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, prosthodontics. The number of respondents in each practice area/specialty can be found at the end of this report.

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Economic Confidence

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

**General Practice**
890 Responses

- Your particular dental practice?
  - Very confident: 26.0%
  - Somewhat confident: 39.8%
  - Neither confident nor skeptical: 17.3%
  - Somewhat skeptical: 13.6%
  - Very skeptical: 2.0%

- The dental care sector in general?
  - Very confident: 13.7%
  - Somewhat confident: 43.0%
  - Neither confident nor skeptical: 22.0%
  - Somewhat skeptical: 17.5%
  - Very skeptical: 2.0%

- The U.S. economy?
  - Very confident: 21.7%
  - Somewhat confident: 18.0%
  - Neither confident nor skeptical: 33.8%
  - Somewhat skeptical: 22.1%
  - Very skeptical: 2.0%

**Pediatric Dentistry**
53 Responses

- Your particular dental practice?
  - Very confident: 15.1%
  - Somewhat confident: 50.9%
  - Neither confident nor skeptical: 24.5%
  - Somewhat skeptical: 7.5%
  - Very skeptical: 2.0%

- The dental care sector in general?
  - Very confident: 11.3%
  - Somewhat confident: 58.5%
  - Neither confident nor skeptical: 24.5%
  - Somewhat skeptical: 2.0%

- The U.S. economy?
  - Very confident: 28.3%
  - Somewhat confident: 39.6%
  - Neither confident nor skeptical: 18.9%
  - Somewhat skeptical: 11.9%
  - Very skeptical: 2.0%

**Dentists in Public Health Settings**
67 Responses

- Your particular dental practice?
  - Very confident: 28.4%
  - Somewhat confident: 47.8%
  - Neither confident nor skeptical: 11.9%
  - Somewhat skeptical: 9.0%
  - Very skeptical: 3.0%

- The dental care sector in general?
  - Very confident: 14.9%
  - Somewhat confident: 49.3%
  - Neither confident nor skeptical: 23.9%
  - Somewhat skeptical: 9.0%
  - Very skeptical: 2.0%

- The U.S. economy?
  - Very confident: 31.3%
  - Somewhat confident: 20.9%
  - Neither confident nor skeptical: 23.9%
  - Somewhat skeptical: 17.9%
  - Very skeptical: 2.0%
Appointment Schedule

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

Mean % of schedule filled

Dentists in Private Practice

1040 Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Mean % of Schedule Filled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GP</td>
<td>86.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>PED</td>
<td>84.6</td>
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</table>

Dentists in Public Health Settings

65 Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Mean % of Schedule Filled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DiPHS</td>
<td>93.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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**
726 Responses

- Trouble filling vacant staff positions: 29.6%
- Not enough patients making appts: 38.3%
- COVID safety protocols: 5.9%
- No shows/cancellations < 24 hours: 82.6%
- Cancellations 24+ hours prior: 45.7%
- Other, please specify: 7.9%

**Pediatric Dentistry**
49 Responses

- Trouble filling vacant staff positions: 40.8%
- Not enough patients making appts: 30.6%
- COVID safety protocols: 4.1%
- No shows/cancellations < 24 hours: 79.6%
- Cancellations 24+ hours prior: 40.8%
- Other, please specify: 12.2%

**Dentists in Public Health Settings**
37 Responses

- Trouble filling vacant staff positions: 45.9%
- Not enough patients making appts: 16.2%
- COVID safety protocols: 2.7%
- No shows/cancellations < 24 hours: 78.4%
- Cancellations 24+ hours prior: 37.8%
- Other, please specify: 5.4%
### Patient Wait Times

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

#### Mean number of days

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dentists in Private Practice (owners only)</th>
<th>Dentists in Public Health Settings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>948 Responses</td>
<td>67 Responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GP</strong></td>
<td><strong>DiPH</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PED</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

#### Mean number of days

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dentists in Private Practice (owners only)</th>
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<tr>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>37.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PED</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.9</td>
<td></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?

890 Responses

- Dental hygienists: 36.7% Yes, 60.9% No, 13.3% Not sure
- Dental assistants: 32.0% Yes, 65.8% No, 13.3% Not sure
- Dentists: 13.3% Yes, 82.9% No, 13.3% Not sure
- Administrative staff: 23.3% Yes, 74.0% No, 23.3% Not sure

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

512 Responses

- Dental hygienists: 81.0% Extremely challenging, 30.9% Very challenging, 11.9% Moderately challenging, 14.7% Slightly challenging
- Dental assistants: 54.4% Extremely challenging, 30.9% Very challenging, 11.9% Moderately challenging, 11.9% Slightly challenging
- Dentists: 58.5% Extremely challenging, 17.8% Very challenging, 16.1% Moderately challenging, 11.6% Slightly challenging
- Administrative staff: 43.0% Extremely challenging, 32.4% Very challenging, 20.3% Moderately challenging, 13.3% Slightly challenging

- Not challenging at all: 14.7% Dental hygienists, 32.4% Dental assistants, 20.3% Dentists, 13.3% Administrative staff
- Not sure/Not applicable: 14.7% Dental hygienists, 32.4% Dental assistants, 20.3% Dentists, 13.3% Administrative staff
Pediatric Dentistry

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

- Dental hygienists: 30.2% Yes, 67.9% No, 18.9% Not sure
- Dental assistants: 52.8% Yes, 47.2% No, 20.0% Not sure
- Dentists: 18.9% Yes, 79.2% No, 9.3% Not sure
- Administrative staff: 30.2% Yes, 66.0% No, 3.8% Not sure

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

- Dental hygienists: 75.0% Extremely challenging, 25.0% Very challenging, 10.0% Moderately challenging, 1.3% Slightly challenging, 3.8% Not challenging at all, 6.3% Not sure/Not applicable
- Dental assistants: 64.3% Extremely challenging, 25.0% Very challenging, 7.1% Moderately challenging, 10.0% Slightly challenging, 6.3% Not challenging at all, 6.3% Not sure/Not applicable
- Dentists: 90.0% Extremely challenging, 10.0% Very challenging, 10.0% Moderately challenging, 3.8% Slightly challenging, 6.3% Not challenging at all, 6.3% Not sure/Not applicable
- Administrative staff: 43.8% Extremely challenging, 25.0% Very challenging, 18.8% Moderately challenging, 6.3% Slightly challenging, 6.3% Not challenging at all, 6.3% Not sure/Not applicable
Dentists in Public Health Settings

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

67 Responses

- Dental hygienists: 47.8% Yes, 49.3% No, 4.9% Not sure
- Dental assistants: 76.1% Yes, 23.9% No, 0% Not sure
- Dentists: 52.2% Yes, 44.8% No, 3% Not sure
- Administrative staff: 46.3% Yes, 44.8% No, 9% Not sure

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

58 Responses

- Dental hygienists: 37.5% Extremely challenging, 40.6% Very challenging, 18.8% Moderately challenging, 18.4% Slightly challenging, 19.4% Not challenging at all, 16.1% Not sure/Not applicable
- Dental assistants: 51.0% Extremely challenging, 23.5% Very challenging, 21.6% Moderately challenging, 18.4% Slightly challenging, 38.7% Not challenging at all, 14.8% Not sure/Not applicable
- Dentists: 51.4% Extremely challenging, 17.1% Very challenging, 25.7% Moderately challenging, 18.4% Slightly challenging, 38.7% Not challenging at all, 14.8% Not sure/Not applicable
- Administrative staff: 25.8% Extremely challenging, 38.7% Very challenging, 19.4% Moderately challenging, 16.1% Slightly challenging, 46.3% Not challenging at all, 21.6% Not sure/Not applicable
### Dentists in private practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specialty</th>
<th>Choice Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Practice (GP)</td>
<td>889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral and maxillofacial surgery (OMS)</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Endodontics (ENDO)</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orthodontics (ORTHO)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pediatric dentistry (PED)</td>
<td>54</td>
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<tr>
<td>Periodontics (PERIO)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prosthodontics (PROS)</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dental public health (DPH)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dental anesthesiology (DENTANES)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orofacial pain (OROFPAIN)</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Setting</th>
<th>Choice Count</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dentist in private practice</td>
<td>1,053</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dentist in public health setting</td>
<td>67</td>
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