (among those currently employed)	Private solo practice	39.4%	50.4%
	Group dental practice	22.0%	24.0%
	Specialty practice or multi-specialty clinic	14.3%	4.6%
	Dental service organization	7.1%	9.0%
	Public health	8.0%	5.8%
	Academic	2.7%	1.8%
	Military	1.2%	0.4%
	Other	4.4%	3.1%
	Independent hygiene practice	n/a	0.4%

# CONTRIBUTORS

This report was written in partnership between the ADA Health Policy Institute, American Dental Assistants Association, American Dental Hygienists' Association, the Dental Assisting National Board, and IgniteDA. Contributing authors from each organization are listed below.



ADA American Dental Association®

[ADA.org/HPI](http://ADA.org/HPI)

The Health Policy Institute is a thought leader and trusted source for policy knowledge on critical issues affecting the U.S. dental care system. HPI strives to generate, synthesize, and disseminate innovative research for policymakers, oral health advocates, and dental care providers.

Chelsea Fosse  
Rachel Morrissey  
Adriana Menezes  
Marko Vujicic



[ADAAusa.org](http://ADAAusa.org)

The American Dental Assistants Association mission is to advance the careers of dental assistants through education, credentialing, legislative advocacy, and professional activities that improve the delivery of quality dental health care.

Jay Casper



[ADHA.org](http://ADHA.org)

The American Dental Hygienists' Association works to support dental hygienists throughout their career lifecycle and advance the dental hygiene profession by developing new career paths, expanding opportunities for care, and providing the latest training and information.

JoAnn Gurenlian  
Ann Lynch



[DANB.org](http://DANB.org)

The Dental Assisting National Board mission is to promote the public good by providing credentialing services to the dental community. DANB accomplishes this mission through the creation of valid dental assisting exams; recertification requirement integrity; and exams, certificates and certifications.

Hanna Aronovich  
Laura Skarnulis



[IgniteDDS.com/IgniteDA](http://IgniteDDS.com/IgniteDA)

IgniteDA is dedicated to engaging, educating, and empower dental assistants.

Kevin Henry

# APPENDICES

1. Dental Assistant Workforce Shortage Survey
2. Dental Hygienist Workforce Shortage Survey
3. Dentist Polling from Economic Outlook and Emerging Issues in Dentistry
4. Innovations in Shoring Up the Pipeline, Recruitment, and Retention

# APPENDICES

## Dental Assistant Workforce Shortage Survey

### Screener

1. Have you ever worked as a dental assistant?

- Yes
- No

### Background/Employment Status

2. In what year did you first start working as a dental assistant?

Please enter year in the format YYYY:

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Since then, have you taken time away from being a dental assistant at any point?

- Yes
- No

If *Since then, have you taken time away from being a dental assistant at any point?* = Yes, display this question:

4. How long were you away?

Years \_\_\_\_\_  
Months \_\_\_\_\_

5. How many different dental employers have you worked for or did you work for as a dental assistant throughout your career?

Number of employers: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Which of the following best describes your current employment status?

- Full-time as a dental assistant (32 hours or more per week)
- Part-time as a dental assistant (fewer than 32 hours per week)
- Semi-retired/limited work as a dental assistant
- Fully retired from dental assisting
- Employed in a different occupation in dentistry
- Employed in a different occupation outside dentistry
- Not employed

If *Which of the following best describes your current employment status?* = Fully retired from dental assisting, Employed in a different occupation in dentistry, Employed in a different occupation outside dentistry, or Not employed, display this question:

7. In what year did you stop working as a dental assistant?

Please enter year in the format YYYY: \_\_\_\_\_

If *Which of the following best describes your current employment status?* = Fully retired from dental assisting, Employed in a different occupation outside dentistry, Not employed, display this question:

8. If not currently working as a dental assistant, please indicate the primary reason why:

- I voluntarily left my position
- My employer laid off/furloughed me
- My employer permanently let me go from my position
- I have a health condition that prevents me from working right now
- Other reason, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

# APPENDICES

*If not currently working as a dental assistant, please indicate the primary reason why: = My employer laid off/furloughed me, My employer permanently let me go from my position, display this question:*

9. If your dental practice let you go from your position, please indicate the primary reason why are you not currently practicing:

I have not yet found a new position

I am waiting to be rehired by my dental practice

I do not want to work as a dental assistant while COVID-19 pandemic disruptions continue

I do not want to work as a dental assistant any longer

I prefer not to say

Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

*If not currently working as a dental assistant, please indicate the primary reason why: = I voluntarily left my position, display this question:*

10. Please indicate the reason(s) why you stopped working as a dental assistant (select all that apply):

Planned to retire at this time in my career

Insufficient pay

Inadequate benefits

Family situation changed, wanted/needed more time at home

Lack of opportunity for growth and advancement

Overworked

Culture (e.g., poor leadership, toxic environment)

Communication concerns in the practice

Flexible work schedule needed

Practice philosophy

Patient attitudes

Safety concerns related to COVID-19

Career has not been satisfying

Pursued dental hygiene as a career

Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

*If not currently working as a dental assistant, please indicate the primary reason why: = I voluntarily left my position, display this question:*

11. Please briefly describe what, if anything, would have made you stay working as a dental assistant?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Currently Employed Questions

For the following questions, please respond based on your current or most recent PRIMARY place of employment as a dental assistant. Your primary place of employment is where you work the most hours.

12. On a scale of 1 to 10, how satisfied are you in your current role?

(1=Not at all satisfied, 10=Extremely satisfied)

*If On a scale of 1 to 10, how satisfied are you in your current role? = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, display this question:*

# APPENDICES

13. You indicated that you are at least somewhat dissatisfied in your current role. What are the top 3 reasons why?

- Insufficient pay
- Inadequate benefits
- Work-life balance
- Lack of opportunity for growth and advancement
- Overworked
- Workplace culture (e.g., leadership style, values, coworkers)
- Communication in the practice
- Rigid work schedule
- Practice philosophy
- Unpleasant patients
- Safety is not a priority (e.g., COVID-19 protocols)
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

If *On a scale of 1 to 10, how satisfied are you in your current role?* = 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, display this question:

14. You indicated that you are at least somewhat satisfied in your current role. What are the top 3 reasons why?

- Fair pay
- Adequate benefits
- Work-life balance
- Opportunity for growth and advancement
- Reasonable workload
- Workplace culture (e.g., leadership style, values, coworkers)
- Communication in the practice
- Flexible schedule
- Practice philosophy
- Pleasant patients
- Safety is a priority (e.g., COVID-19 protocols)
- Helping patients improve oral health
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

15. Which of the following best describes the location of your primary place of employment?

- Private solo dental practice
- Group dental practice (multiple dentists in one location)
- Specialty practice (i.e., periodontology)
- DSO (Dental Service Organization, i.e., a corporate dental office such as Aspen Dental or Smile Brands)
- Multi-specialty clinic
- Public health clinic/agency
- Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC)
- Community health center (CHC)
- Academic/university/college
- School-based setting
- Military
- Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

16. Please indicate when you began working at your current primary place of employment:

Please enter year in the format YYYY: \_\_\_\_\_

# APPENDICES

17. When did you last receive a raise (wage increase) at your current primary place of employment?

- Within the past year
- 1-2 years ago
- 3-4 years ago
- 5 or more years ago
- Never

If *When did you last receive a raise (wage increase) at your current primary place of employment?* = *Within the past year, 1-2 years ago, 3-4 years ago, 5 or more years ago*, display this question:

18. How much was your last raise (wage increase)?

- 1-3%
- 4-6%
- 7-9%
- 10% or more

19. Which of the following benefits do you have through your primary employer? Please select all that apply:

- Paid vacation
- Paid sick time
- Paid holidays
- Retirement savings (e.g., 401K, 403B, SEP IRA)
- Health insurance
- Dental benefits (e.g., free in-house care)
- CE or professional development funds/time
- Paid leave (e.g., FMLA, other forms of maternity or family leave)
- Membership in professional association (e.g., ADHA, ADAA, ADA)
- Licensure or certificate fees
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

Carry Forward Selected Choices - Entered Text from "Which of the following benefits do you have through your primary employer? Please select all that apply:"

20. Below are the benefits you currently receive. Please indicate how important these benefits are to you:

Very important    Somewhat important    Not at all important

- Paid vacation
- Paid sick time
- Paid holidays
- Retirement savings (e.g., 401K, 403B, SEP IRA)
- Health insurance
- Dental benefits (e.g., free in-house care)
- CE or professional development funds/time
- Paid leave (e.g., FMLA, other forms of maternity or family leave)
- Membership in professional association (e.g., ADHA, ADAA, ADA)
- Licensure or certificate fees
- Other, please specify

Carry Forward Unselected Choices from "Which of the following benefits do you have through your primary employer? Please select all that apply:"

# APPENDICES

20. Below are the benefits you do NOT currently receive. Please indicate how desirable these benefits are to you:

Very desirable    Somewhat desirable    Not at all desirable

- Paid vacation
- Paid sick time
- Paid holidays
- Retirement savings (e.g., 401K, 403B, SEP IRA)
- Health insurance
- Dental benefits (e.g., free in-house care)
- CE or professional development funds/time
- Paid leave (e.g., FMLA, other forms of maternity or family leave)
- Membership in professional association (e.g., ADHA, ADAA, ADA)
- Licensure or certificate fees
- Other, please specify

21. Have you ever voluntarily left or quit a dental assistant position?

- Yes
- No

If *Have you ever voluntarily left or quit a dental assistant position?* = Yes, display this question:

22. Thinking about the most recent position you left or quit voluntarily, please briefly describe the reason(s) for your departure:

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If *Have you ever voluntarily left or quit a dental assistant position?* = Yes, display this question:

23. Was there anything that could have prevented your departure from the most recent dental assisting position you left voluntarily? Please describe.

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24. Given your current work situation, what is your best estimate as to when you will retire from dental assisting?

- Within the next 12 months
- In the next 1-2 years
- 3-5 years from now
- 6-10 years from now
- 11-20 years from now
- More than 20 years from now

25. Are you currently a member of any of the following professional associations? Select all that apply.

- American Dental Assistants Association
- American Dental Hygienists' Association
- American Dental Association
- Other professional dental association(s):

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# APPENDICES

26. What initially influenced your decision to start working as a dental assistant? Select all that apply.

- A personal dental experience
- Your dentist or dental office
- Family member or friend who is/was a dental assistant
- Job openings in dental assisting
- Outreach information from a local dental assisting training program
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

27. What best describes your dental assisting educational background? Select all that apply:

- Primarily trained on the job
- High school dental assisting program
- Community college, technical school, or similar training program that was less than 3 months
- Community college, technical school, or similar training program that was between 3 and 12 months
- Community college, technical school, or similar training program that was more than 12 months
- Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

28. Are you personally registered or licensed as a dental assistant in your state?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know
- My state does not offer registration or licensure for dental assistants

29. Do you have a license or permit to perform expanded functions (i.e., are you an expanded function dental assistant or "EFDA"?)

- Yes
- No
- I don't know
- My state does not license EFDAs

If *Do you have a license or permit to perform expanded functions (i.e., are you an expanded function... =* Yes, display this question:

30. Does your employer delegate expanded functions to you?

- Yes
- No

## Demographics

31. Please indicate your gender:

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to say
- Prefer to self-describe: \_\_\_\_\_

32. What best describes your ethnicity?

- Latino or Hispanic
- Not Latino and not Hispanic

# APPENDICES

33. What best describes your race?

White (includes individuals with origins in Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa)

Black or African-American

American Indian or Alaska Native

Asian (includes individuals with origins in the Far East, Southeast Asia, and the Indian subcontinent)

Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

Prefer not to say

Prefer to self-describe: \_\_\_\_\_

34. In what year were you born?

Please enter in the format YYYY: \_\_\_\_\_

35. What is the zip code where you primarily work or most recently worked as a dental assistant?

Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

36. (OPTIONAL) If you are interested in participating in other research by the ADA Health Policy Institute in the future, you are welcome to provide your email address. Please note that your email address will NOT be attached or connected to your survey responses to ensure anonymity.

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

# APPENDICES

## Dental Hygienist Workforce Shortage Survey

### Screener

1. Have you ever worked as a clinical dental hygienist?  
Yes  
No

### Background/Employment Status

2. In what year did you first start working as a clinical dental hygienist?  
Please enter year in the format YYYY: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Since then, have you taken time away from being a clinical dental hygienist at any point?  
Yes  
No

If *Since then, have you taken time away from being a clinical dental hygienist at any point?* = Yes, display this question:

4. How long were you away?  
Years \_\_\_\_\_  
Months \_\_\_\_\_

5. How many different dental employers have you worked for or did you work for as a clinical dental hygienist throughout your career?  
Number of employers: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Which of the following best describes your current employment status?  
Full-time as a dental hygienist (32 hours or more per week)  
Part-time as a dental hygienist (fewer than 32 hours per week)  
Semi-retired/limited work as a dental hygienist  
Fully retired from dental hygiene  
Employed in a different occupation in dentistry  
Employed in a different occupation outside dentistry  
Not employed

If *Which of the following best describes your current employment status?* = Fully retired from dental hygiene, Employed in a different occupation in dentistry, Employed in a different occupation outside dentistry, Not employed, display this question:

7. In what year did you stop working as a dental hygienist?  
Please enter year in the format YYYY: \_\_\_\_\_

If *Which of the following best describes your current employment status?* = Fully retired from dental hygiene, Employed in a different occupation outside dentistry, Not employed, display this question:

8. If not currently working as a dental hygienist, please indicate the primary reason why:  
I voluntarily left my position  
My employer laid off/furloughed me  
My employer permanently let me go from my position  
I have a health condition that prevents me from working right now  
Other reason, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

# APPENDICES

*If not currently working as a dental hygienist, please indicate the primary reason why: = My employer laid off/furloughed me, My employer permanently let me go from my position, display this question:*

9. If your dental practice let you go from your position, please indicate the primary reason why are you not currently practicing:

I have not yet found a new position

I am waiting to be rehired by my dental practice

I do not want to work as a dental hygienist while COVID-19 pandemic disruptions continue

I do not want to work as a dental hygienist any longer

I prefer not to say

Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

*If not currently working as a dental hygienist, please indicate the primary reason why: = I voluntarily left my position, display this question:*

10. Please indicate the reason(s) why you stopped working as a dental hygienist (select all that apply):

Planned to retire at this time in my career

Insufficient pay

Inadequate benefits

Family situation changed, wanted/needed more time at home

Lack of opportunity for growth and advancement

Overworked

Culture (e.g., poor leadership, toxic environment)

Communication concerns in the practice

Flexible work schedule needed

Practice philosophy

Patient attitudes

Safety concerns related to COVID-19

Career has not been satisfying

Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

*If not currently working as a dental hygienist, please indicate the primary reason why: = I voluntarily left my position, display this question:*

11. Please briefly describe what, if anything, would have made you stay working as a dental hygienist?

\_\_\_\_\_

## Currently Employed Questions

12. For the following questions, please respond based on your current or most recent PRIMARY place of employment as a clinical dental hygienist. Your primary place of employment is where you work the most hours.

13. On a scale of 1 to 10, how satisfied are you in your current role?

(1=Not at all satisfied, 10=Extremely satisfied)

*If On a scale of 1 to 10, how satisfied are you in your current role? = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, display this question:*

# APPENDICES

14. You indicated that you are at least somewhat dissatisfied in your current role. What are the top 3 reasons why?

- Insufficient pay
- Inadequate benefits
- Work-life balance
- Lack of opportunity for growth and advancement
- Overworked
- Workplace culture (e.g., leadership style, values, coworkers)
- Communication in the practice
- Rigid work schedule
- Practice philosophy
- Unpleasant patients
- Safety is not a priority (e.g., COVID-19 protocols)
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

If *On a scale of 1 to 10, how satisfied are you in your current role? (1=Not at all satisfied, 10=Ex... = 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, display this question:*

15. You indicated that you are at least somewhat satisfied in your current role. What are the top 3 reasons why?

- Fair pay
- Adequate benefits
- Work-life balance
- Opportunity for growth and advancement
- Reasonable workload
- Workplace culture (e.g., leadership style, values, coworkers)
- Communication in the practice
- Flexible schedule
- Practice philosophy
- Pleasant patients
- Safety is a priority (e.g., COVID-19 protocols)
- Helping patients improve oral health
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

16. Which of the following best describes the location of your current primary place of employment?

- Private solo dental practice
- Group dental practice (multiple dentists in one location)
- Specialty practice (i.e., periodontology)
- DSO (Dental Service Organization, i.e., a corporate dental office such as Aspen Dental or Smile Brands)
- Multi-specialty clinic
- Public health clinic/agency
- Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC)
- Community health center (CHC)
- Academic/university/college
- School-based setting
- Military
- Independent dental hygiene practice (owned by an RDH)
- Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

17. Please indicate when you began working at your current primary place of employment:

Please enter year in the format YYYY: \_\_\_\_\_

# APPENDICES

18. When did you last receive a raise (wage increase) at your current primary place of employment?

- Within the past year
- 1-2 years ago
- 3-4 years ago
- 5 or more years ago
- Never

If *When did you last receive a raise (wage increase) at your current primary place of employment?* = *Within the past year, 1-2 years ago, 3-4 years ago, 5 or more years ago*, display this question:

19. How much was your last raise (wage increase)?

- 1-3%
- 4-6%
- 7-9%
- 10% or more

20. Which of the following benefits do you have through your primary employer? Please select all that apply:

- Paid vacation
- Paid sick time
- Paid holidays
- Retirement savings (e.g., 401K, 403B, SEP IRA)
- Health insurance
- Dental benefits (e.g., free in-house care)
- CE or professional development funds/time
- Paid leave (e.g., FMLA, other forms of maternity or family leave)
- Membership in professional association (e.g., ADHA, ADAA, ADA)
- Licensure or certificate fees
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

Carry Forward Selected Choices - Entered Text from "Which of the following benefits do you have through your primary employer? Please select all that apply:"

21. Below are the benefits you currently receive. Please indicate how important these benefits are to you:

Very important    Somewhat important    Not at all important

- Paid vacation
- Paid sick time
- Paid holidays
- Retirement savings (e.g., 401K, 403B, SEP IRA)
- Health insurance
- Dental benefits (e.g., free in-house care)
- CE or professional development funds/time
- Paid leave (e.g., FMLA, other forms of maternity or family leave)
- Membership in professional association (e.g., ADHA, ADAA, ADA)
- Licensure or certificate fees
- Other, please specify

Carry Forward Unselected Choices from "Which of the following benefits do you have through your primary employer? Please select all that apply:"

# APPENDICES

22. Below are the benefits you do NOT currently receive. Please indicate how desirable these benefits are to you:

	Very desirable	Somewhat desirable	Not at all desirable
Paid vacation			
Paid sick time			
Paid holidays			
Retirement savings (e.g., 401K, 403B, SEP IRA)			
Health insurance			
Dental benefits (e.g., free in-house care)			
CE or professional development funds/time			
Paid leave (e.g., FMLA, other forms of maternity or family leave)			
Membership in professional association (e.g., ADHA, ADAA, ADA)			
Licensure or certificate fees			
Other, please specify			

23. Have you ever voluntarily left or quit a dental hygiene position?

Yes  
No

If *Have you ever voluntarily left or quit a dental hygiene position?* = Yes, display this question:

24. Thinking about the most recent dental hygienist position you left or quit voluntarily, please briefly the reason(s) for your departure:

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If *Have you ever voluntarily left or quit a dental hygiene position?* = Yes, display this question:

25. Was there anything that could have prevented your departure from the most recent dental hygienist position you left voluntarily? Please describe.

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26. Given your current work situation, what is your best estimate as to when you will retire from practicing dental hygiene?

Within the next 12 months  
In the next 1-2 years  
3-5 years from now  
6-10 years from now  
11-20 years from now  
More than 20 years from now

27. Are you currently a member of any of the following professional associations? Select all that apply.

American Dental Hygienists' Association  
American Dental Assistants Association  
American Dental Association  
Other professional dental association(s):

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# APPENDICES

28. What initially influenced your decision to start working as a dental hygienist? Select all that apply.

- A personal dental experience
- Your dentist or dental office
- Family member or friend who is/was a dental hygienist
- Job openings in dental hygiene
- Outreach information from a local dental hygiene training program
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Demographics

29. Please indicate your gender:

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to say
- Prefer to self-describe: \_\_\_\_\_

30. What best describes your ethnicity?

- Latino or Hispanic
- Not Latino and not Hispanic

31. What best describes your race?

- White (includes individuals with origins in Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa)
- Black or African-American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian (includes individuals with origins in the Far East, Southeast Asia, and the Indian subcontinent)
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Prefer not to say
- Prefer to self-describe: \_\_\_\_\_

32. In what year were you born?

Please enter in the format YYYY: \_\_\_\_\_

33. What is the zip code where you primarily work or most recently worked as a dental hygienist?

Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

34. Thank you for your participation in this survey. Data collection for this project is complete and you may click "Submit" below if you do not wish to provide your email address for future research.

35. (OPTIONAL) If you are interested in participating in other research by the ADA Health Policy Institute in the future, you are welcome to provide your email address. Please note that your email address will NOT be attached or connected to your survey responses to ensure anonymity.

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

# APPENDICES

## Dentist Polling from Economic Outlook and Emerging Issues in Dentistry

Theme	Question	Polling Wave
Core questions	<p>Which of the following factors prevented your dental practice's appointment schedule from reaching 100% last week? (Select all that apply.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Patient no shows or cancellations &lt;24 hours in advance</li> <li>- Patient cancellations at least 24 hours in advance</li> <li>- Not enough patients making appointments</li> <li>- Trouble filling vacant staff positions</li> <li>- COVID safety protocols</li> <li>- Other, please specify: _____</li> </ul>	All
	<p>Have you recently or are you currently recruiting any of the following positions in your dental practice?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dental hygienists</li> <li>- Dental assistants</li> <li>- Dentists</li> <li>- Administrative staff</li> </ul>	All
	<p>How challenging has it been to recruit the(se) position(s)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Extremely challenging</li> <li>- Very challenging</li> <li>- Moderately challenging</li> <li>- Slightly challenging</li> <li>- Not challenging at all</li> <li>- Not sure/Not applicable</li> </ul>	All
Recruitment	<p>What specifically has been challenging about recruiting dental hygienists and dental assistants? (free response)</p>	February 2022
	<p>What tools have you used to find applicants for your dental hygienist and/or dental assistant positions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dental society classifieds or ads</li> <li>- Online recruitment websites</li> <li>- Posted to dental-specific job boards</li> <li>- Social media</li> <li>- Local hygiene or assisting programs</li> <li>- Used a staffing agency or recruiter</li> <li>- Word of mouth</li> <li>- Other, please specify: _____</li> </ul>	April 2022

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	<p>Have you offered any of these new benefits to dental hygienist or dental assistant applicants that you did not prior to the COVID-19 pandemic?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Raised starting pay rate</li> <li>- Offered new retirement plan</li> <li>- Offered health insurance</li> <li>- Offered a sign-on bonus</li> <li>- Offered paid time off</li> <li>- Changed hours for applicant needs</li> <li>- Other, please specify: _____</li> <li>- None of the above</li> </ul>	April 2022
Reduced capacity	<p>When your practice is FULLY STAFFED, what is the maximum number of patients it could see in a typical week? (numerical response)</p>	February 2022
	<p>Considering your practice's CURRENT STAFFING situation, what is the maximum number of patients it could see in a week? (numerical response)</p>	February 2022
	<p>How many patients did your practice ACTUALLY SEE last week? (numerical response)</p>	February 2022
	<p>How many of each of the following positions in your practice are <i>currently filled</i>? (numerical response in full time equivalents)</p>	May 2022
	<p>How many <i>open positions</i> does your practice have in each of the following? (numerical response in full time equivalents)</p>	May 2022
Pay raises	<p>When did you last give dental hygienists and dental assistants on your staff a wage increase?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Within the past year</li> <li>- 1-2 years ago</li> <li>- 3-4 years ago</li> <li>- 5 or more years ago</li> <li>- Never</li> </ul>	June 2022
	<p>How much was the wage increase, on average?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1-3%</li> <li>- 4-6%</li> <li>- 7-9%</li> <li>- 10% or more</li> </ul>	June 2022

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Benefits	<p>Which of the following benefits do you offer to your employees? (Select all that apply.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Paid vacation</li> <li>- Paid sick time</li> <li>- Paid holidays</li> <li>- Retirement savings</li> <li>- Health insurance</li> <li>- Dental benefits</li> <li>- CE or professional development</li> <li>- Paid leave</li> <li>- Membership in professional association(s)</li> <li>- Licensure or certificate fees</li> <li>- Other, please specify: _____</li> </ul>	June 2022
	<p>Why do you not offer health insurance? (Select all that apply.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Too costly</li> <li>- Don't know how/Unfamiliar with vendors</li> <li>- Not the industry norm</li> <li>- Don't feel it's my obligation</li> <li>- Don't feel it's important</li> <li>- Other, please specify: _____</li> </ul>	July 2022
	<p>Why do you not offer paid leave? (Select all that apply.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Too costly</li> <li>- Don't know how/Unfamiliar with vendors</li> <li>- Not the industry norm</li> <li>- Don't feel it's my obligation</li> <li>- Don't feel it's important</li> <li>- Other, please specify: _____</li> </ul>	July 2022

Note: Complete results are available in the data reports posted at [ADA.org/HP/poll](https://ada.org/HP/poll).

# APPENDICES

## Innovations in Shoring up the Pipeline, Recruitment, and Retention

Below are some of the innovations championed by state agencies, health centers, dental associations, dental schools, and employers to shore up the dental workforce pipeline, fill vacant positions, and support the retention of the dental team.

### Professional Advancement

- [Peak Dental Services offers equity in practice to dental hygienists.](#)
- Tend DSO: Supporting dental assistant employees as they head off to dental school

### Pipeline & Training

- [Maine Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Pilot Program.](#) “The program will attract and retain health care professionals in Maine by repaying outstanding student loans of selected participants who commit to living and working in Maine for at least three years. [The Finance Authority of Maine] will pay up to \$25,000 per year.” Dental hygiene is one of the prioritized occupations.
- [Maine Department of Education has provided funding to St Apollonia Dental Clinic to develop a hybrid-format dental assistant training program.](#)
- [Partnership Community Health Center in Wisconsin initiated dental assistant training program for refugees with dental experience.](#)
- [Virginia Commonwealth University School of Dentistry is on a “tour” of community college campuses across the Appalachia region, educating students on the opportunities provided by a career in dental hygiene or dental assisting – or dentistry.](#)
- [California Dental Association advocated successfully for additional funding for High Road Training Partnerships](#) to expand dental assisting training programs to new regions of the state.

### Staffing

- [Harbor Dental Society partners with DirectDental to fill vacant job postings.](#)
- [onDiem](#) staffing platform connects dental practices with dental staff in real time.
- [Stynt](#) technology (endorsed by the ADA) “allows dentists to connect with dental professionals for temporary or permanent employment, lets potential workers bid on office openings and eases the onboarding process by providing credential and reference checks.”

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## SUGGESTED CITATION

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