

DENTAL REPORT

Trends Shaping the Future of Oral Health

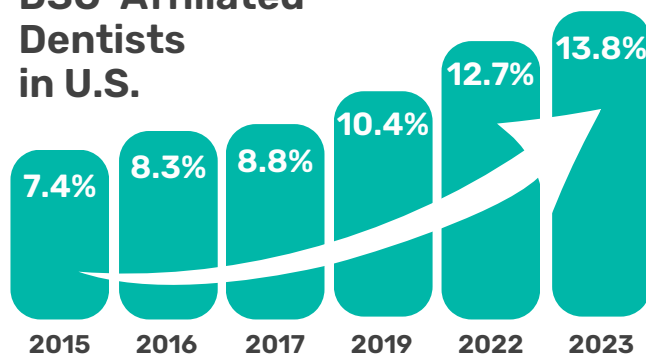


Like the broader healthcare industry, dental health is continuously evolving. From technology and patient-centered care to sustainability and accessibility, the coming years will redefine the way providers and patients approach oral health. Here's a look at a few key changes and trends shaping the future of dental healthcare today.

Large Group Practices & DSOs Grow

Dental Service Organizations (DSOs) and larger group practices are on the rise. According to the Health Policy Institute (HPI) at the American Dental Association (ADA), the percentage of DSO-affiliated dentists has nearly doubled from 7.4% to 13.8% between 2015 and 2023. It's increased for every dental specialty in 2023. That rate is even higher for dentists who graduated less than 5 years ago and 6 to 10 years ago at 27% and 18% respectively (1).





DSO-Affiliated Dentists in U.S.



45% of DSO-affiliated dentists graduated < 10 yrs ago

Top Challenges

In 2024, **82%** of dentists cited extreme stress due to:

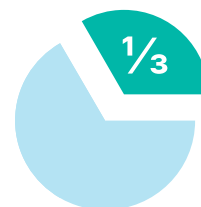
-  Insurance reimbursement
-  Clinical dentistry
-  Labor shortages
-  Patient attitudes

A 2024 Trend Report from the ADA validated the mounting pressures of practice management with insurance reimbursement, labor shortages, clinical dentistry, and patient attitudes contributing to 82% of dentists' major career stress (2).

Insurance reimbursement and dental staffing shortage issues are the biggest pain points for dentists, and most likely among the top reasons they are looking for the administrative support that larger dental organizations and group practices offer. Roughly one-third of dentists are trying to recruit hygienists and assistants today (3). **A 2024 HPI-ADA survey reported that almost 72% of respondents cited it was extremely challenging to recruit dental hygienists and another 46% said the same of dental assistants.** With fewer dental professionals on staff since before the pandemic, 30% of dentists have taken on additional dental responsibilities doing more hygiene procedures (2).

Considering the rapid rate of change and challenges in each of these areas, the trend of dentists leaning in for help through practice consolidation is unlikely to go away anytime soon.

Dentists' Recruiting

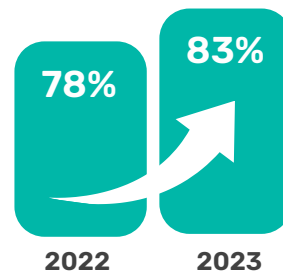


Dental Assistants & Hygienists in Q3-2024

Preventive Dental Use Improves

Dental labor challenges and reimbursement issues aside, importantly, consumers have begun to place greater emphasis on their oral health. Between 2022 and 2023, the number of U.S. adults visiting the dentist for preventive care increased from 78% to 83%. According to a Delta Dental [report](#), more adults were motivated to take care of their preventive dental healthcare in 2023 (4), a positive trend that hopefully continues in the years ahead.

Adults Visiting Dentist for Preventive Care



Some more encouraging oral health [trends](#) in the U.S. involve the improvement of patient access to care (5).

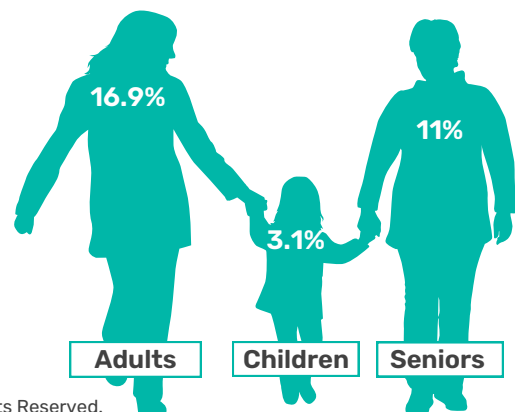
- 1** The percentage of kids without dental insurance coverage fell to its lowest recorded level since 2002 at 8% in 2022.
- 2** Dentist visits increased slightly population wide to an estimated 45% between 2021 and 2022, regardless of age, income, race/ethnicity, and insurance type.
- 3** Use of most oral health services [rebounded](#) to pre-COVID levels in 2022.

Cost Barriers to Care

Unfortunately, financial roadblocks to dental care are [greater](#) than for any other type of healthcare service in the U.S. In 2023, 13% of Americans reported cost barriers to dental care, compared to 4% to 5% for other healthcare services (5). Another ADA [study](#) cited cost as the top reason 36% of surveyed respondents had not visited a dentist in two years (2). Expectedly, people with [lower](#) incomes from all age groups have higher cost barriers to dental care (5).

Did Not Receive Dental Care Due to Cost⁽⁵⁾

IN LAST 12 MONTHS (2023)



AI Technology Drives Dental Change

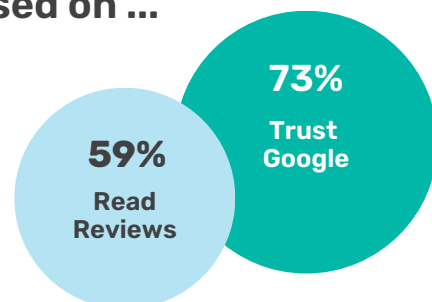


AI will play a significant role in many oral health issues and administrative tasks.

Artificial intelligence (AI) has also made significant strides in the healthcare industry, and dental health is among them. In 2024, AI is already playing a pivotal role in diagnosing oral health issues, automating administrative tasks, and even performing certain dental procedures. **AI has become a game-changer for patient management by helping dental healthcare organizations like Benevis streamline and automate patient appointments, reminders, and follow-ups.** Not only does this technology improve the patient experience, but it eliminates human error and frees up time for dental professionals to focus on other areas of the practice (6).

Technology also drives consumer choice, according to a 2024 ADA Trend [Report](#). When consumers think about choosing or retaining a dentist, 73% of them said they “trust Google” and 59% said reviews affect their decision (2).

Consumers Choose Dentists based on ...



Oral Healthcare Reform Proposed

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As we look ahead, we must prioritize equitable access to oral health services for children and families. Dental practices should evaluate their operational models, assessing opportunities to enhance access to care. They should consider adjusting office hours to accommodate patients' work schedules or their proximity to public transportation. These considerations should be integrated into broader strategies for practice growth and for improving population health. This way, we can give all patients the care they need and deserve.”

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Dr. Jane Whang
Benevis Regional Director of Clinical



For the first time in a decade, the federal government has proposed comprehensive dental care reform.

For the first time in a decade, the most comprehensive reform in dental care is being addressed through new laws and actions by policymakers and leading dental organizations. In 2024, the Comprehensive Dental Care Reform Act, a major piece of federal legislation, passed in Congress to help improve dental care access for Americans in the U.S. It included Medicaid's Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) guidance, which established the requirement that children and youth be entitled to healthcare services that prevent, diagnose, and treat children as early as possible—including dental services (7).

Additionally, to better address infrastructure, diversity in dental careers, dental care training, reimbursement, and research, a coalition of dental groups requested oral health program funding in 2025 (8).

The dental healthcare landscape will continue to transform as new technologies, practices, legislation, and patient expectations redefine the way oral care is delivered.

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(3) American Dental Association's Health Policy Institute. Economic Outlook and Emerging Issues in Dentistry. Published September 2024. Accessed November 19, 2024.

(4) Delta Dental Plans Association. The 2024 State of America's Oral Health and Wellness Report. Published October 29, 2024. Accessed November 19, 2024.

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Benevis is a leading dental healthcare organization for practices focused on delivering critical oral care and orthodontics to underserved communities. Through comprehensive care and operational services that expand access to dentistry, Benevis has a 20-year history of providing the highest quality care to approximately 5 million children and adults. Its network reaches more than 100 dental offices across the U.S. that deliver treatment during 1.4 million visits each year. Benevis also advocates for programs and legislation that ensure all families have access to the oral healthcare they need and deserve.

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