



DENTAL HYGIENIST

2022

Salary Survey



2022 RDH Salary Survey Report

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Report Summary & Highlights

2022 DentalPost RDH Salary Survey Report

From late July through early September 2021, DentalPost conducted the largest and most comprehensive dental professional salary survey of its kind, generating participation from more than 13,000 dental professionals nationwide. This report covers everything from compensation to work environments to the job turnover rate of dental hygienist respondents.

Key Highlights & Takeaways

There was a 25% increase in RDH participation over last year's survey. Despite the significant increase in respondents, we saw the exact proportions of respondents by age, gender, race/ethnic background, and type of geographic location as last year.

- In 2020, 75% of full-time dental hygienist salaries ranged from \$40,000 to \$80,000, with 33.5% of dental hygienists earning \$70,000+ annually and 15.5% earning over \$80,000+ annually.
- In 2021, 72% of the full-time dental hygienist salaries ranged from \$40,000 to \$80,000 with 43% of dental hygienists earning \$70,000+ annually and 21% of dental hygienists earning \$80,000+ annually.
- Dental hygienist income satisfaction rose 30% since last year's survey.
- Among those who indicated they are dissatisfied with their income, the median income is \$64,000, suggesting that it is not just the lowest paid dental hygienists unhappy with their income.
- Compared with last year's survey, conducted from August to September of 2020, there is a significant decrease in the percentage of dental hygienists who intend to apply for new jobs. Last year, 43% declared this intention, and this year only 17% did.

Income

Average & Median Income

State-by-State RDH Income

In the five highest-paying states and the District of Columbia, the average dental hygienist income varied from \$84,000 to \$109,750. In the five highest-paying states and the District of Columbia, the average dental hygienist income in each of these locations was in the range of \$84,000 to \$109,750. The highest paying locations are Washington D.C., Alaska, California, Washington, Maryland, and Nevada.

The following statistics reflect the total 2021 income reported by dental hygienists who work more than 30 hours a week.

\$80,000 +

	MEAN (AVERAGE)	MEDIAN*
Washington D.C.	\$109,750	\$124,000
Alaska	\$93,500	\$76,000
California	\$89,635	\$89,000
Washington	\$88,441	\$90,000
Maryland	\$85,957	\$82,000
Nevada	\$84,056	\$80,000

\$70,000 - 79,000

	MEAN (AVERAGE)	MEDIAN*
Hawaii	\$78,500	\$76,000
Oregon	\$77,677	\$80,000
Virgin Islands	\$76,667	\$75,000
Colorado	\$75,627	\$58,000
Massachusetts	\$75,447	\$75,000
New Hampshire	\$75,284	\$75,000
Virginia	\$75,168	\$75,000
New Mexico	\$74,419	\$72,000
Vermont	\$74,261	\$76,000
Montana	\$74,010	\$70,000
Oklahoma	\$73,899	\$75,000
South Dakota	\$73,262	\$70,000
New Jersey	\$72,390	\$70,000
New York	\$72,376	\$70,000
Connecticut	\$72,073	\$63,000
Louisiana	\$71,710	\$68,500
Arizona	\$70,577	\$70,000

\$60,000 - 69,000

	MEAN (AVERAGE)	MEDIAN*
Texas	\$69,882	\$70,000
Minnesota	\$69,559	\$69,000
Nebraska	\$69,192	\$68,000
Illinois	\$69,055	\$70,000
Missouri	\$68,301	\$65,000
North Dakota	\$68,000	\$65,000
Georgia	\$66,580	\$65,000
North Carolina	\$65,327	\$65,000
Delaware	\$67,300	\$69,000
Wisconsin	\$65,025	\$63,000
Florida	\$64,286	\$62,000
Indiana	\$63,665	\$60,000
Idaho	\$63,133	\$65,000
Arkansas	\$62,912	\$65,000
Iowa	\$62,786	\$56,000
Ohio	\$62,147	\$60,000
South Carolina	\$61,933	\$62,000
Kansas	\$61,869	\$65,000
Tennessee	\$61,473	\$60,000
Maine	\$61,183	\$64,000
West Virginia	\$60,916	\$55,000
Utah	\$60,605	\$68,000

\$40,000 - 59,000

	MEAN (AVERAGE)	MEDIAN*
Rhode Island	\$59,154	\$59,000
Pennsylvania	\$58,786	\$60,000
Michigan	\$58,350	\$57,800
Kentucky	\$54,896	\$55,000
Mississippi	\$54,330	\$53,000
Wyoming	\$54,190	\$59,904
Alabama	\$44,792	\$40,000
Puerto Rico	\$40,000	\$40,000

***50% of respondents in the state earn this income or more.**

Income

Dental Hygienists' Average & Median Income (Continued...)

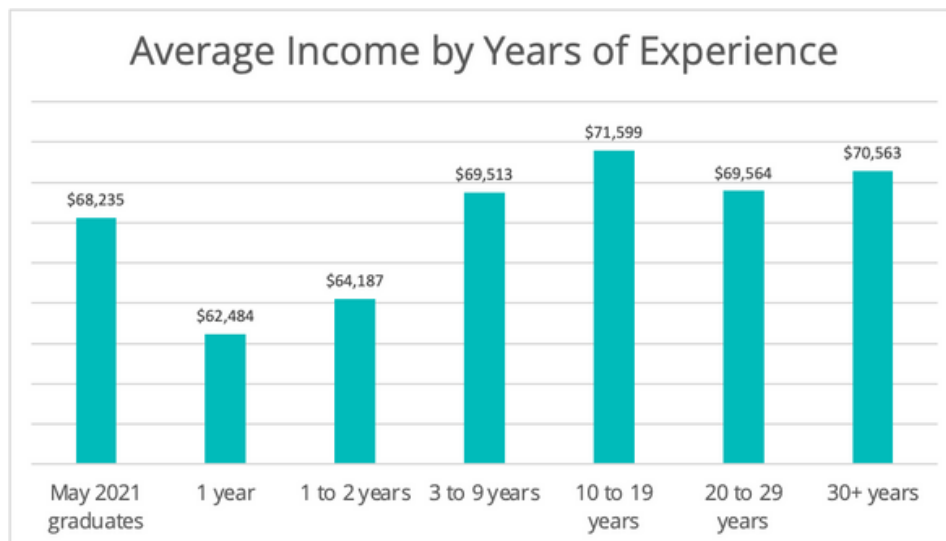
National RDH Income

- **Hourly Wage:** The national average hourly wage for dental hygienists responding to our 2021 survey is \$38.
- **Average Income:** The national average total income for dental hygienists responding to our 2021 survey is \$70,067.
- **Median Income:** Half of all RDHs earn \$70,000 or more.

Average Income Based on Experience

The glass ceiling is a concern for dental hygienists as they advance through their careers. Interestingly, we learned that the top earners are dental hygienists with 10 to 19 years of experience. Their average income is \$71,599.

New dental hygienists who graduated in May of 2021 earn more than hygienists hired in the two prior years.



The top earners are dental hygienists with 10 to 19 years of experience. Their average income is \$71,599.

Income

Dental Hygienists' Average & Median Income (Continued...)

Why do RDHs with 20+ years of experience earn less than those with less experience?

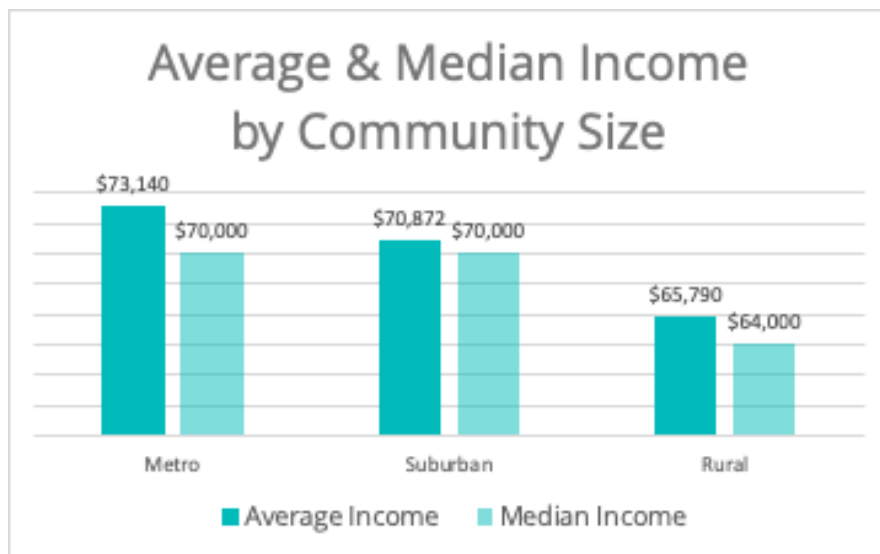
Hygienists with 20-29 years of experience make less than those who started their careers in the preceding decade and the following decade. These hygienists are not working fewer hours on average compared with other experience groups.

Starting wages can have a lifetime impact on income. When those with 20 to 29 years of experience began their careers, economic conditions could have given them a lower start. There was a sharp slowdown in the economy in 1995. The economy started to pick up in 1996, 1998 was better, and then the recession of 2001 hit and kept unemployment stubbornly at 5% that year.

Income by Location Type

The median income for full-time dental hygienists in metropolitan and suburban communities is \$70,000. The median income for full-time dental hygienists in rural areas is \$64,000.

Dental hygienists working in metropolitan communities are paid somewhat more than in suburban communities. The greatest disparity occurs in rural communities. The 2021 average and median income numbers follow for RDHs who work more than 30 hours a week.



Income

Dental Hygienists' Average & Median Income (Continued...)

Income by Employment Type

The following income numbers are based on the reported total income of responding dental hygienists who work more than 30 hours a week.

	AVERAGE INCOME	MEDIAN*
General Private Practice	\$68,939	\$66,500
Corporate Practice	\$73,758	\$73,000
Specialist Private Practice	\$67,868	\$68,000
Public Health	\$71,748	\$71,000
Community Clinic	\$79,224	\$75,000
Military	\$79,572	\$85,000
Hospital	\$71,690	\$75,000
University	\$64,133	\$68,000
Prison	\$66,917	\$66,000
Public Schools	\$67,150	\$68,000
Mobile Clinic	\$59,333	\$58,000
All Other	\$71,103	\$71,000

**Half of the RDHs in this type of employment reported an income equal to or greater than the median income for their employment type.*

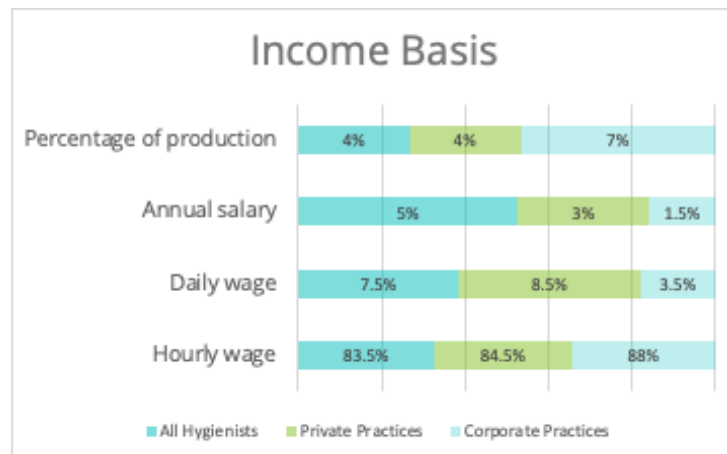
Income

How RDHs are paid.

One of the new questions we asked this year is whether dental hygienists are paid for no-shows or open appointments in the middle of the day. A majority (92%) of respondents said they are paid their full wage for no-shows and open appointments.

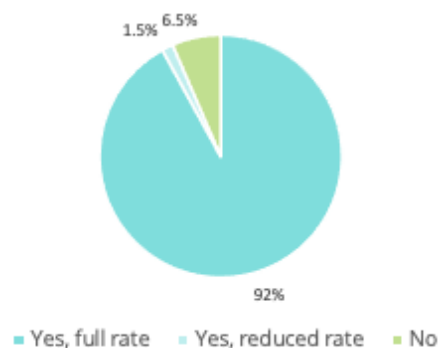
How dental hygienists are paid:

- The vast majority of respondents (84%) said their principal dental income is based on an hourly wage.
- There has been a decrease in the percentage whose income is based on a percentage of production. This is most significant in corporate practices, where the percentage dropped to 7% from 19% one year ago.
- There has been an increase in the percentage of RDHs who are paid a daily wage.



Are hygienists getting paid for no shows or open appointments?

- 92% of RDH are paid their full rate for no shows and open appointments in the middle of their day.
- 1.5% are paid a reduced rate for no shows and open appointments.
- 6.5% receive no compensation for no shows and open appointments.

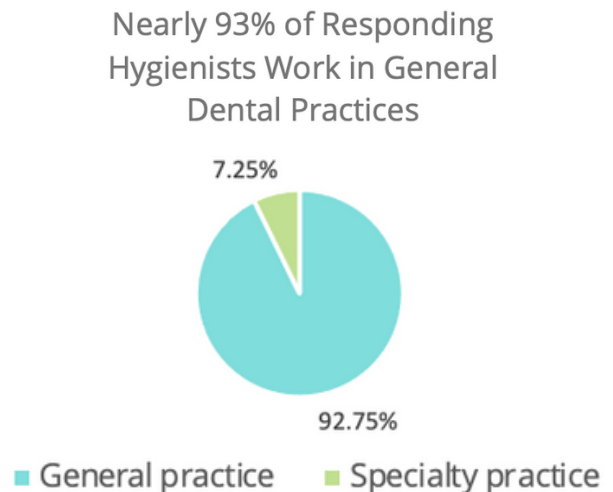
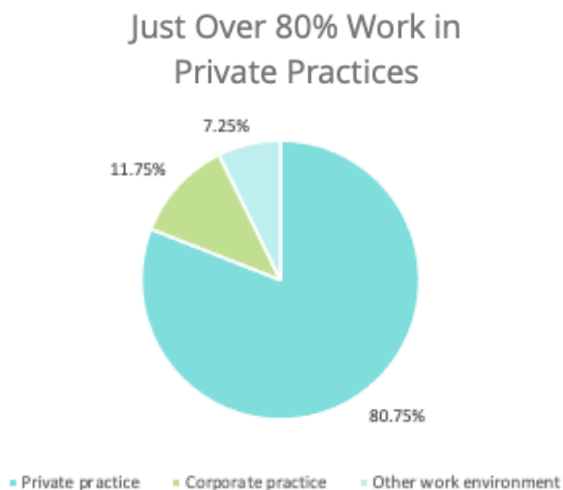


Practice Type / Size & Hours

Types and Sizes of the Dental Practices, Average Working Hours

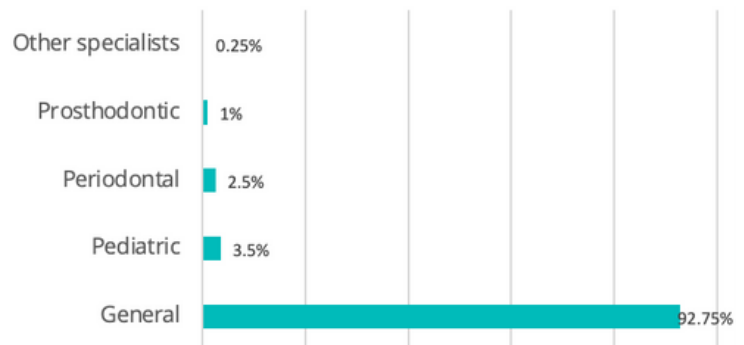
What types of dental practices do RDHs work in?

- A greater percentage of hygienists in each age group are working in corporate dental practices.
- Nearly 93% work in general practice dental offices.
- Nearly 81% work in private practices (general or specialty), 12% in corporate dental practices, and 7% in other clinical settings such as public or community health programs.
- The number of RDHs working in corporate practices is 12% in 2021, compared with 8% in 2020.



Responding Dental Hygienists in General Dental Practices Compared to Specialty Practices

- General 92.75%
- Pediatric 3.5%
- Periodontal 2.5%
- Prosthodontic 1%
- Other Specialists .25%



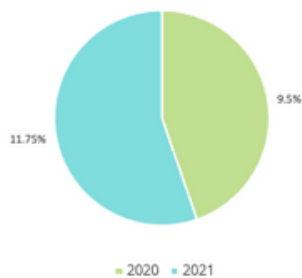
Practice Type / Size & Hours

Types and Sizes of the Dental Practices, Average Working Hours (Continued...)

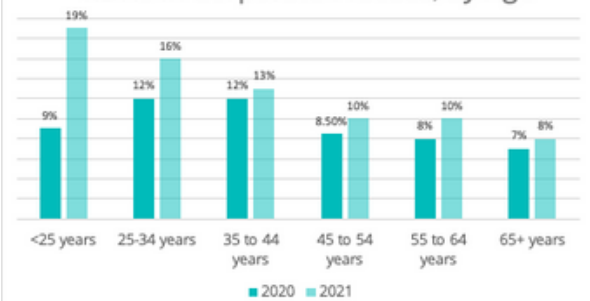
Growth of RDHs in Corporate Practices

There has been growth in the percentage of respondents who work in corporate dental practices this year compared with the previous year's survey results. This growth occurred in all age brackets.

Year-Over-Year Comparison of RDHs Who Work in Corporate Practice



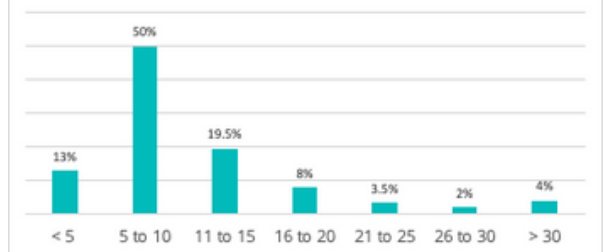
Year-Over-Year Comparison of RDHs in Corporate Practice, by Age



How big are the dental clinics they work in?

- 50% of RDHs work in dental practices with 5 to 10 team members.

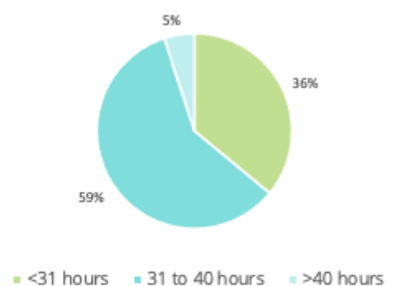
Staff Size of the Practices They Work in



How many hours do dental hygienists work?

- 36% of RDHs work less than 31 hours a week.
- 59% of RDHs work 31 to 40 hours a week.
- 5% work more than 40 hours a week.

Average Hours Per Week



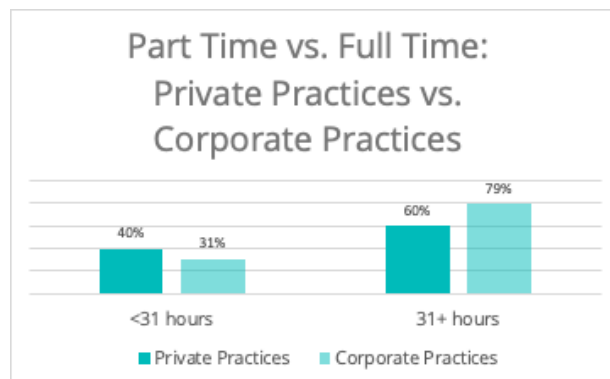
Practice Type / Size & Hours

Types and Sizes of the Dental Practices, Average Working Hours (Continued...)

Full vs. Part Time RDHs

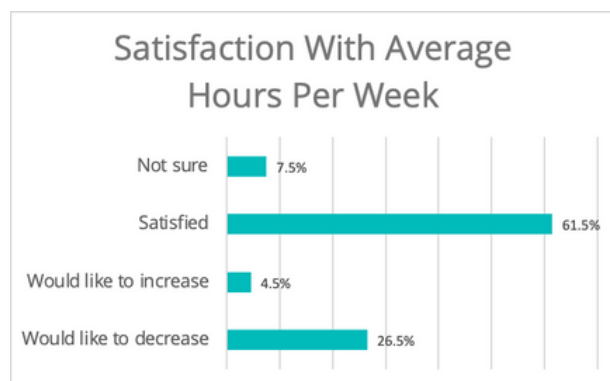
There is a variance between private dental practices and corporate dental practices with a significantly greater percentage of the RDHs in corporate practices working full time.

- 79% of dental hygienists in corporate practices work more than 31 hours a week.
- 60% of dental hygienists in private practices work more than 31 hours a week.



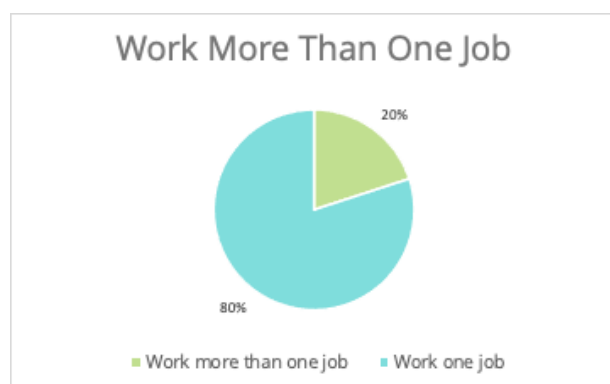
Are dental hygienists happy with their hours?

- 4.5% of RDHs would like to work more hours.
- 26.5% of RDHs would like to work fewer hours.
- 61.5% are satisfied.
- 7.5% are not sure.



How many dental hygienists work multiple jobs?

- 20% work multiple jobs.
- 10% earn income from non-clinical side gigs.
- 10% earn income from clinical side gigs.
- Around 40% of the gig workers are Gen Y millennials (25 to 40 years old).
- Around 30% of the gig workers are Boomers (55+ years old).



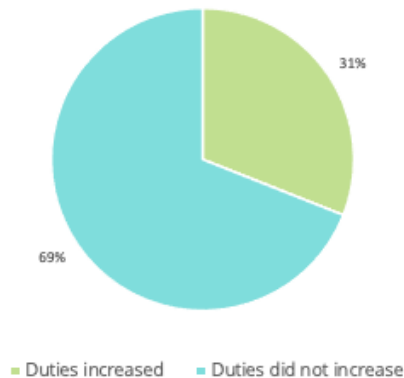
Practice Type / Size & Hours

Types and Sizes of the Dental Practices, Average Working Hours
(Continued...)

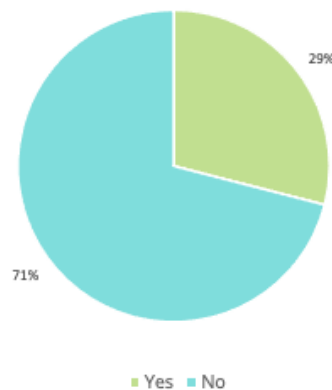
Additional Duties Related to COVID-19

- 31% of RDHs indicated their duties had been increased due to the pandemic, and 69% indicated their duties had not been increased.
- Of those who reported doing more, 29% said they are being compensated for the additional COVID-19 related duties.

Did Their Duties Increase Due to the Pandemic?



Was Pay Increased to Compensate for Increased Duties?

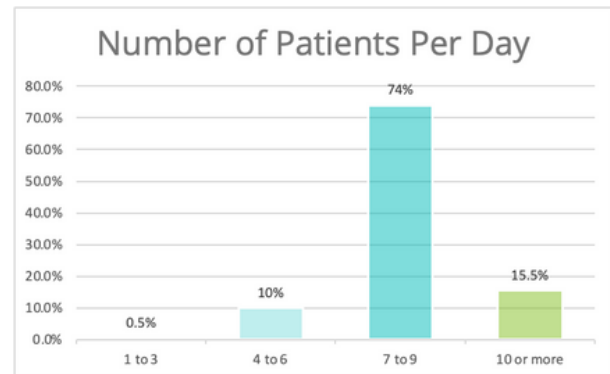


Practice Type / Size & Hours

Types and Sizes of the Dental Practices, Average Working Hours
(Continued...)

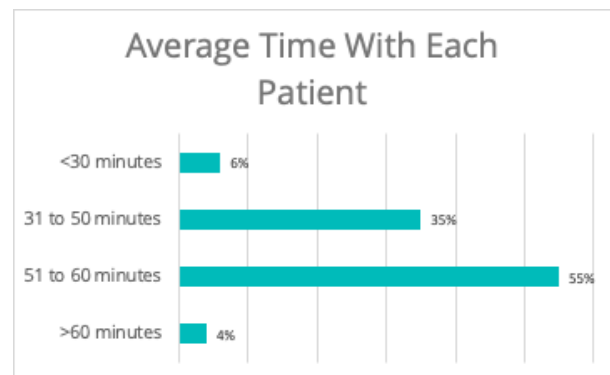
How many patients do dental hygienists see a day?

The vast majority (74%) see between 7 and 9 patients a day.



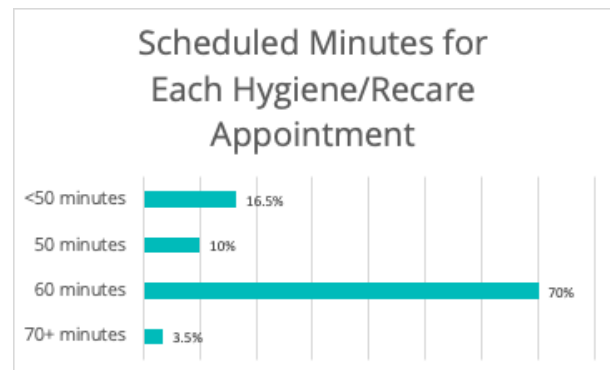
How many minutes do dental hygienists spend on average with each patient?

- 4% spend more than 60 minutes.
- 55% spend between 51 and 60 minutes.
- 35% spend 31 to 50 minutes.
- 6% spend less than 30 minutes, and the majority of these hygienists are employed in pediatric practices.



How many minutes are RDH scheduled for each hygiene/recare appointment?

- 16.5% said less than 50 minutes.
- 10% said 50 minutes
- 70% said 60 minutes.
- 3.5% said 70+ minutes.



Variance in time spent with patients in private & corporate practices:

The variance is slight; 6% more RDHs in private practices spend more than 50 minutes with each patient.

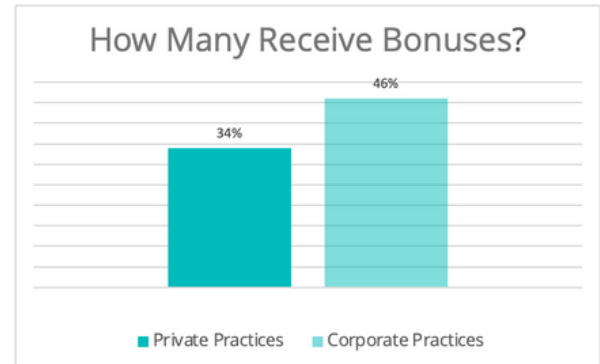
Bonuses

Insights into RDH bonuses in 2021

Comparing Private vs. Corporate Practice

Five out of six dental hygienists responded to questions about income bonuses.

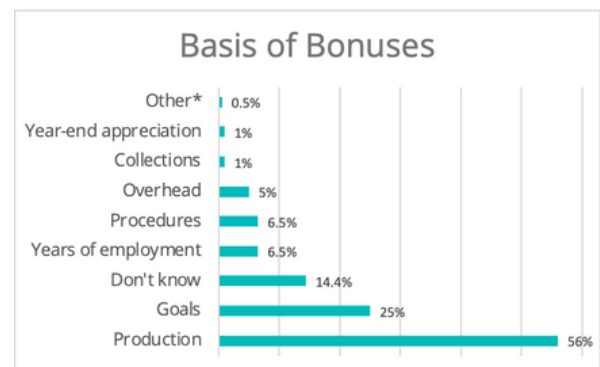
Nearly 35% of responding dental hygienists receive bonuses. There is a disparity between private and corporate practices, with 46% of RDHs reporting they receive bonuses in corporate practices compared with 34% in private practices.



Basis of Bonuses

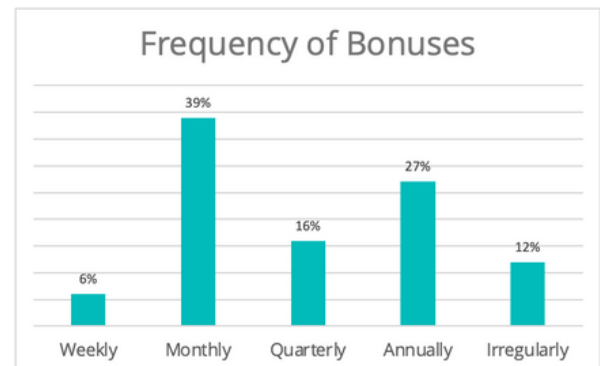
Over half of bonuses are based on production. Some respondents indicated more than one basis because they receive more than one type of bonus.

**Other included end-of-year profit sharing or holiday gifts, Saturday hours, new patient referrals, product sales, patient retention, appreciation*



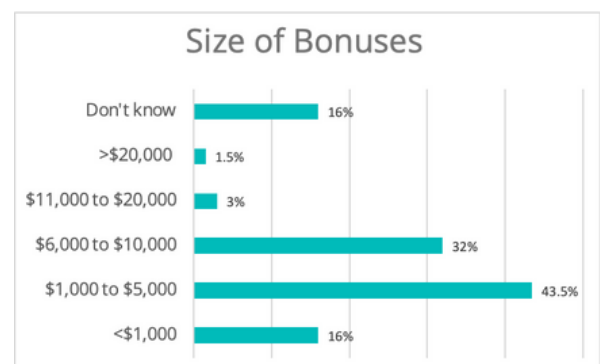
Frequency of Bonuses

Most dental hygienists who receive bonuses reported they receive them monthly or annually.



Expected Bonuses in 2021

44% anticipated their bonuses to total \$1,000 to \$5,000 in 2021.

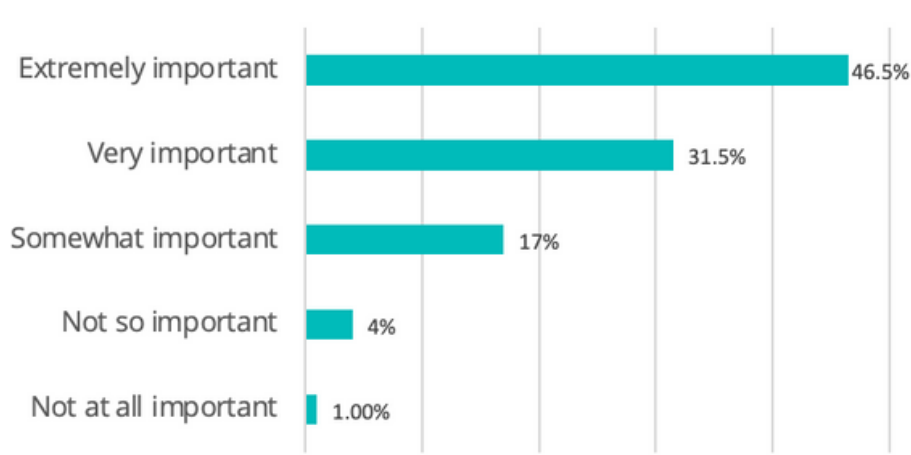


Benefits

Insights Into Dental Hygienists' Benefits in 2021

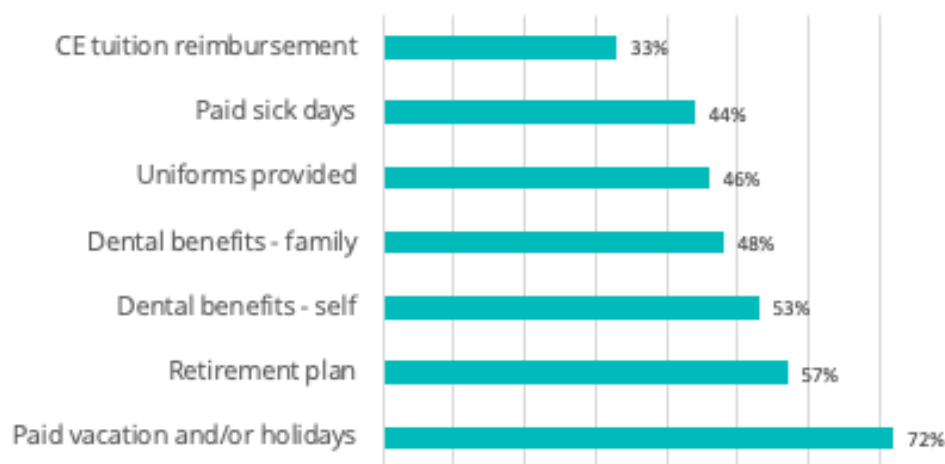
Importance of Benefits to RDHs

Nearly half of responding dental hygienists said employee benefits are extremely important to them, and only 5% said they were not important to them. Only 6.5% said they do not receive one or more employee benefits, although the health benefits they say they want are provided to just over 30% of dental hygienists.



78.5% said benefits are very to extremely important.

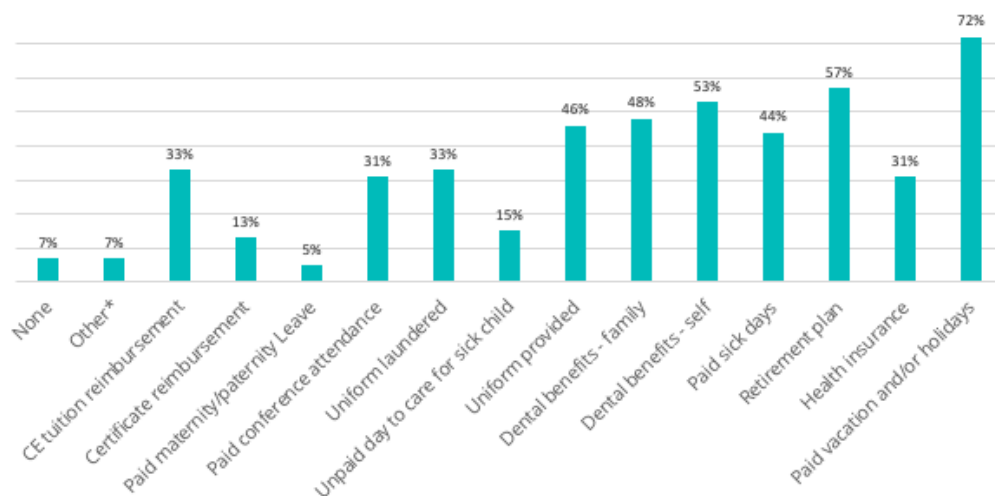
Top 7 Benefits RDHs Receive



Benefits

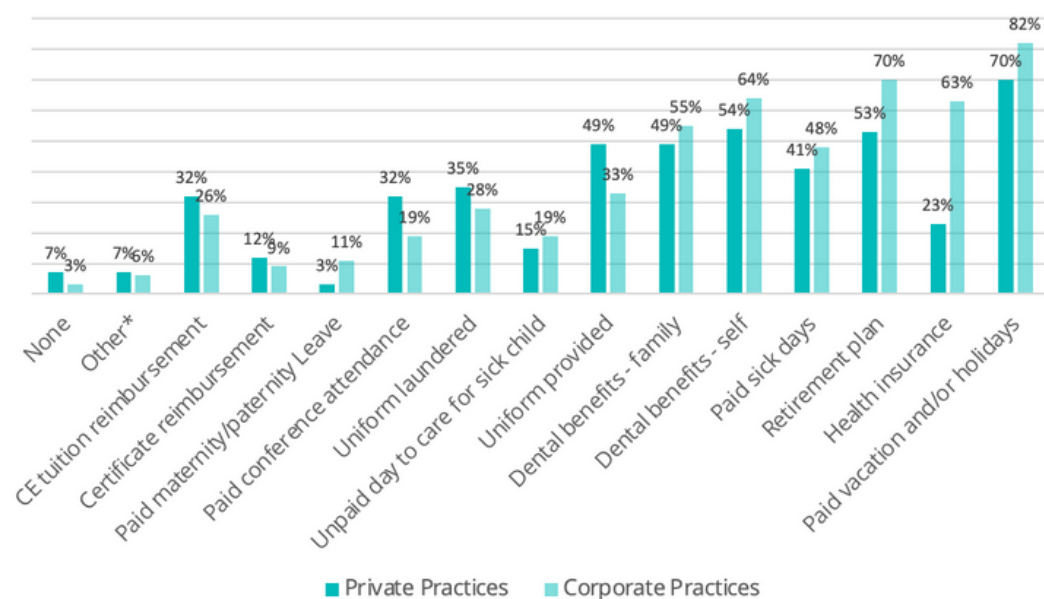
Insights Into Dental Hygienists' Benefits in 2021 (Continued...)

The Benefits Hygienists Receive



The Benefits of Private vs. Corporate Dental Practices

Looking at which benefits dental hygienists receive, there is a difference between those who work in corporate offices and those who work in private practices. Hygienists are 2.7x more likely to receive health insurance benefits in corporate dental organizations.

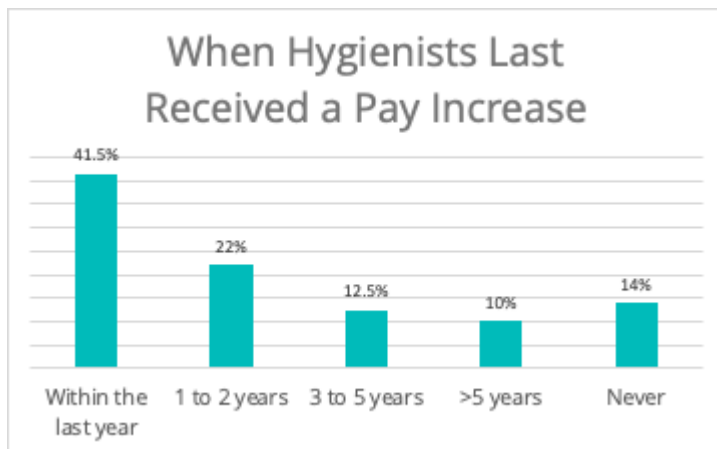


*"Other" includes vision benefits and free dental care for self and family.

Pay Increases & Income Satisfaction

Most hygienists received pay raises in the last two years. Compared with past years, more dental hygienists say they are “very satisfied” with their total income.

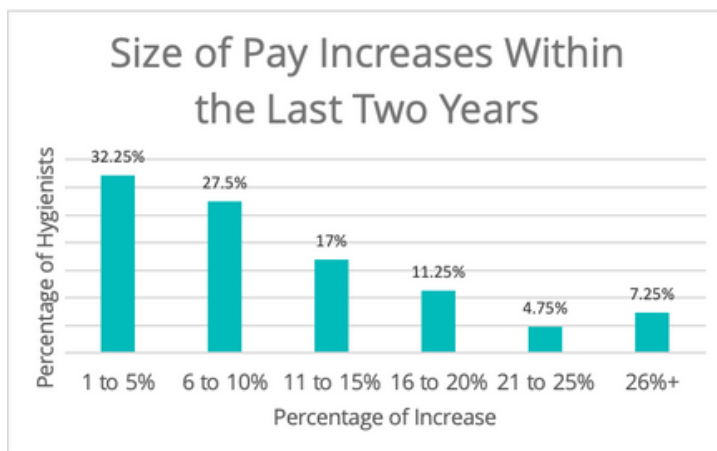
In 2021, 72% of full-time dental hygienist salaries ranged from \$40,000 to \$80,000 with 43% of RDHs earning \$70,000+ annually and 21% of RDHs earning \$80,000+ annually. That’s an increase of 10% more RDHs earning \$70,000+ and 5% more RDH earning \$80,000+ annually.



How many dental hygienists had a pay increase in the last year?

We asked the survey audience when they received their last pay raise. Just over 40% said their last raise was within the prior 12 months. Another 22% said their raise was in the last 1 to 2 years.

14% of dental hygienists said they have never received a pay increase. This group of respondents represented not just young RDHs but also hundreds of RDHs who have worked 10 to 30+ years.



How big were dental hygienists’ pay increases in the last two years?

Just over 32% of dental hygienists who have received a raise in the last two years reported an increase of 1 to 5%.

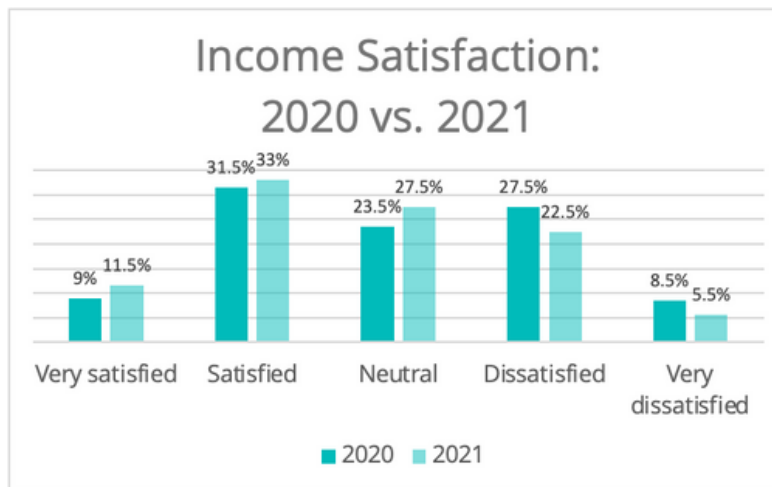
27.5% reported an increase of 6 to 10%.

Pay Increases & Income Satisfaction

(Continued...)

How satisfied are dental hygienists with their income?

We asked the survey audience how satisfied they are with their total income. In the following two charts that compare satisfaction a year ago (2020) with this year's survey results (2021), the "very satisfied" percentage increased and the "very dissatisfied" percentage decreased.



In 2021, the percentage of dental hygienists who were "satisfied" with their income increased significantly when total income exceeded \$70,000+.



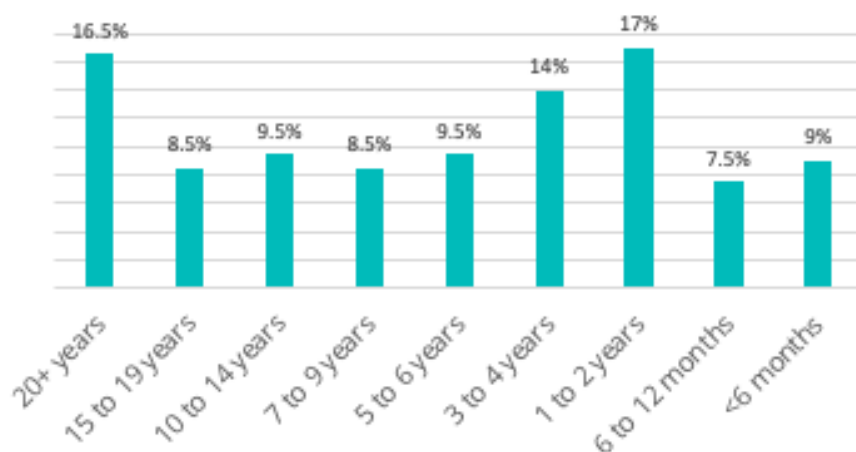
Job Turnover

Compared with the 2020 survey, there is a significant decrease in the percentage of dental hygienists who intend to apply for new jobs. Last year, 43% declared this intention, and this year 17% did. In the “open comments” section of the survey, respondents entered hundreds of comments that shed light on why those who are planning to look for a new job are dissatisfied with their current jobs.

To understand the percentage of turnover, we asked questions related to longevity in their current position, the number of new jobs they applied for in the last year, and their plans to apply for new jobs in the future.

Longevity in Current Position

- 9% of the respondents have been with their current employer for less than 6 months.
- 33.5% have been with their current employer for less than 3 years.
- 16.5% have been with their current employer for more than 20 years.



Recent Job Search Activity

Almost a third of dental hygienists said they applied for a new job in the prior year but not all of them moved to a new job.

- 29% of the respondents reported they applied for one or more new jobs in the 12 months prior to taking the survey. Because 18% reported they have been with their current employer less than one year, it seems 11% decided to stay where they were.
- Two out of three of the job seekers applied for 1 or 2 jobs. One out of three applied for 3+ jobs.

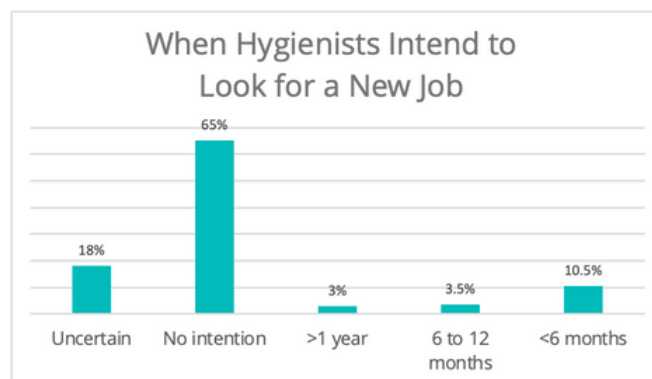
Job Turnover

(Continued...)

Intention to Look For a New Job

Five out of six RDHs responded to the question: “Do you intend to look for a new job?”

- 14% indicated they **do intend** to look for a new job within the next year. An additional 3% said they plan to do so in more than one year.
- 18% **are uncertain** if they will look for a new job.
- 21.5% of RDHs **in corporate practices** intend to look for a new job within one year.
- 12.5% of RDHs **in private practices** intend to look for a new job within one year.



Job Search Motivations

In the 2021 survey, hundreds of respondents made open comments about their job satisfaction. Although none of the respondents said they would leave their careers and some said they are very happy, hundreds registered dissatisfaction with one or more aspects of their current jobs.

Feeling underpaid continues to be the top dissatisfier, year after year. Nearly one in four said time constraints, new practice owners, and new practice policies are interfering with their ability to do their best work. The chart to the right represents a breakdown of comments by sentiment.



**Practice management changes and time constraints are interfering with their ability to do their best work.*

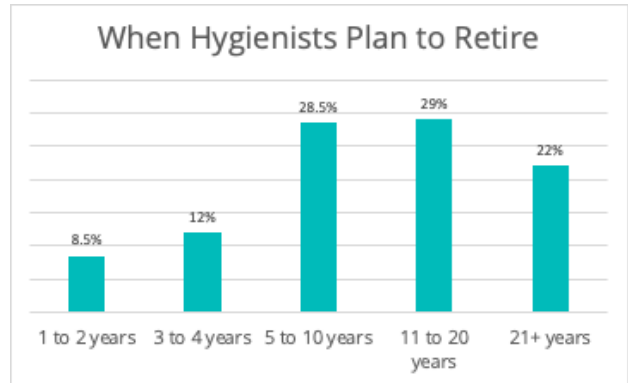
Retirement

Retirement Forecast

Our survey results indicate that dental hygienists plan to retire at a rate of about 10% every two years. This means that close to 50% of today's working dental hygienists will retire within the next 10 years. A full 92% of those who are 55 or older say they plan to retire in the coming decade. Among those who are now 65 or older (6% of our survey audience), 42% plan to continue working for at least another two years.

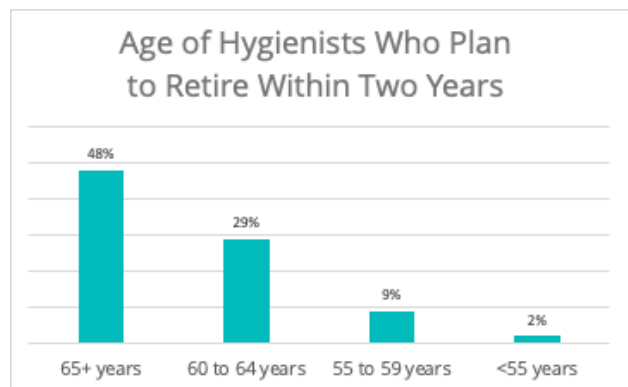
Nearly half of the survey audience plans to retire within the next 10 years, at a rate of about 10% every two years.

- 8.5% plan to retire within 2 years.
- 20% plan to retire within 4 years.
- 49% of RDH plan to retire within the next decade.



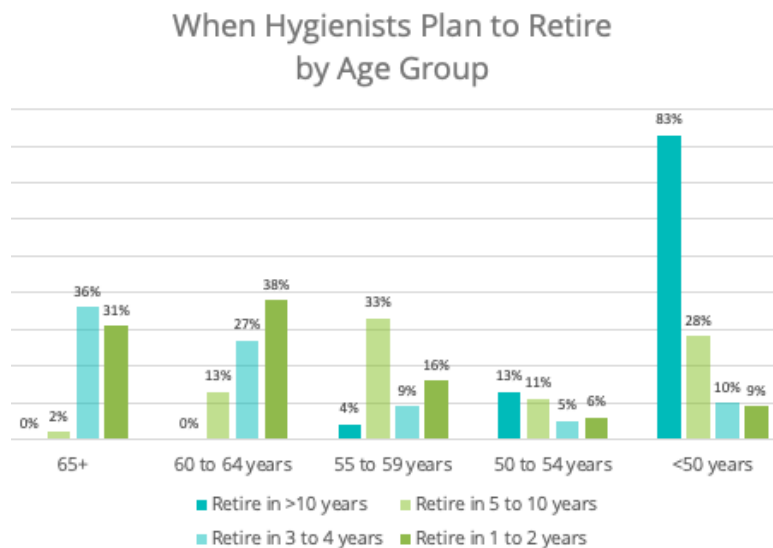
Years to Retirement

The retiring RDHs, who are 55+ years of age, represent 27% of all RDH respondents, and 92% of them plan to retire within the next decade.



Retirement Plan by Age Group

Dental hygienists, who are age 65+ represent nearly 6% of our survey audience. It's interesting to note that 36% of dental hygienists who are age 65+ plan to work beyond age 67, and 2% of dental hygienists who are age 65+ anticipate extending their work years beyond age 70.



Survey Audience Demographics

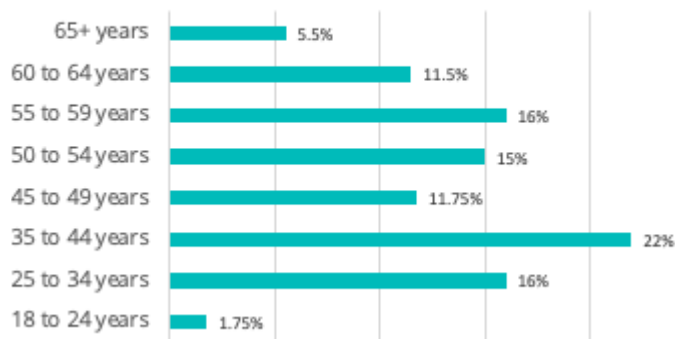
Who Responded to DentalPost's 2021 RDH Salary Survey?

Every state and the District of Columbia were represented by the dental hygienists who responded to DentalPost's 2021 Salary Survey. Demographic information follows and remains largely consistent with the previous year's survey report.

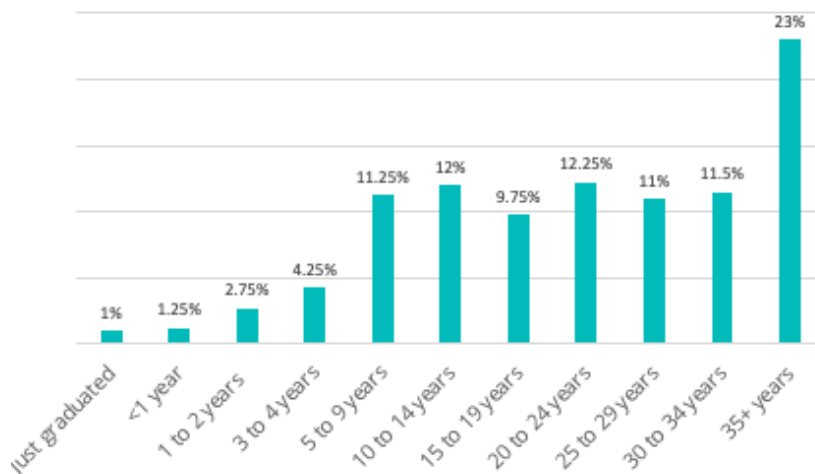
Age & Experience

By age and experience, responding hygienists fell into the following groups:

Age of Responding Hygienists



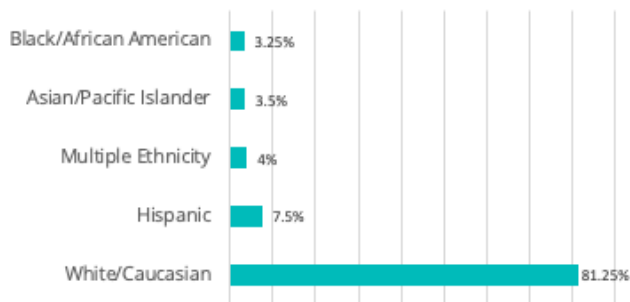
Years of Experience



Survey Audience Demographics

(Continued...)

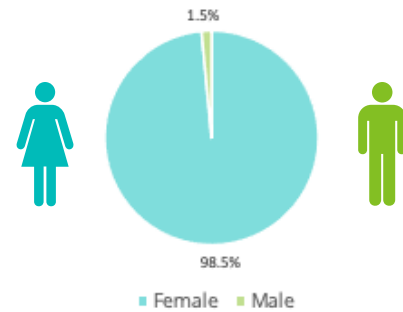
Race / Ethnicity



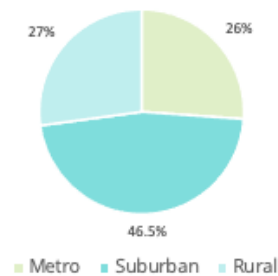
For comparison, here are the latest Race/Ethnicity percentages in the U.S. population, according to the U.S. Census Bureau:

- 60% White alone, not Hispanic
- 18.5% Latino/Hispanic alone
- 13.4% Black or African American alone
- 5.9% Asian alone
- 2.8% Two or more races
- 1.3% American Indian/Alaskan Native
- .2% Hawaiian/Pacific Island

Gender



Size of Community Responding RDHs Live In:



Sole Income Earner

27% of responding RDHs are the sole income earner in their household, compared with 73% in joint income households.





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As the largest dental job search board in the industry, connecting 900,000 dental employees with 70,000 dental practice employers, DentalPost is uniquely positioned to keep dental professionals informed of the latest data and survey results surrounding compensation, working environments, and career choices.

Founded in 2005 by registered dental hygienist Tonya Lanthier, DentalPost leads the dental industry in metric-based career matching, including personality tests, work culture preferences, skill matching, and career goal assessments.

Learn more about DentalPost and view the comprehensive 2022 Salary Survey Report at dentalpost.net.

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