Economic Outlook and Emerging Issues in Dentistry

Insights from Data from November 2022
Emerging Issues Polling

- Goal of panel is to measure the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and other emerging issues in dentistry.
- Over 3,000 dentists to-date have opted to participate; roughly 1,100 responded in the most recent wave.
- Data was collected November 8-13, 2022.
- Core measures include economic outlook, fullness of practice schedule, schedule barriers, recruitment needs and associated difficulty.
- Complete reports with breakdowns are available at ADA.org/HPI.
Economic Outlook

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

Dentists’ economic confidence has been stable over the past few months. Holding pattern.
How full was your dental practice’s appointment schedule last week?

Busyness levels have been fairly stable for several months. Holding pattern.
Practice Schedules

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

In October 2022, the share of dentists with practice schedules that are nearly at capacity (81-95% and 96-100% full) decreased slightly. A larger share of dentists report their practices are seeing 81-95% of pre-pandemic capacity.
Scheduling Barriers

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

- Patient no-shows/cancel < 24 hrs
- Patient cancellations >24 hrs
- Not enough patients making appts
- Trouble filling vacant staff positions
- COVID safety protocols

Patient no-shows, cancellations, and not enough patients making appointments are now the top three factors limiting patient volume.
Scheduling Barriers

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

- Patient cancellations (pre-July 2022)
- Patient no shows/cancel < 24 hrs (July 2022 onward)
- Patient cancellations >24 hrs (July 2022 onward)
- Not enough patients making appts
- Trouble filling vacant staff positions

Hiring issues seem to be easing somewhat while not enough patients making appointments is trending upward.
Dental Team Recruitment

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

- Dental hygienists
- Dental assistants
- Dentists
- Administrative staff

Dental assistants and dental hygienists remain the most in-demand members of the dental team, with more than one-third of dentists currently or recently recruiting for these positions.
Dental Team Recruitment

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

![Graph showing recruitment rates for dental assistants, dental hygienists, administrative staff, and dentists from October 2020 to November 2022.]

The hiring pressure on dental assistants and dental hygienists has been declining slightly over the past several months.
Challenges Recruiting

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

<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>80.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental assistants</td>
<td>57.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dentists</td>
<td>61.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>22.9%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative staff</td>
<td>47.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>32.0%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recruitment of dental hygienists continues to be particularly challenging for dentists.
The vast majority of dentists support medical loss ratio provisions in their state.
Most dentists reported they are at least somewhat likely to participate in grassroots efforts to establish medical loss ratio provisions in their states.
Key Takeaways

• **Practice Schedules:** Dental practice schedules have been very steady for the past six months. Schedules were 85% full on average in November. Patient no-shows and late cancellations are largely to blame.

• **Low Patient Demand:** There has been an increase in the share of dentists indicating low patient demand for appointments in recent months.

• **Recruitment Needs:** Dental team recruitment needs declined slightly in November, though dentists continue having difficulty filling positions.

• **Economic Confidence:** Dentists’ confidence in economic recovery has improved modestly since its low in June 2022.
Thank You!

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