

Economic Outlook and Emerging Issues in Dentistry

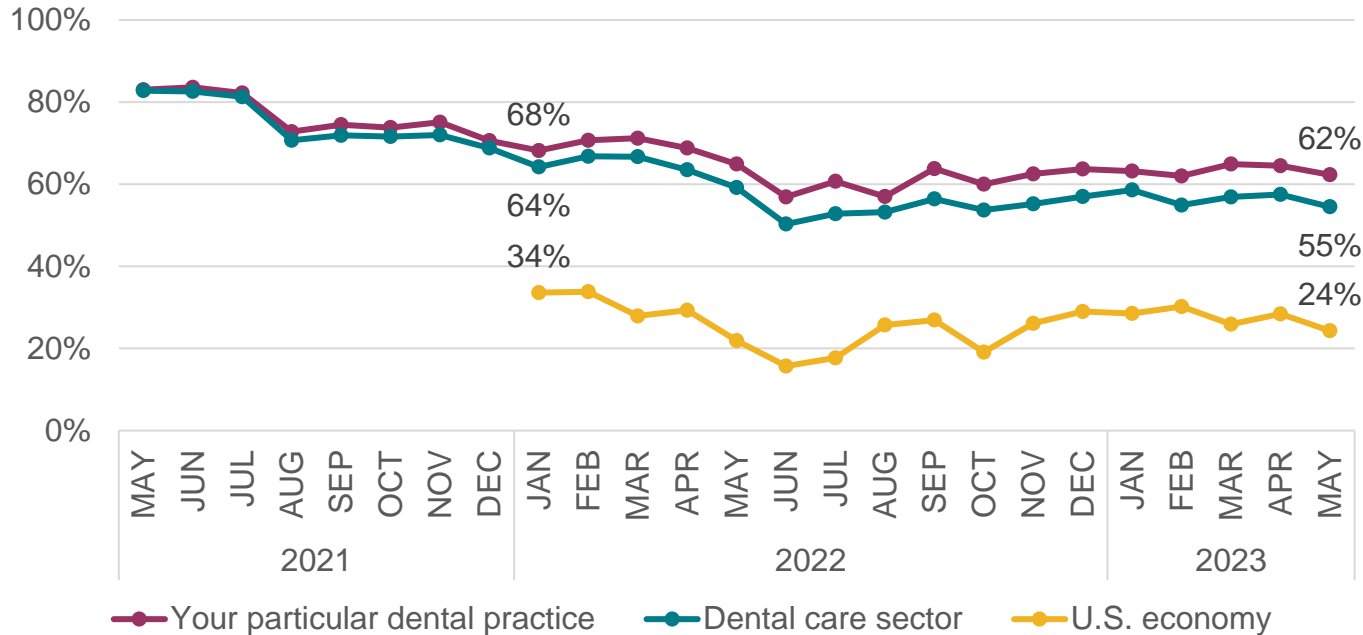
Insights from Data from May 2023

Emerging Issues Polling

- Measuring the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and other emerging issues in dentistry
- Over 3,000 have opted to participate to date. About 1,000 participated in May 2023.
- Data was collected May 16-22, 2023
- Core measures: economic outlook, fullness of practice schedule, schedule barriers, recruitment needs and challenges
- New this month: Filled positions, open positions, and big ticket investment plans
- Complete reports with breakdowns available at [ADA.org/HPI](https://ada.org/HPI)

Confidence in the Economy

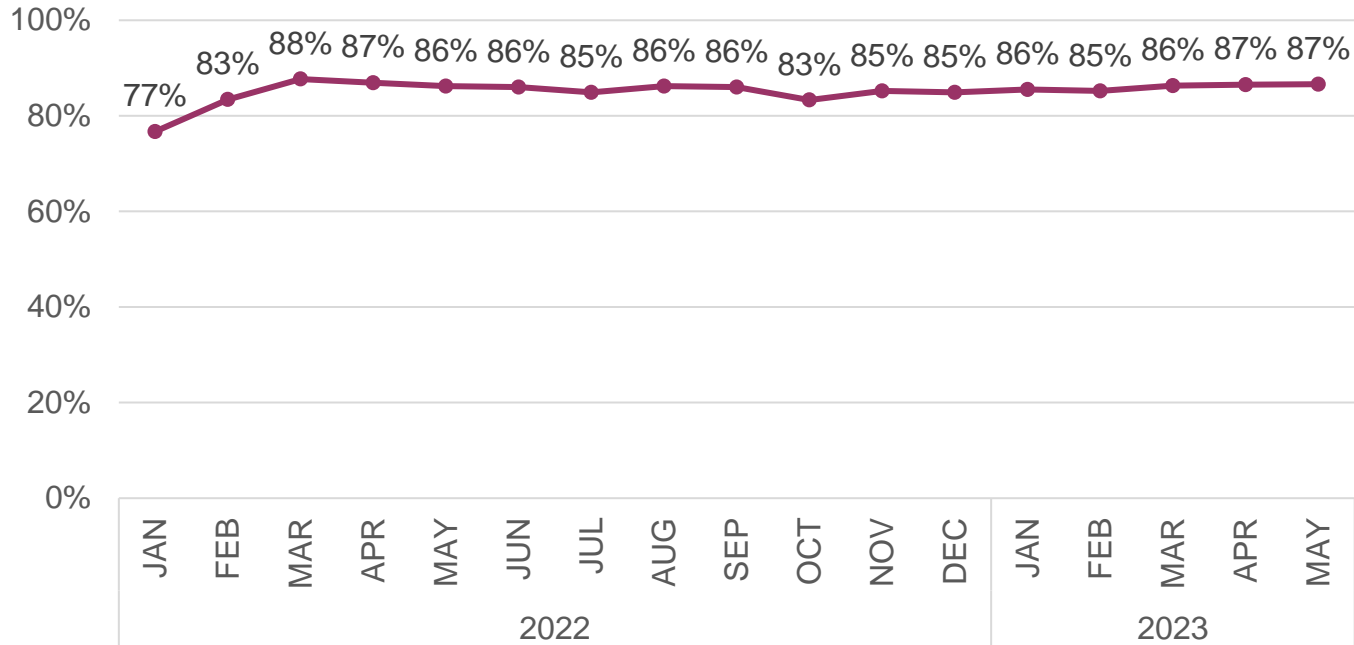
Looking ahead to the next six months, how confident are you in the recovery of the following?
 (Percentages indicating “very” or “somewhat” confident.)



Dentists’ confidence in their dental practice, the dental care sector, and the general U.S. economy dropped slightly in May 2023. Confidence levels remain below a high point in 2021.

Busyness

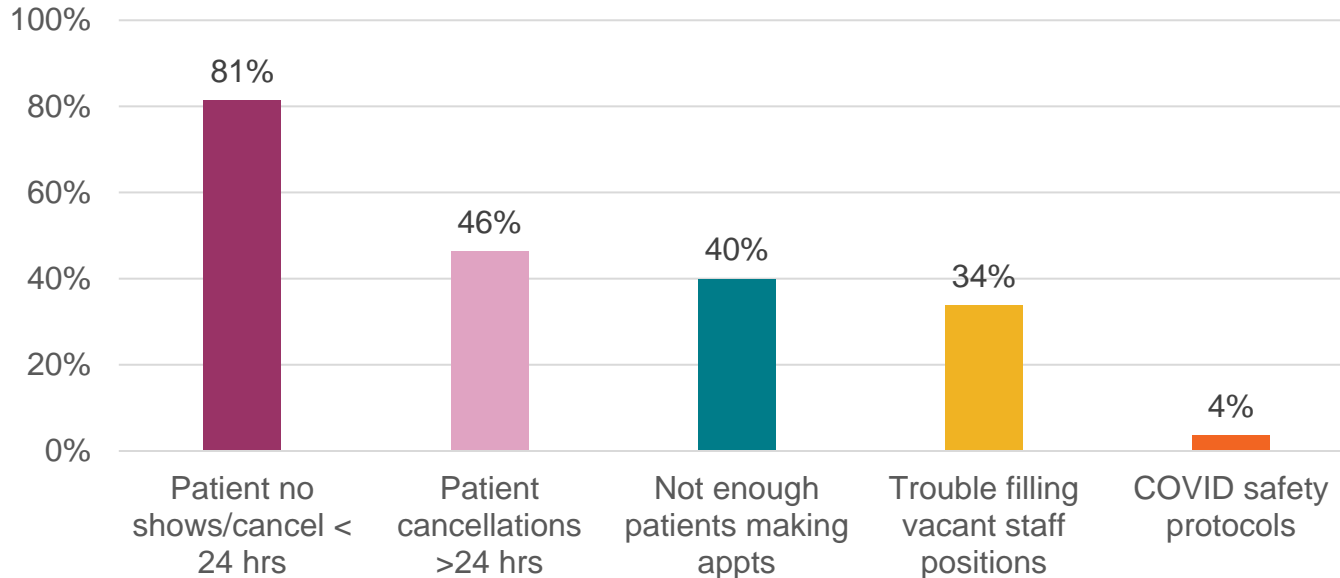
How full was your dental practice's appointment schedule last week?



Dentists' appointment schedules were 87% full in May 2023, following a pretty flat trend over the past year.

Barriers to Reaching Full Capacity

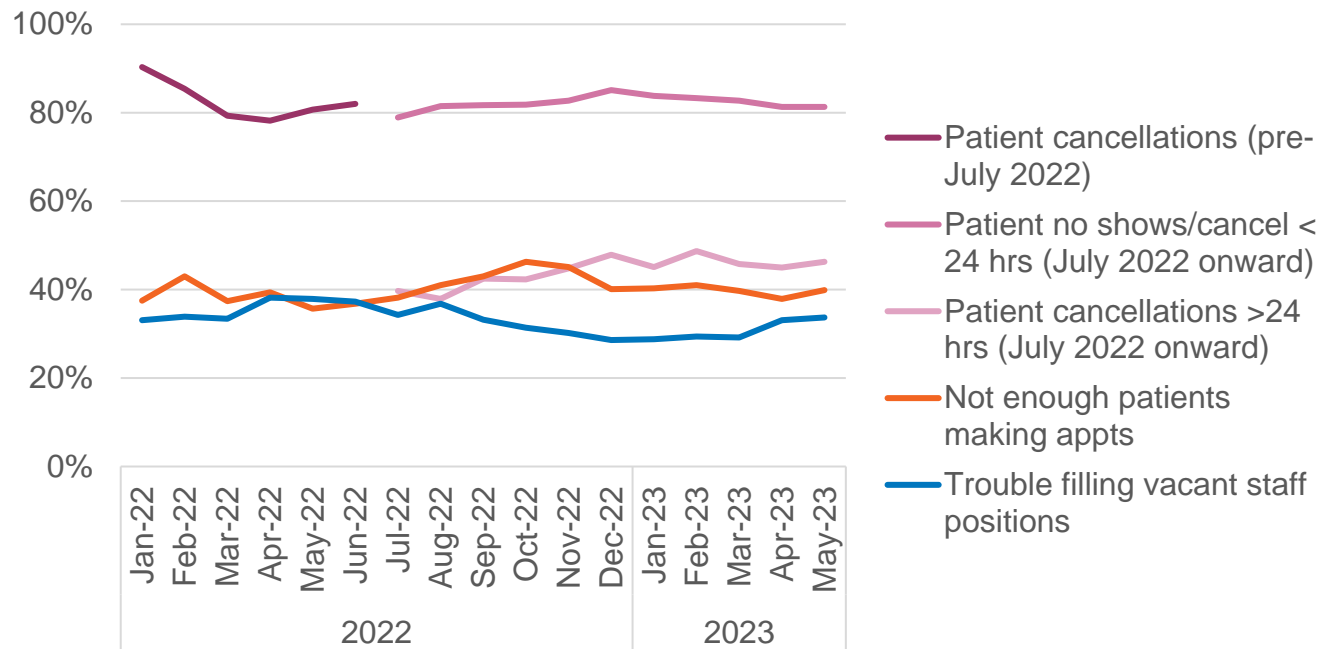
Which of the following factors prevented your dental practice's appointment schedule from reaching 100% last week? (Select all that apply.)



Patient no-shows and late cancellations remained the most common factor for unfilled practice schedules in May 2023.

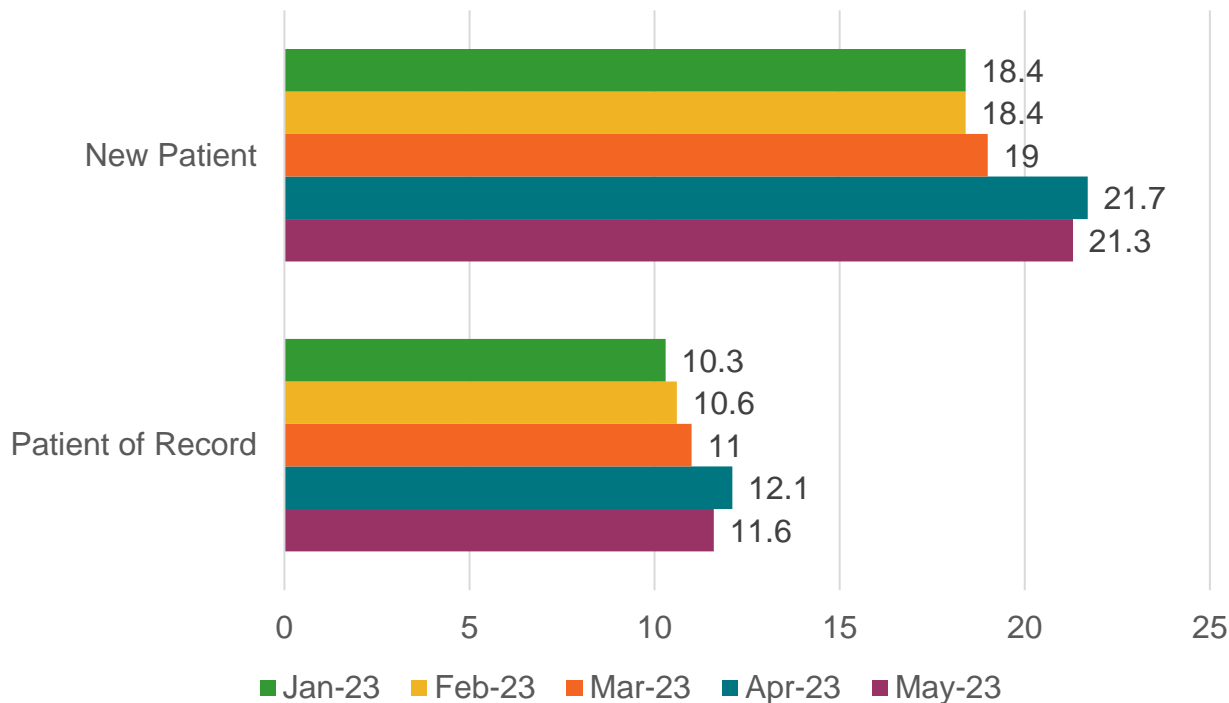
Barriers to Reaching Full Capacity

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



Short-notice cancellation was selected by about 8 in 10 dentists as a reason why their practice schedules are not full.

Average Wait Times



In May 2023, average appointment wait times for new patients and patients of record went down slightly compared to April 2023.

Staff Positions – Filled

[Owner dentists] How many of each of the following positions in your practice are *currently filled*?

May 2022

| Filled positions (FTE) | Mean |
|------------------------|------|
| Dental hygienists | 1.8 |
| Dental assistants | 2.6 |

May 2023

| Filled positions (FTE) | Mean |
|------------------------|------|
| Dental hygienists | 1.8 |
| Dental assistants | 2.6 |

On average, dentists report the same number of filled positions in May 2023 compared to one year ago.

Staff Positions – Open

[Owner dentists] How many *open positions* does your practice have right now in each of the following?

May 2022

| Open positions (FTE) | Mean |
|----------------------|------|
| Dental hygienists | 0.5 |
| Dental assistants | 0.6 |

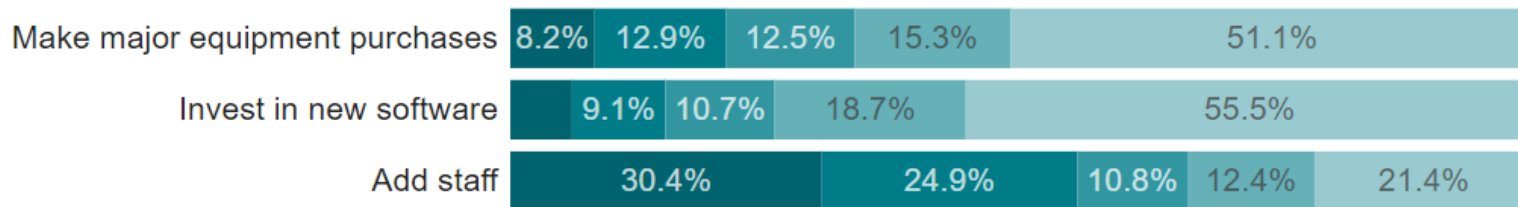
May 2023

| Open positions (FTE) | Mean |
|----------------------|------|
| Dental hygienists | 0.4 |
| Dental assistants | 0.4 |

On average, dentists report having slightly fewer open hygienist and assistant positions in their dental practice in May 2023 compared to one year ago.

Upcoming Practice Plans

In the next six months, how likely are you to do each of the following for your practice?



● Very likely ● Somewhat likely ● Neither likely nor unlikely ● Somewhat unlikely ● Very unlikely

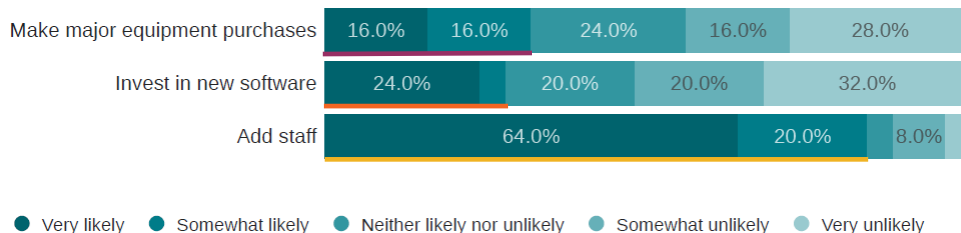
More than half of dentists say they are very or somewhat likely to add staff in the next six months. By contrast, only about 1 in 5 dentists say they are somewhat or very likely to purchase new equipment and 15% say they are very or somewhat likely to invest in new software.

Upcoming Practice Plans by DSO Status

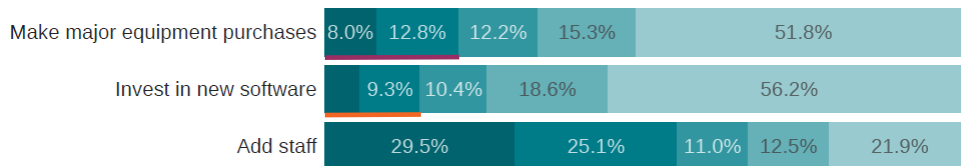
[Owner dentists] In the next six months, how likely are you to do each of the following for your practice?

BY DSO AFFILIATION

DSO



Non-DSO



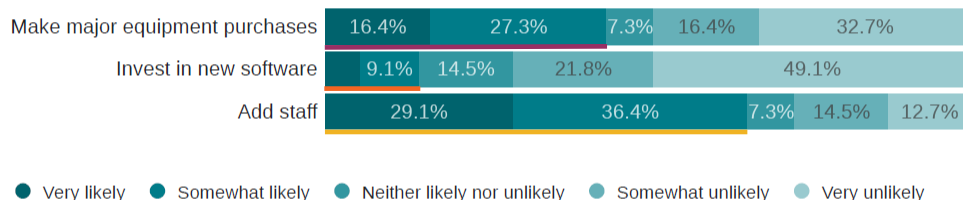
A larger proportion of owner dentists affiliated with a DSO were very or somewhat likely to make investments in these three areas in the next six months than those not affiliated with a DSO.

Upcoming Practice Plans by Career Stage

[Owner dentists] In the next six months, how likely are you to do each of the following for your practice? (continued)

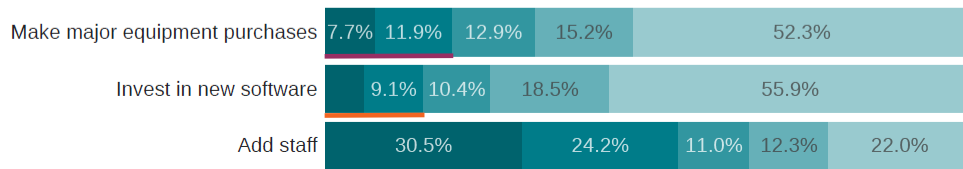
BY YEARS EXPERIENCE

New dentists (graduated 2013-2022)



Similarly, new dentists were more likely to make investments in these three areas in the next six months than more experienced dentists.

Experienced dentists (graduated before 2013)



Key Takeaways

- **Busyness:** Practice schedules have been consistently at about 85% to 87% full on average over the last year. The most commonly cited reasons for underfilled practice schedules are patient cancellations and no-shows.
- **Recruitment Needs:** The number of dentists actively recruiting dental hygienists and dental assistants went up slightly in May 2023. Dentists continue to say recruitment is extremely challenging. The number of reported filled was about the same in May 2022 and May 2023 while the number of open positions declined slightly.
- **Confidence:** Dentists' confidence in various economic sectors has declined since mid-2021 but have been relatively steady over the past several months.
- **Upcoming plans:** More than half of dentists say they plan to add staff in the next six months. Meanwhile, 21% of dentists say they are somewhat or very likely to purchase new equipment and 15% say they are very or somewhat likely to invest in new software. A larger proportion of dentists affiliated with DSOs and of new dentists (graduated 2013-2022) were very or somewhat likely to make an investment than their counterparts.

Thank you!

[@ADAHPI](#)

[ADA.org/HPI](#)

[ADA.org/HPIConsulting](#)

hpi@ada.org



ADA American Dental Association®