

new dentist news



What are you looking most forward to after the COVID-19 crisis is over?

What changes in dentistry do you see occurring as a result of the pandemic?

ACCEPTANCE // Page 3

Ethical and other considerations when treating transgender patients

ASK THE EXPERT // Page 5

How do I protect myself financially from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic?

DATA INSIGHTS // Page 6

Economic impact of COVID-19 on dental practices

Life after COVID-19

DENTISTS SEE RANGE OF CHANGES COMING TO THE PROFESSION

BY KIMBER SOLANA

More than two months since the Association issued its recommendation to close dental offices to all but urgent and emergency procedures, some dentists and practices begin plans to reopen as some states start easing stay-at-home orders initiated due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

With more debt and typically lower incomes, new dentists have unique challenges and outlooks during the crisis.

The New Dentist News asked six dentists around the country to share their thoughts and answer two questions:

- What are you looking most forward to after the COVID-19 crisis is over?
- What changes in dentistry do you see occurring as a result of the pandemic?

Continued on Page 4.

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ETHICAL AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS WHEN TREATING transgender patients



Dr. Michael Farmer

BY MARY BETH VERSACI

Transgender patients can face obstacles when seeking dental care, but through education and communication, dentists and their teams can help make these patients feel accepted and comfortable.

“One of their main concerns is whether the provider and dental team will be accepting,” said Dr. Michael Farmer, who owns a dental practice in Charlotte, North Carolina, and graduated from dental school in 2008 and the American Dental Association Institute for Diversity in Leadership in 2019. “If they feel that they are going to be judged or talked about, they may avoid seeking care at all.”

Education of transgender issues and proper communication will provide the patient with a better experience.

The ADA Principles of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct states that “dentists shall not refuse to accept patients into their practice or deny dental service to patients because of the patient’s race, creed, color, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin or disability.”

The ADA Center for Professional Success offers ways for dentists to avoid gender identity discrimination and be inclusive towards all patients at [Success.ADA.org](https://www.success.ada.org).

These steps include adding a blank space as an option to the gender portion of patient intake forms to allow for self-identification; training all staff in office standards of respect towards transgender people, including using their chosen name and referring to them by their chosen pronoun; and having an open dialogue with patients about their gender identity/expression.

If dentists or their team members make a mistake with a patient’s preferred name or pronoun, they may wish to apologize directly and let them know they will continue to do their best not to let that happen in the future, Dr. Farmer said.

“Overall, education of transgender issues and proper communication will provide the patient with a better experience and a more trusting doctor-patient relationship,” he said. “By developing dental providers and a dental team that is well educated on gender issues, the office becomes more diverse and better equipped to treat a variety of patients effectively.” ■

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The *ADA New Dentist News* is a quarterly supplement to the *ADA News*.

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Life after COVID-19 (continued from cover)



Dr. David Reisinger

Oak Park, Ill.

I look forward to having family gatherings once again, and maybe even hosting block parties, cooking out and inviting neighbors over to share a meal. Also, my wife and I are simply looking forward to getting back

to outdoors projects, gardening with friends, kayaking, camping and hiking. On the dentistry side of things, God has used this time to ignite high hopes for me to get right back to work but back to the “right” work.

We will find patients especially interested in what we’re doing to minimize the risk of them contracting the coronavirus at our practice. I could definitely be very wrong but I wonder if after COVID-19 the public may be a lot more money-conscious and hesitant to spend their remaining money at the dentist. Lastly, it seems that teledentistry is really taking off and we’re going to see it more and more in dentistry.



Dr. Chinara Garraway

Tallahasee, Fla.

I am mostly looking forward to interacting with my patients and providing them with quality dental care. I have also been working on new business practices that I plan on implementing once this

crisis is over. In my personal life, I can’t wait to go to the gym, travel and go to the park and read.

Because of this pandemic, dentists and team members have been more cognizant of the type of PPE required, as well as the extra precautions necessary to better protect themselves against airborne pathogens. I believe that there will be changes, from an increase in the number of air filtration systems in dental offices to an increase in the use of rubber dams for procedures. Due to financial constraints, patients could less likely take time off for routine dental visits and could be less likely to pay for cosmetic procedures.



Dr. Sean Aiken

Louisville, Ky.

I am most looking forward to a return to a normal routine and seeing our patients. The relationships we have with them are what make our dental practice the fulfilling and enjoyable place that it is for us.

I would be lying if I said I wasn’t also looking forward to the return of sports as well. Not being able to end my days watching Atlanta Braves games has been a strange reality for me this time of year.

One thing we have been doing while seeing emergencies is a text message-based check-in. This may be something we consider for our high-risk patients with co-morbidities where they text us upon arrival to the office, and then we let them know when we are ready to bring them back. I think embracing small changes will help to decrease risk and show patients we are committed to the highest levels of infection control protocol, universal precautions and safety.



Dr. Fallon Stiens

Stanberry, Mo.

I practice in a small town where we have built personal relationships with our patients and run into them on a regular basis outside of the office. We have been checking in with them over the phone,

but to actually see their smiling faces will be wonderful! Personally, I’m looking forward to catching up with our extended family and friends at summer gatherings — in groups of more than 10.

Prior to reopening, new PPE recommendations and office policy changes will be discussed with staff team members. After the reopen, we are preparing to spend extra time with patients discussing the office changes, patient concerns and maintaining trust by reassuring our patients that we are following the most updated recommendations to keep them safe.



Dr. Nidhi Taneja

Stockton, Calif.

Being a pediatric dentist, I am an advocate for preventive dentistry and a proponent of minimally invasive dentistry. I am hoping more patients will realize the importance of simple procedures like

regular checkups and getting a cavity restored before it becomes symptomatic. I hope patients seek dental care for preventive procedures rather than treatment only.

I envision more dentists offering less invasive treatment alternatives, and I believe teledentistry is going to become more popular for some procedures, especially to improve access to care in rural areas.

We will find patients especially interested in what we’re doing to minimize the risk of them contracting the coronavirus at our practice.



Dr. Neil Singh

Chicago

I am looking forward to outdoor activities with my family, and professionally being able to treat all patients with confidence of not catching or passing a life-threatening virus.

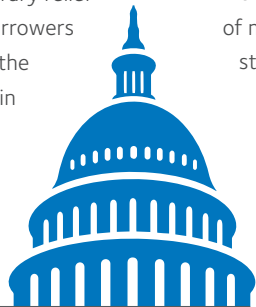
Cosmetic care may drop in the short-term immediate future, and practitioners may be forced to work longer hours, treat more patients, just to make up for lost income. There is also the fact that job security will come into question for all members (hygiene, assistant, front desk, doctor) of the dental field. ■

Cover Photo: Andriy Onufriyenko / Moment / Getty Images

5 ways the ADA HAS NEW DENTISTS' BACKS

1. Your voice is heard where it matters most.

The ADA influences public policies affecting dentistry. Temporary relief for federal student loan borrowers was among the provisions the Association advocated for in Congress' response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Visit [ADA.org/virus](https://ada.org/virus).



2. Dental debt help.

Speaking of student loans, your ADA membership entitles you to an additional 0.25% rate reduction when refinancing with Laurel Road.



3. Assistance on licensure questions.

Although each state regulates the practice of dentistry, ADA policies include advocating for freedom of movement and increasing standardization of clinical licensing examinations. Visit [ADA.org/education-careers](https://ada.org/education-careers).

4. Know before you sign.

While not a substitute for a lawyer, the ADA provides resources to keep you well-informed on employment agreements. Dentist Employment Agreements: A Guide to Key Legal Provisions, located in the ADA Center for Professional Success, is free to members.



5. Connections.

Dental group? Solo practice? Military or public health? The ADA offers resources and assistance to support dentists in all settings. As you navigate your career path, you can turn to friends and colleagues at the ADA. We are one dental community. Encourage your friends to join now at [ADA.org/join](https://ada.org/join).

For more information on how the ADA can help, visit [ADA.org/newdentist](https://ada.org/newdentist). ■

Ask the Expert:

HOW DO I PROTECT MYSELF FINANCIALLY FROM THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC?

BY CHRISTINE OLMSTEAD LOPEZ, CERTIFIED HEALTHCARE FINANCIAL PROFESSIONAL, BMO HARRIS BANK

Dear Christine: *I've been an associate at a Chicago-area dental practice for two years. The practice has been closed due to the coronavirus since mid-March, and I have been furloughed without pay. How do I stabilize my finances in the near term?*
— Time to Pay Bills

Dear Time to Pay Bills: With little to no patients coming in to dental offices, layoffs and furloughs have, regrettably, been commonplace during the COVID-19 pandemic. Making the decision to reduce staff is a difficult one, one faced by millions of business owners nationwide. Some dental practices may be beneficiaries of the Paycheck Protection Program or other similar government aid, designed to help businesses get by without losing staff.

Aside from experiencing a temporary lack of revenue, many dentists have large student debt. If you're carrying student debt, you can suspend your federal student loan payments with zero percent interest as part of the federal government's student loan relief, which ends in September.

If you have not yet done so, call your bank and your credit card company and ask about available hardship programs. Most lenders have set up relief options for customers impacted by the coronavirus. If they can offer payment deferrals or reduced fees, take full advantage.

Given historically low interest rates, you can also look to consolidate high-interest debt and pay off multiple loans with a new loan, with the goal of getting a lower interest rate

to reduce your lifetime interest costs and monthly payment. Banks and nonprofit credit counseling agencies can help with this.

All of us hope that circumstances will soon change for the better, and that we'll be able to resume our normal activities in the coming months. For starters, I promise to reschedule my routine teeth cleaning as soon as possible. I miss seeing my local dentist and hygienist and hope everyone is staying safe and healthy. ■

A commercial banker since 2006, Ms. Olmstead Lopez advises mid- to large-size practices, leveraging her background in commercial credit underwriting and structuring, and providing industry-specific expertise and local market insight to add value, foster long-lasting relationships and — above all — helping dentists realize their vision for growth.

Editor's note: This article is provided by BMO Harris Bank, the ADA Member Advantage-endorsed provider for practice financing. Call 1-833-276-6017 or visit bmoharris.com/dentists for more information.

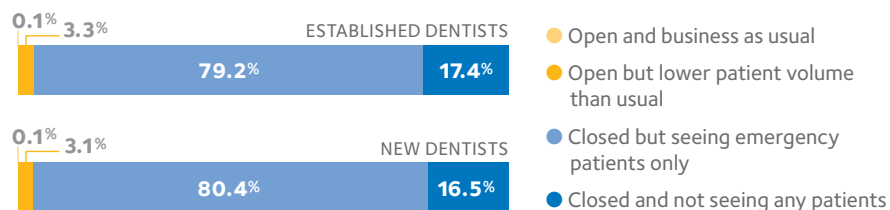
Economic Impact OF COVID-19 ON DENTAL PRACTICES

To better understand the impact of COVID-19 on U.S. dental practices, the ADA Health Policy Institute is conducting a biweekly poll on economic conditions during the pandemic. Over 12,000 dentists have joined this panel.

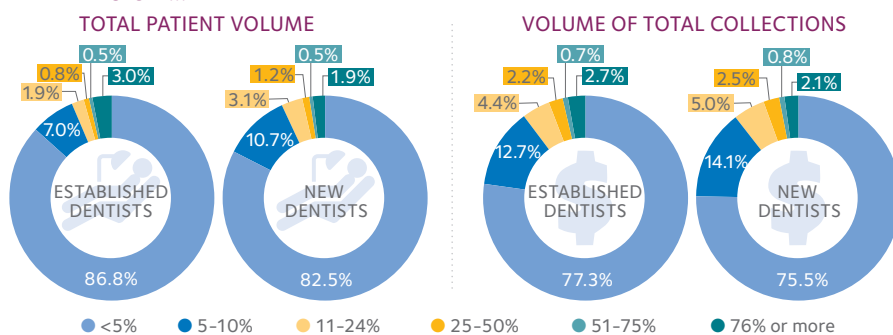
Poll results from the week of April 20 show that new and established dentists gave similar responses on the state of their dental practices. Both dentist groups reported that at least three out of four practices were closed but seeing emergency patients only that week. At least 80% of both dentist groups also reported that their patient volume was less than 5% of what is typical, and at least 75% of both dentist groups reported that their total collections were less than 5% of what is typical.

Learn more about how the ADA Health Policy Institute is tracking the economic impact of the pandemic, or sign up to be part of this panel of dentists, at ADA.org/HPI. ■

WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATUS OF YOUR PRACTICE?



HOW DOES THIS WEEK COMPARE TO WHAT IS TYPICAL IN YOUR PRACTICE, IN TERMS OF ...



In case you missed it



10 Under 10 Awards: Recognizing the unsung heroes of the profession

The ADA named the recipients of its third annual 10 Under 10 Awards, which recognizes new dentists who have demonstrated brilliance early in their careers in science, research and education, practice excellence, philanthropy, leadership and advocacy. Visit ADA.org/10winners to read the article.



Health, safety and racism: Two Asian-American dentists share concerns over COVID-19 crisis

Drs. Mina C. Kim and Michelle Aguilos Thompson — ADA Institute for Diversity in Leadership alumni — share their personal experiences that have raised concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic. Both Asian-American dentists experienced discrimination amid the crisis. Visit ADA.org/concerns to read the article.



Photo: Valerie Loiseleux / iStock / Getty Images

Dental licensure testing agencies move to manikin-, computer-based examinations amid COVID-19 pandemic

Along with the Joint Commission on National Dental Examinations' Dental Licensure Objective Structured Clinical Examinations, or DLOSCE, launching in June, nonpatient options are providing state dental boards alternatives when addressing the public health concerns caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Visit ADA.org/manikin to read the article.

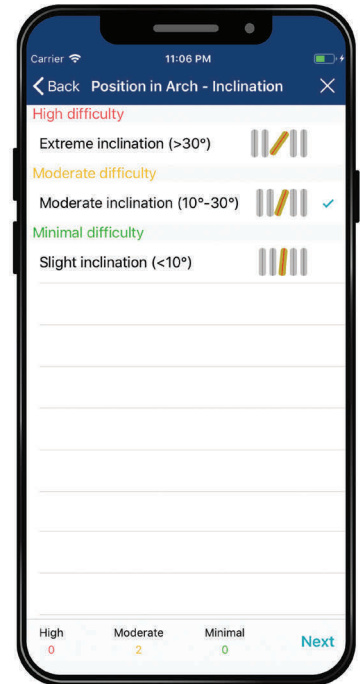
Visit ADA.org/newdentistnews to read more in-depth stories, news and insight about new dentists and their experiences. ■

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³ This example is for illustrative purposes only and is based on a hypothetical fixed interest rate of 4.80% discounted to 4.30% applying the 0.5% ADA member discount fully amortized over a 10-year period which would result in a total savings of \$11,776.80. This example assumes payments are made as scheduled for the term of the loan and interest is computed on a 365/360 basis. The interest rate we offer to you may vary from the example rate used here based on your credit qualifications, loan characteristics, market conditions, and other criteria at the time of the offer. Example rate shown is as of April 14, 2020, and rates are subject to change without notice. Contact a BMO Harris Banker for current rates and more details.

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