THE AGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE DENTIST WORKFORCE IS SHIFTING

The average dentist’s age was 49.4 in 2010 and 49.3 in 2020.

Dentists’ average age at retirement was 68.1 in 2010 and 68.2 in 2020, after peaking at 69.1 in 2018.

ETHNIC AND RACIAL DIVERSITY AMONG DENTISTS DOES NOT MIRROR THAT OF THE U.S. POPULATION

In terms of race and ethnicity, white and Asian dentists are proportionally more represented in the profession when compared to the U.S. population. Hispanic and Black dentists, as well as dentists who identify themselves as another race or ethnicity, are proportionally less represented in the profession when compared to the U.S. population.

A HIGHER SHARE OF DENTISTS IS FEMALE

Between 2010 and 2020, the percentage of female dentists in the workforce increased from 24 percent to 35 percent. This increase is expected to continue for several more years, as is evident in the growth of the proportion of female dental school graduates.

HALF OF PRIVATE PRACTICE DENTISTS WORK SOLO

“Solo” denotes a dentist who is the sole dentist in a dental office. They made up 50 percent of dentists in 2019.
DENTIST-TO-POPULATION RATIOS VARY ACROSS STATES
The number of dentists per 100,000 population in the United States was 61 in 2020 and varied across states. The District of Columbia (104), Massachusetts (84.2) and Alaska (80) had the highest ratios in the nation.

DENTIST-TO-POPULATION RATIOS INCREASED FOR MOST STATES IN THE PAST DECADE
The states where the dentists per 100,000 population increased the most between 2010 and 2020 were North Carolina (14.4 percent), Texas (13.9 percent) and Maine (12.5 percent). Seventeen states experienced decreases, ranging from -0.2 percent (Vermont) to -8.7 percent (Idaho).


For more information, visit ADA.org/HPI or contact the Health Policy Institute at hpi@ada.org.