

Economic Outlook and Emerging Issues in Dentistry

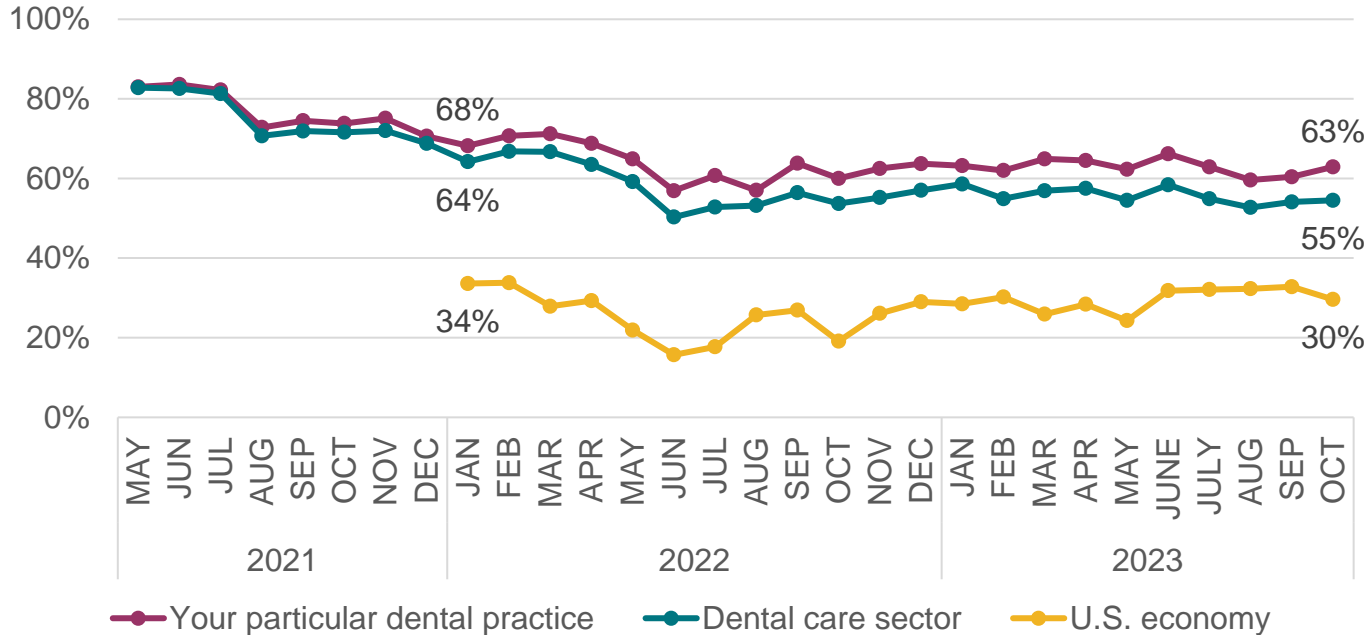
Insights from Data from October 2023

Emerging Issues Polling

- Measuring the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and other emerging issues in dentistry
- Over 3,000 dentists have opted to participate to date; 1,082 participated in October 2023
- Data was collected October 16-22, 2023
- Core measures: economic outlook, fullness of practice schedule, schedule barriers, recruitment needs and challenges
- New this month: staffing levels; workload division
- Complete reports with breakdowns available at [ADA.org/HPI](https://ada.org/HPI)

Confidence in the Economy

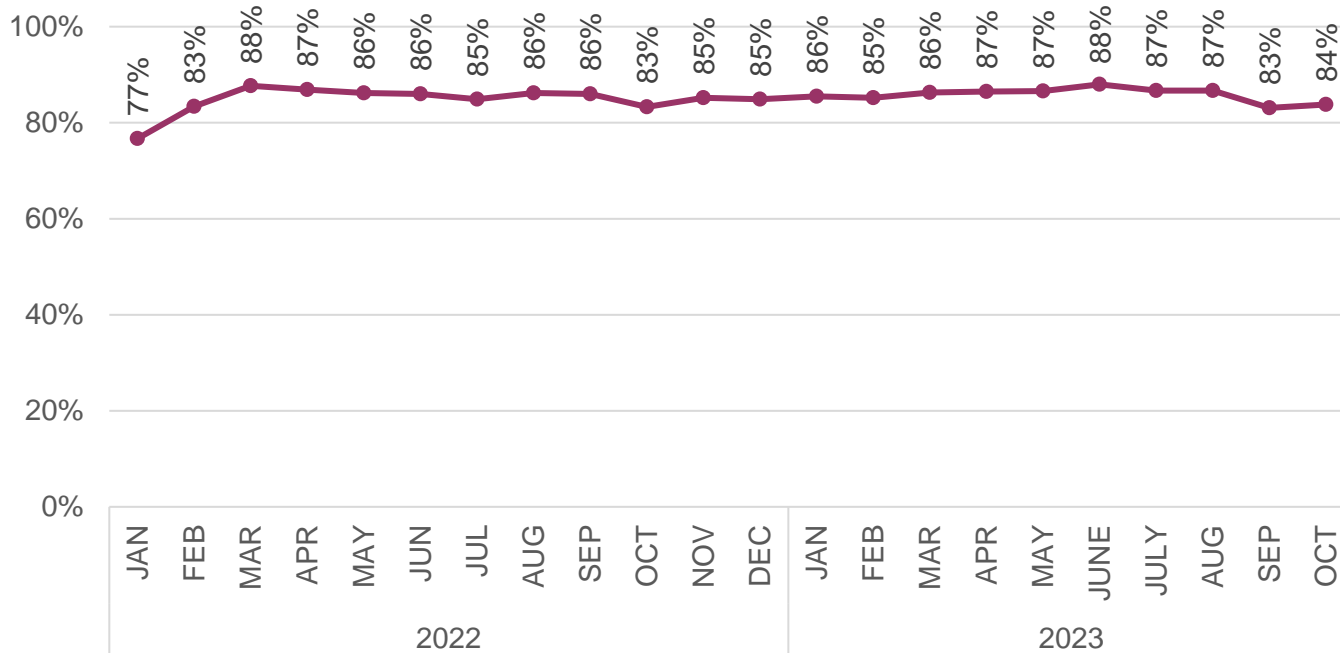
Looking ahead to the next six months, how confident are you in the recovery of the following?
 (Percentages indicating “very” or “somewhat” confident.)



Dentists’ confidence in their dental practice and the dental care sector stayed around the same in October 2023 compared to the previous month while confidence in the U.S. economy went down.

Busyness

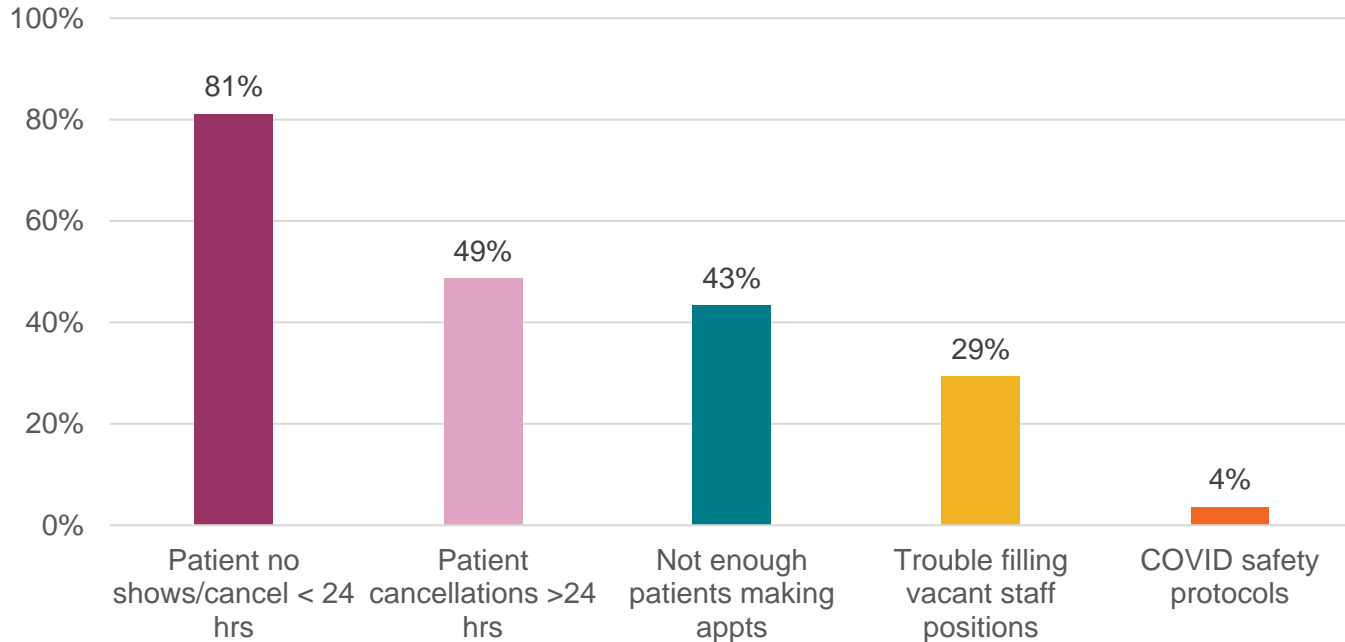
How full was your dental practice's appointment schedule last week?



In October 2023, dentists reported their practice schedules were 84% full, lower than most of 2022 and 2023.

Barriers to Reaching Full Capacity

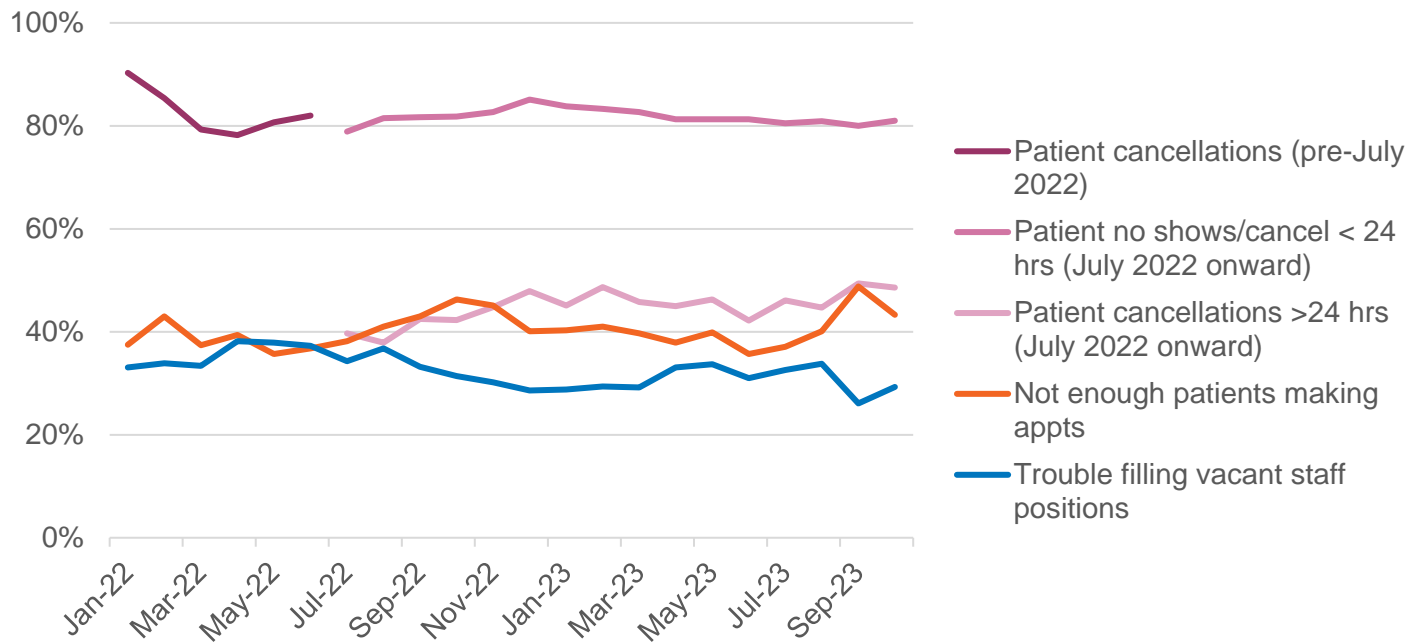
Which of the following factors prevented your dental practice's appointment schedule from reaching 100% last week? (Select all that apply.)



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

Barriers to Reaching Full Capacity

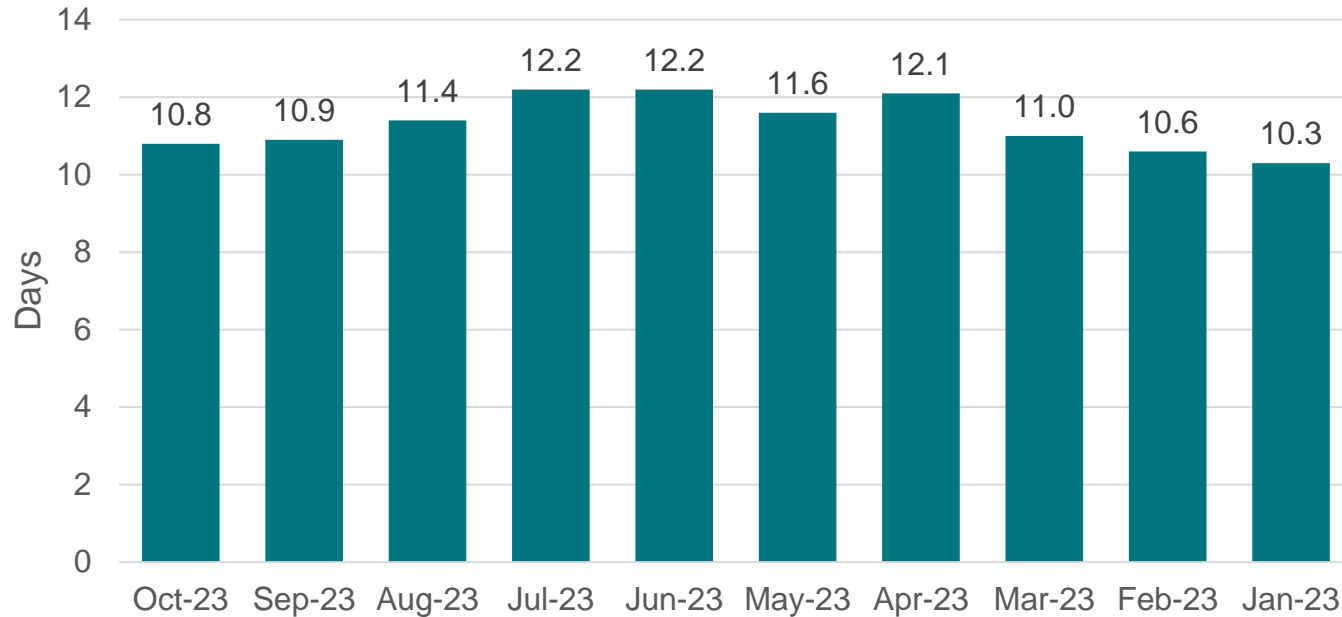
Which of the following factors prevented your dental practice's appointment schedule from reaching 100% last week? (Select all that apply.)



Fewer dentists cite that not enough patients are making appointments while more cite trouble filling vacant staff positions to meet demand.

Average Wait Times

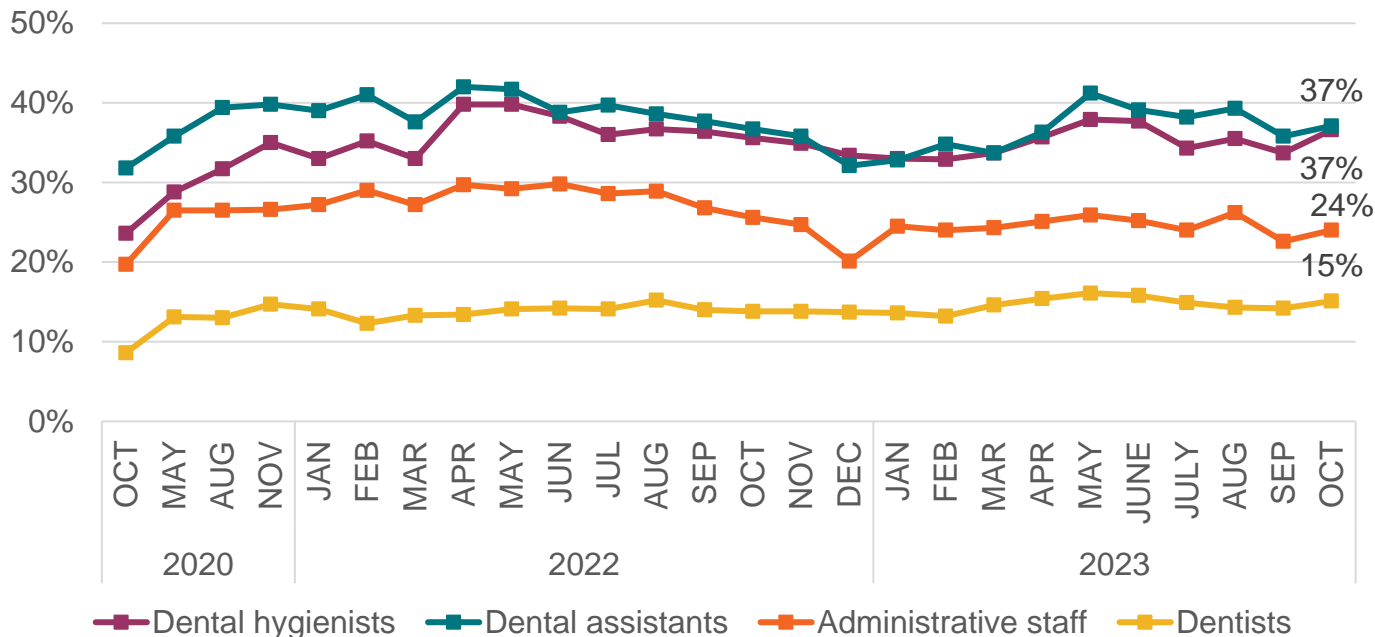
Patient of Record



In October 2023, the average appointment wait time for patients of record was around the same compared to the previous month.

Dental Team Recruitment

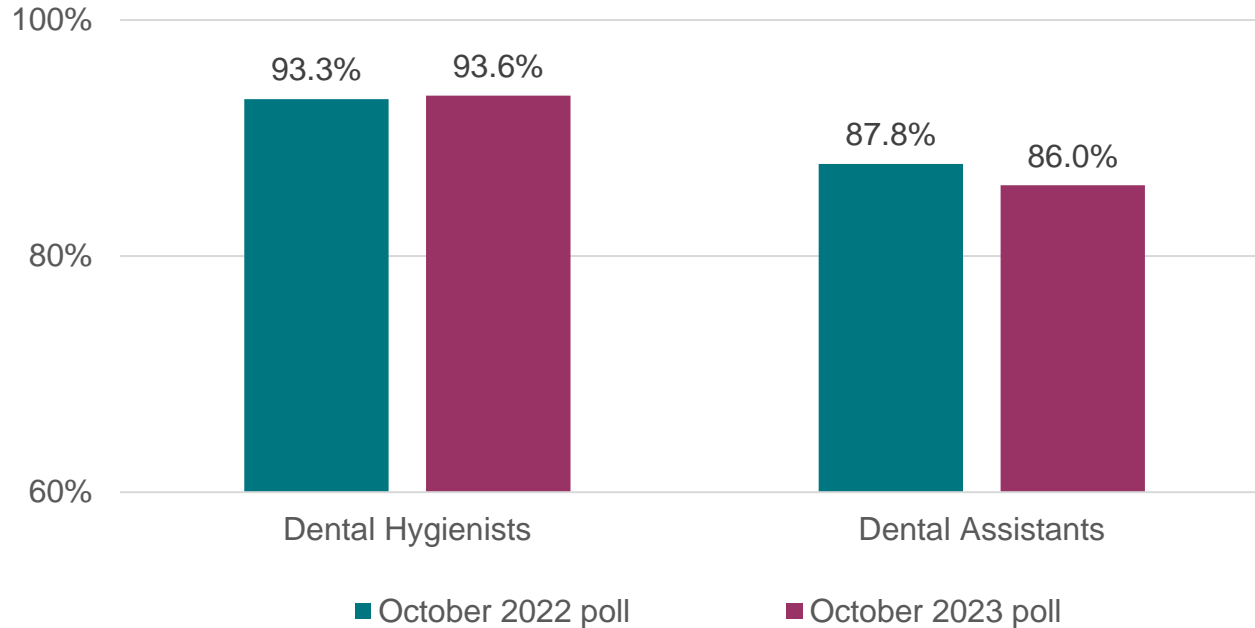
Have you recently or are you currently recruiting any of the following positions in your dental practice? (Percentages indicating “yes.”)



More than one-third of dentists continue to report they are actively recruiting dental hygienists and assistants.

Challenges Recruiting

How challenging has it been to recruit the position(s) below? (Percentage indicating “Extremely Challenging” and “Very Challenging”) October 2022 vs. October 2023



Dentists' perceived difficulty in recruiting dental hygienists and assistants is around the same as it was one year ago.

Practice Non-Dentist Staff

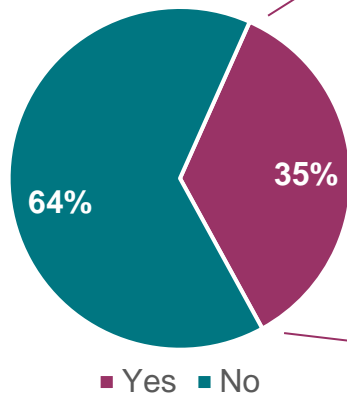
Does your practice currently have an adequate number of non-dentist staff in each of the following categories? (Percentage “Yes”)



While three-quarters of dentists say they have enough office/administrative staff, only two-thirds report they have enough dental hygienists or assistants.

Workload Division Between Dentists and Staff

Compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic, has your practice changed the way the workload is divided among dentists and staff?

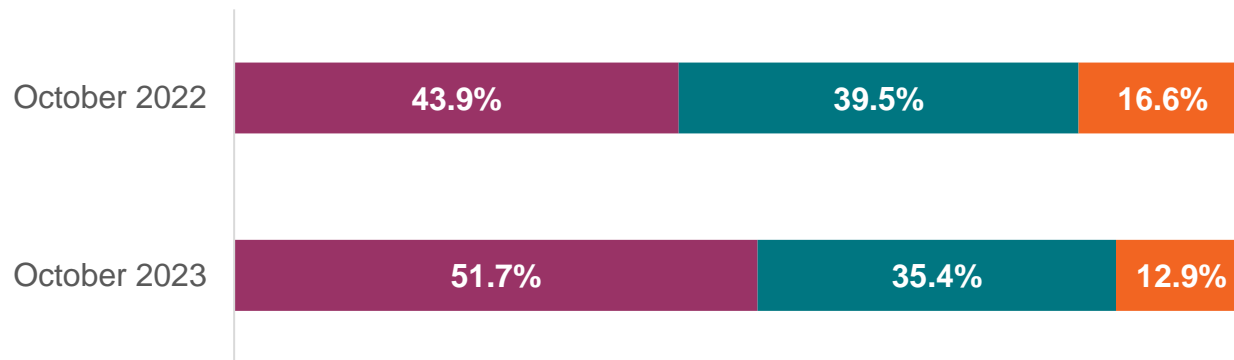


If yes, how so?

Dentist does more hygienist/assistant/admin duties	49.7%
Cross-training staff; multi-tasking	16.2%
Increased responsibilities; maximizing qualifications for clinical staff	14.9%
Increased workload for all staff; Working longer hours	8.8%
Reduced hours or days worked scheduling fewer appointments	4.0%
Increased appointment length	3.7%
Hired additional staff for specific responsibilities	3.7%
Added/retained infection control protocols	3.0%

Future Practice Concerns

Looking ahead to the next six months, which of these concerns you more?



Compared to one year ago, more dentists are saying they are concerned about staffing shortages in their practice.

- Dental team staffing shortages
- Not enough patient demand for care
- Neither of these concern me

Key Takeaways

- **Busyness:** Practice schedule fullness has been at a low point the past couple of months, around 83-84% after hovering around 87%. The most 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 October 2023. Dentists continue to say recruitment is extremely challenging.
- **Confidence:** Dentists' confidence in their practice and in the dental care sector has been steady the past few months. Confidence in the overall U.S. economy has gone down.
- **Workload division:** Two-thirds of dentists say they have an adequate number dental hygienists and dental assistants on staff to meet practice needs. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, 35% of dentists say the workload division between dentists and staff has changed. The most common way the division has changed is dentists are now performing more tasks normally performed by hygienists, assistants, and administrative staff. Other ways include staff are cross-trained or are maximizing their clinical qualifications.
- **Future concerns:** Compared to October 2022, more dentists in October 2023 say they are concerned about the impact of staffing shortages in the next six months.

Thank you!

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