Economic Outlook and Emerging Issues in Dentistry

Insights from Data from September 2022
Emerging Issues Polling

- Measuring the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and other emerging issues in dentistry
- Over 3000 have opted to participate to date, roughly 1100 responded in the most recent wave
- Data was collected September 13 - 18, 2022
- Core measures: economic outlook, fullness of practice schedule, schedule barriers, recruitment needs and associated difficulty
- Complete reports with breakdowns 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’ confidence in economic recovery has improved modestly since its low in June 2022.
How full was your dental practice’s appointment schedule last week?

Dental practice schedules have been in an steady state since early 2022.

In September, dentists indicated that their schedules were 86% full, on average nationally.
How full was your dental practice’s appointment schedule last week?

On average, practices are busier now than they were in early 2022.

Since January 2022, there has been an increase in the share of dentists with practice schedules that are nearly at capacity (81-95% and 96-100% full), and a decrease in the share of dentists with practice schedules that are 80% full or less.
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 (81.7%)
- Patient cancellations >24 hrs (42.5%)
- Not enough patients making appts (43.0%)
- Trouble filling vacant staff positions (33.2%)
- COVID safety protocols (10.1%)

Patient no-shows and late cancellations remained the most common reason for unfilled practice schedules in September.
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

There has been an increase in the share of dentists indicating low patient demand in recent months.
Dental Team Recruitment

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

- Dental hygienists: 36.4% Yes, 61.9% No
- Dental assistants: 37.7% Yes, 60.2% No
- Dentists: 14.0% Yes, 83.0% No
- Administrative staff: 26.8% Yes, 70.6% No

Dental assistants and dental hygienists are the most in-demand members of the dental team, with nearly 4 out of 10 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.”)

Dental assistants and dental hygienists remain in demand in dental practices.

Dental assistants
Dental hygienists
Administrative staff
Dentists
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>77.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td>17.5%</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental assistants</td>
<td>58.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td>28.8%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dentists</td>
<td>56.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative staff</td>
<td>45.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td>33.2%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recruiting dental hygienists and dental assistants continues to be very challenging for dentists.
What keeps dental assistants and dental hygienists satisfied in their roles?

What workplace conditions are to blame for dental assistants and dental hygienists leaving their positions?

What levers are available to recruit and retain a high quality dental workforce?

www.ADA.org/HPI
Key Takeaways

• **Practice Schedules:** Dental practice schedules have been very steady for the past six months. Schedules were 86% full on average in September. 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 remained steady in September. Dental assistants and dental hygienists are in high demand in dental practices, and dentists continue having difficulty filling these positions.

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

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