



ADA Communications Trend Report: 2023

Council on Communications

This Trend Report is intended to:

- Help identify emerging issues from dentists and the public that may impact the reputation of the profession.
- Serve as an additional input to national, state, and local dental society decision-makers engaged in reputation management and communications planning.
- Help identify communication gaps between ADA efforts and member perceptions.



Methodology

The list below summarizes the surveys that were deployed by the ADA in late 2022 through Q2 2023. Key learnings from those surveys are highlighted in this report. More comprehensive results from these surveys are available upon request.

Dentist survey:

- **Dentist Trend Report Survey** – Online survey to the Advisory Circle research panel of ADA member dentists. Fielded in April 2023 with 500 respondents and a margin of error of +/- 4.4%.

Consumer survey:

- **Consumer Trend Report Survey** – Online survey to 1,050 consumers fielded in April 2023 with a margin of error +/- 3%. Responses were balanced to be representative of the U.S. population as a whole.



Practice Trends to Watch

Practice Stressors:

Dentists continue to feel the economic impact of the slowing economy on all aspects of their practices, including workforce shortages and insurance reimbursement issues.

Patient Issues:

Opioid prescriptions are being administered conservatively with minimal push back, and patients visiting a dentist under the influence of marijuana or another drug are on the rise.



Inflation



IMPACT on Dental Practices: (most frequently cited responses)

1. Increased staff wages
2. Increased overhead/
supply costs
3. Patients unable to pay for
treatment
4. Lower profit margins

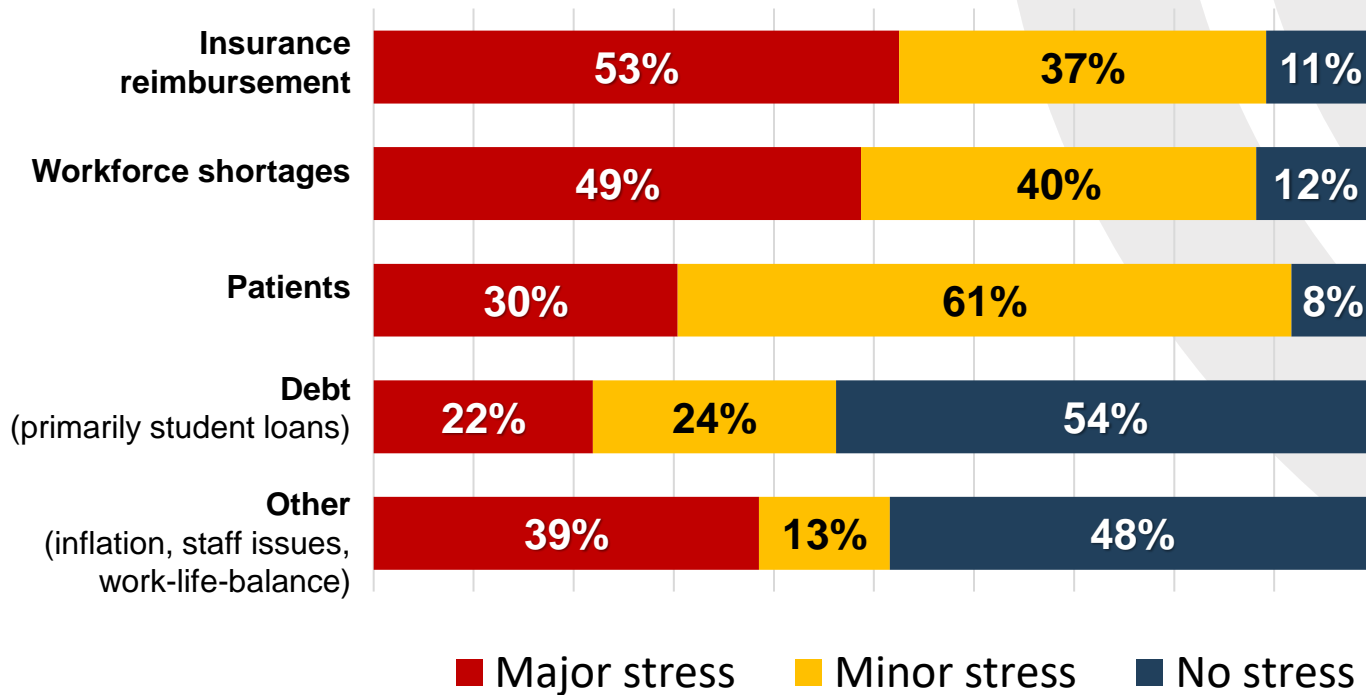


ACTIONS They're Taking: (most frequently cited responses)

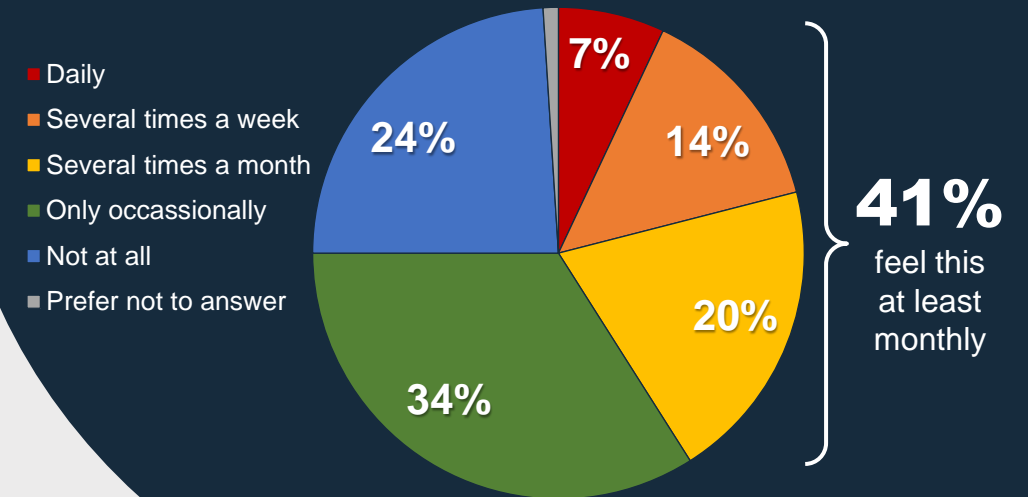
1. Raised fees
2. Changed suppliers
3. Dropped some insurance
plans
4. Doing more with less
5. Lowered their own salary

Stress

Over **90%** of dentists reported feeling some type of stress about their career. More mid career dentists felt stress about insurance reimbursement and patients. More younger dentists reported stress about debt.

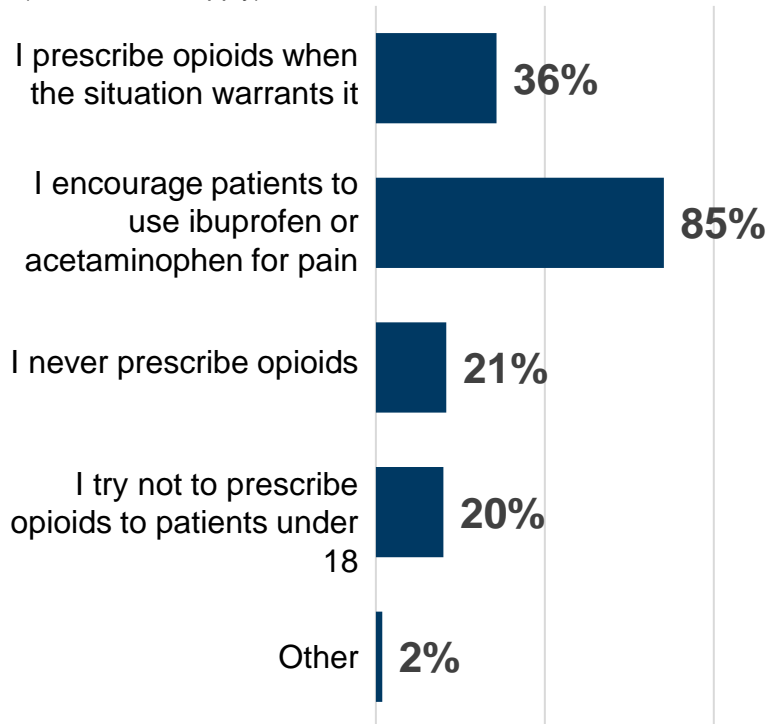


Over the past 6 months, have you ever felt defeated, wanted to quit dentistry, or did not want to go to work?

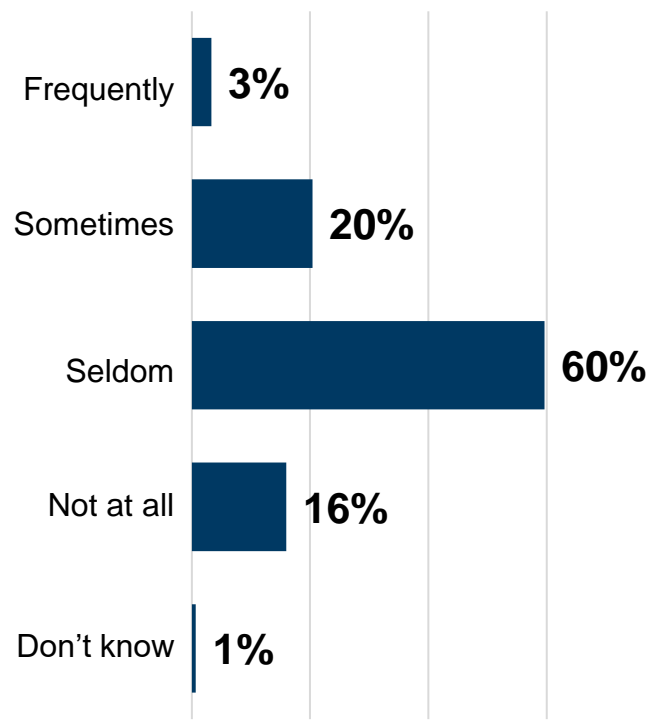


Pain Management

What is your current approach to pain management medication for patients? (select all that apply)



How often do patients push back and ask for stronger than over the counter pain medication?

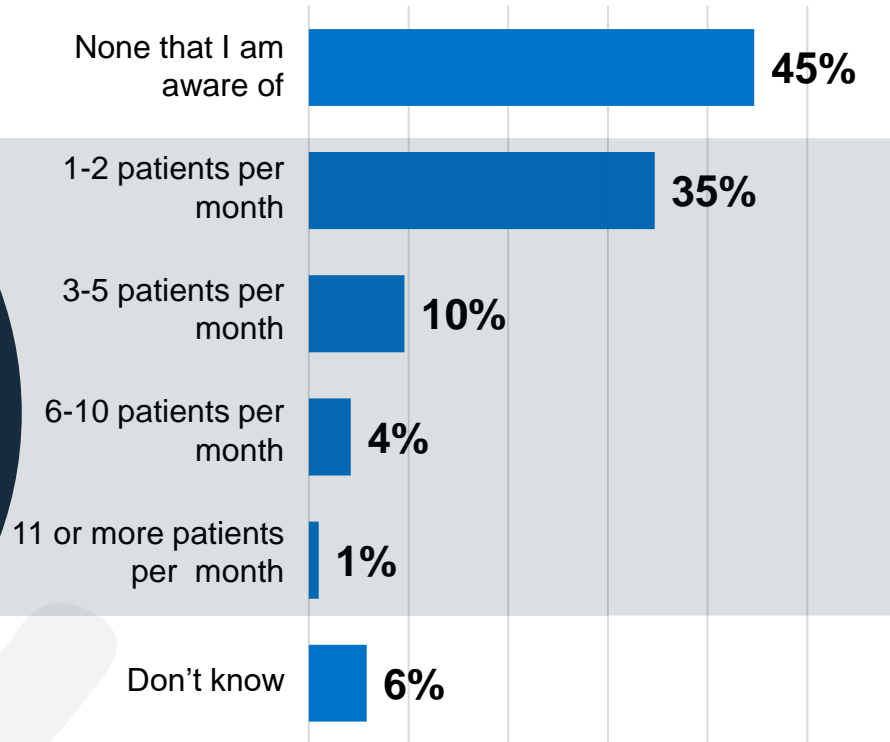


Young and female dentists report more pushback from patients for stronger medication.

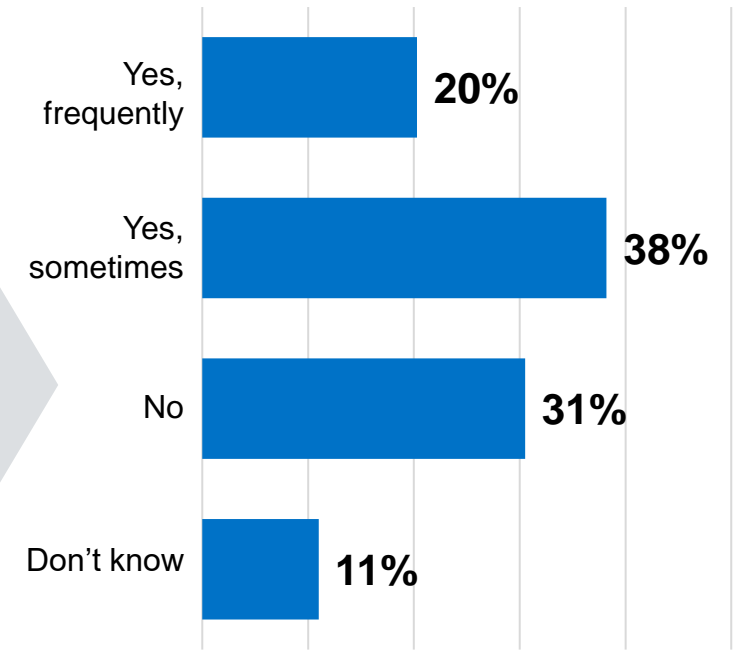
Patients Under the Influence of a Drug

46%
reported seeing
more patients
under the
influence than
a year ago

Do any of your patients 18 or older show up for their appointment high on marijuana or another drug?

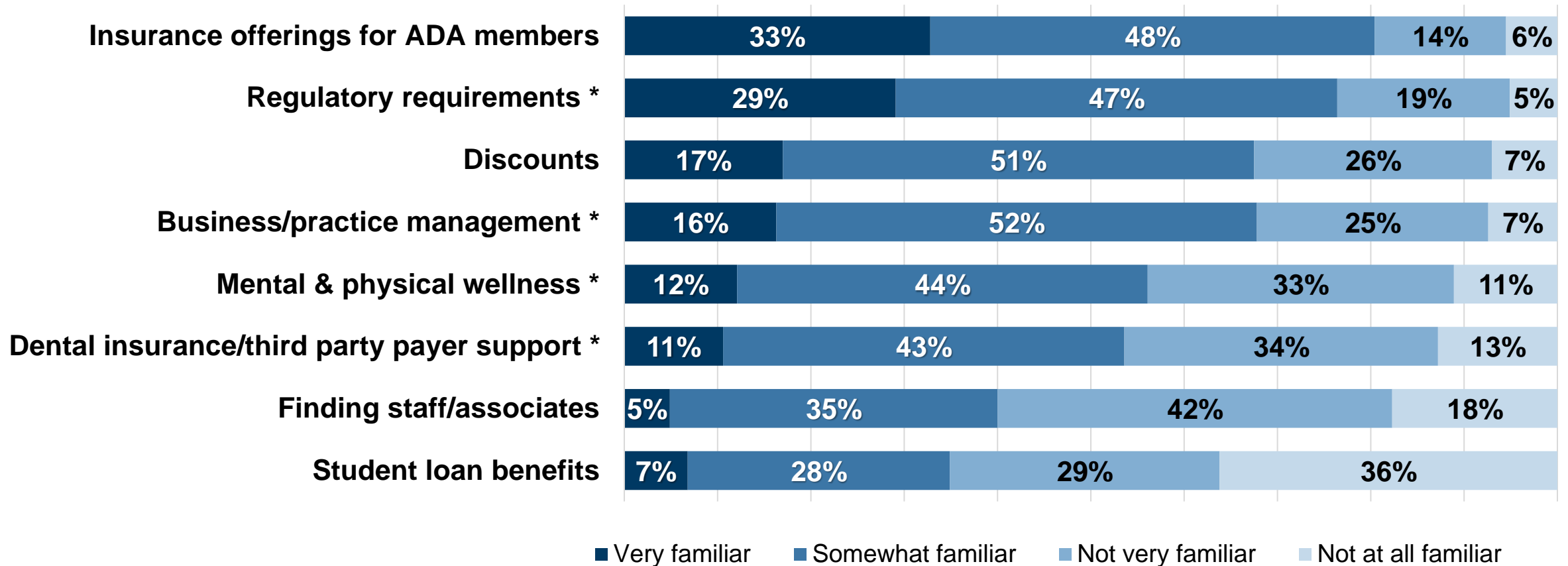


Do you have to alter/increase anesthesia in order to effectively treat these patients?



Opportunity to Increase Awareness of Resources

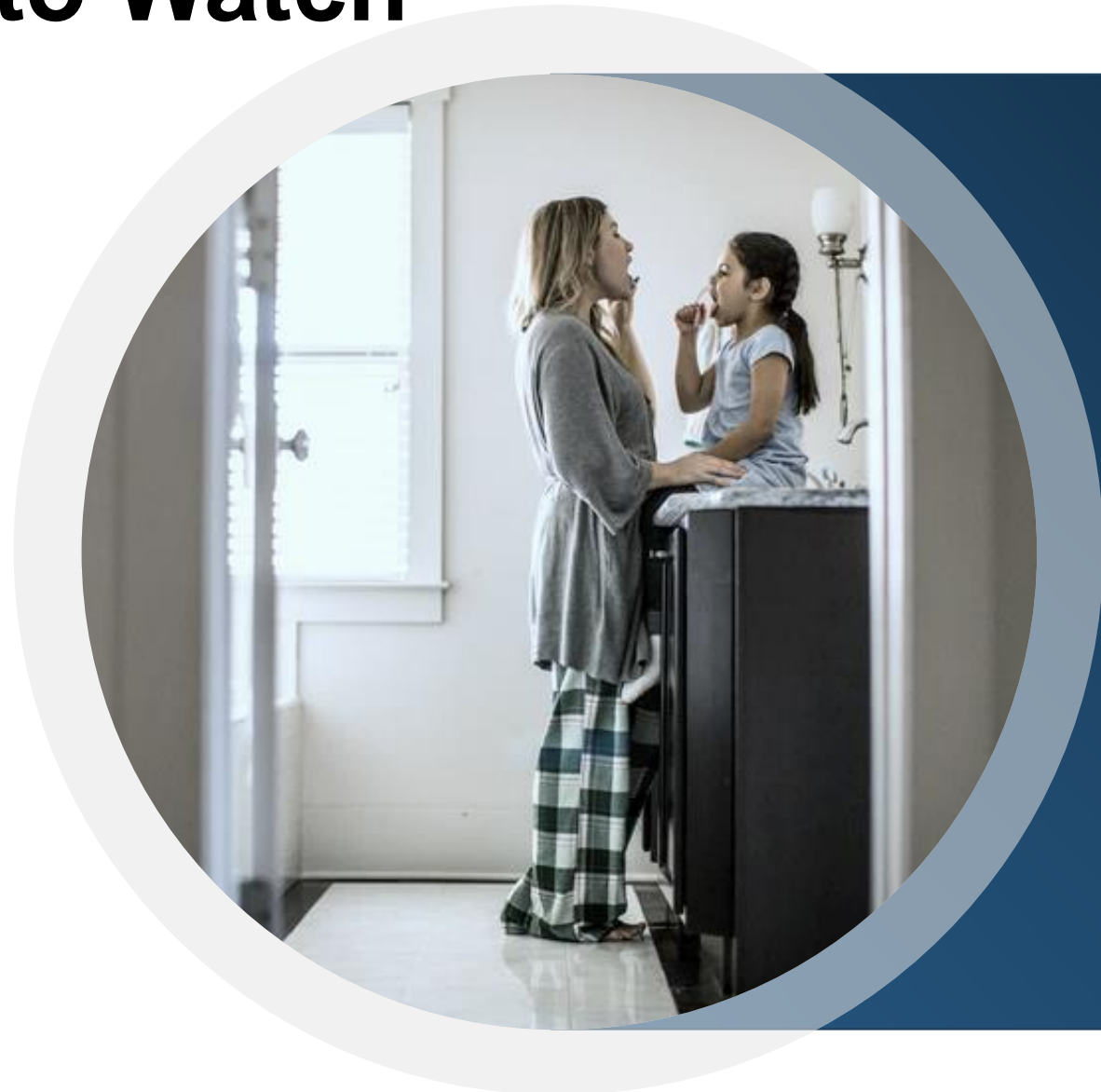
How familiar are you with the ADA resources for these topics?



* These topics were also surveyed in 2022. Results were very similar, with minor decreases in 2023.

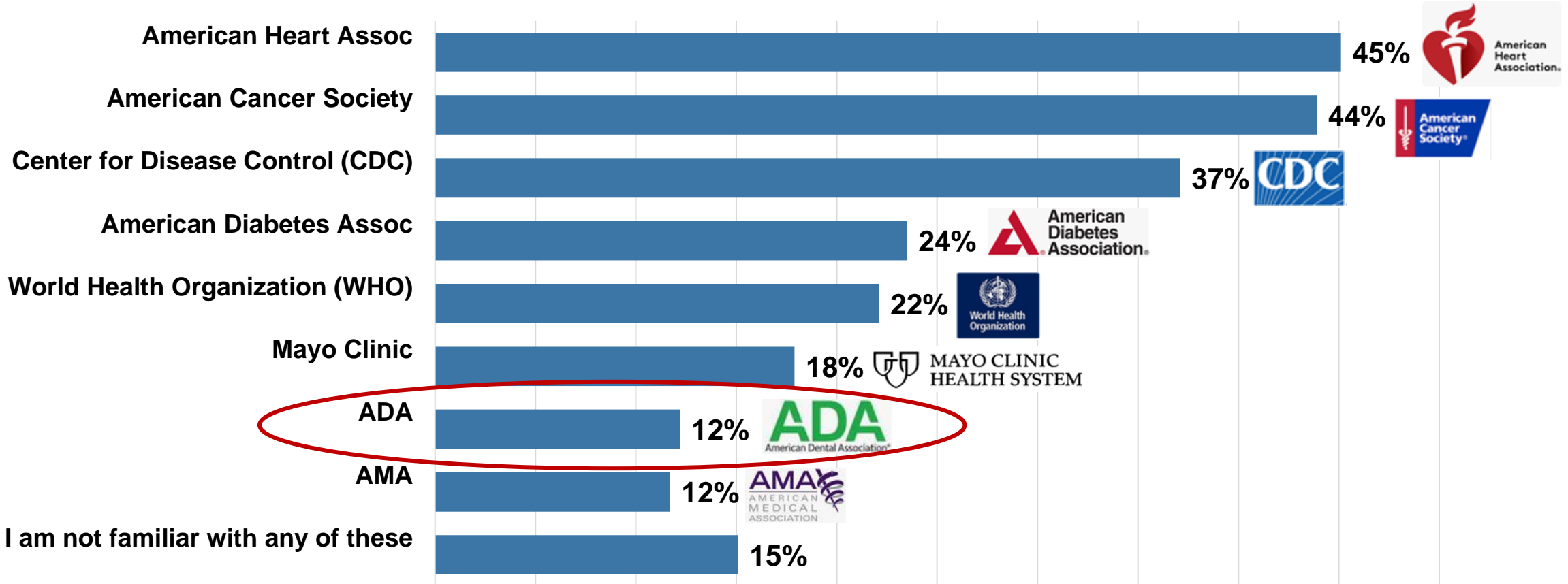
Consumer Trends to Watch

- **ADA awareness is low**, but understanding of **the connection between oral and overall health is strong**
- **Consumers continue to trust their doctor the most for health information**, but trust in online sources is also increasing
- Consumers predominantly seek a dentist for a dental emergency, even those without a dentist
- **Consumers report lower drug use than dentists**, who are seeing an increase in patients under the influence
- New this year – consumers were asked if they ever considered a career in dentistry. **15% said yes.**



Opportunity to Increase Awareness of ADA

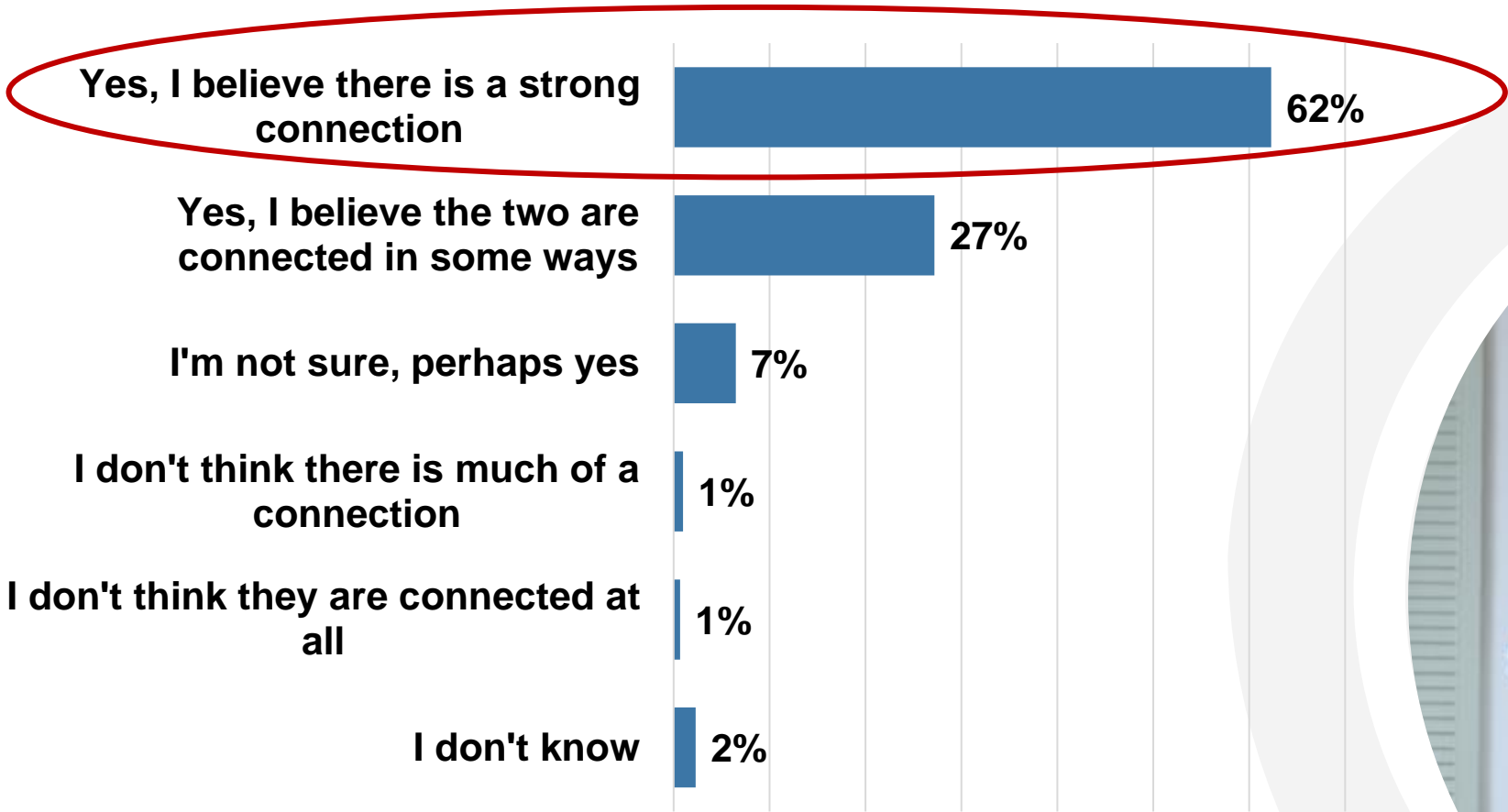
Consumers were shown logos and asked to select the top 2-3 brands they are most familiar with



Nearly 2/3 of consumers believe that oral health is strongly connected to overall health

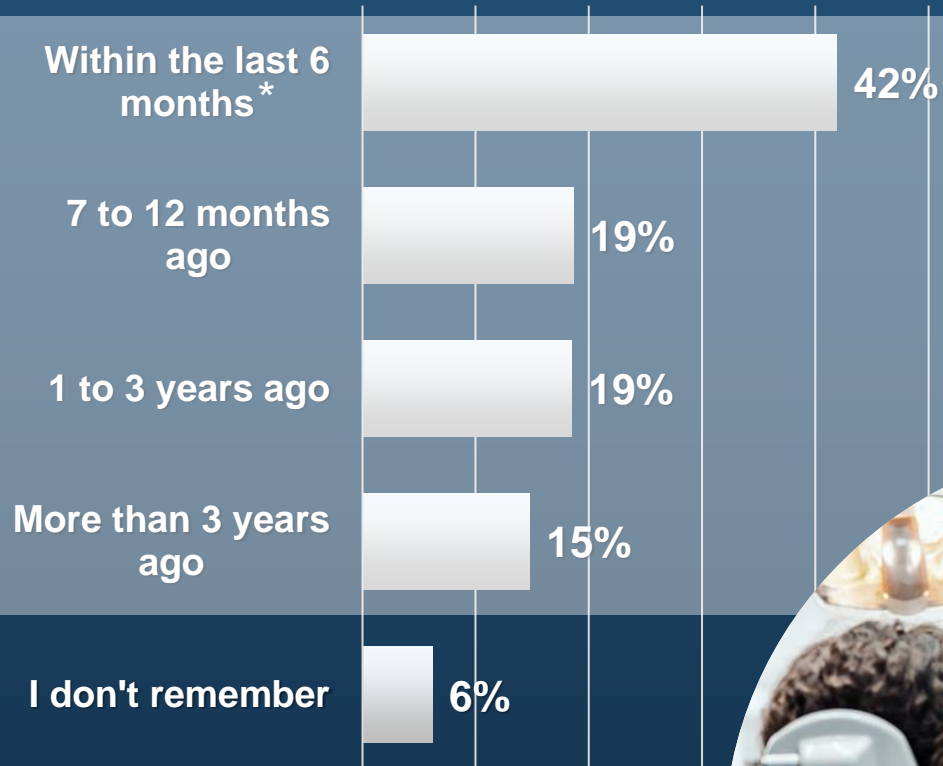
70% from the highest income level believe this

56% from the lowest income level believe this



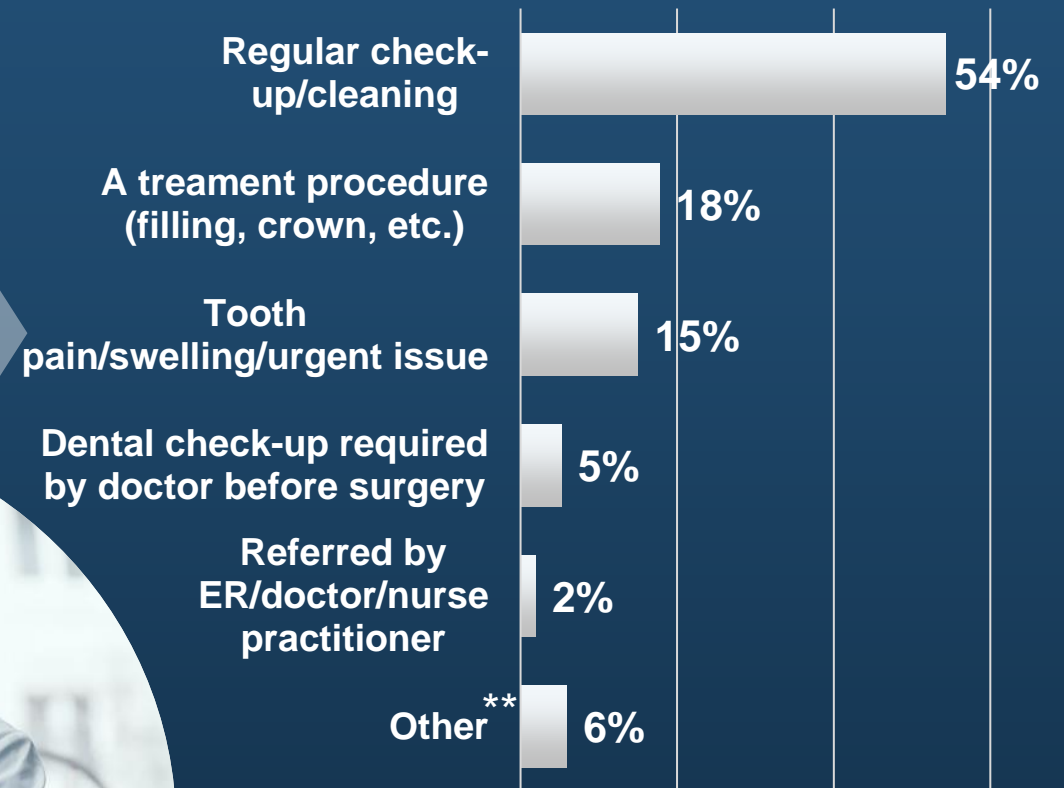
Visiting the Dentist

When was the last time you visited a dentist?



*Patients with a preferred dentist are 3X more likely to have visited a dentist in the past 6 months

What was the purpose of your last dental visit?

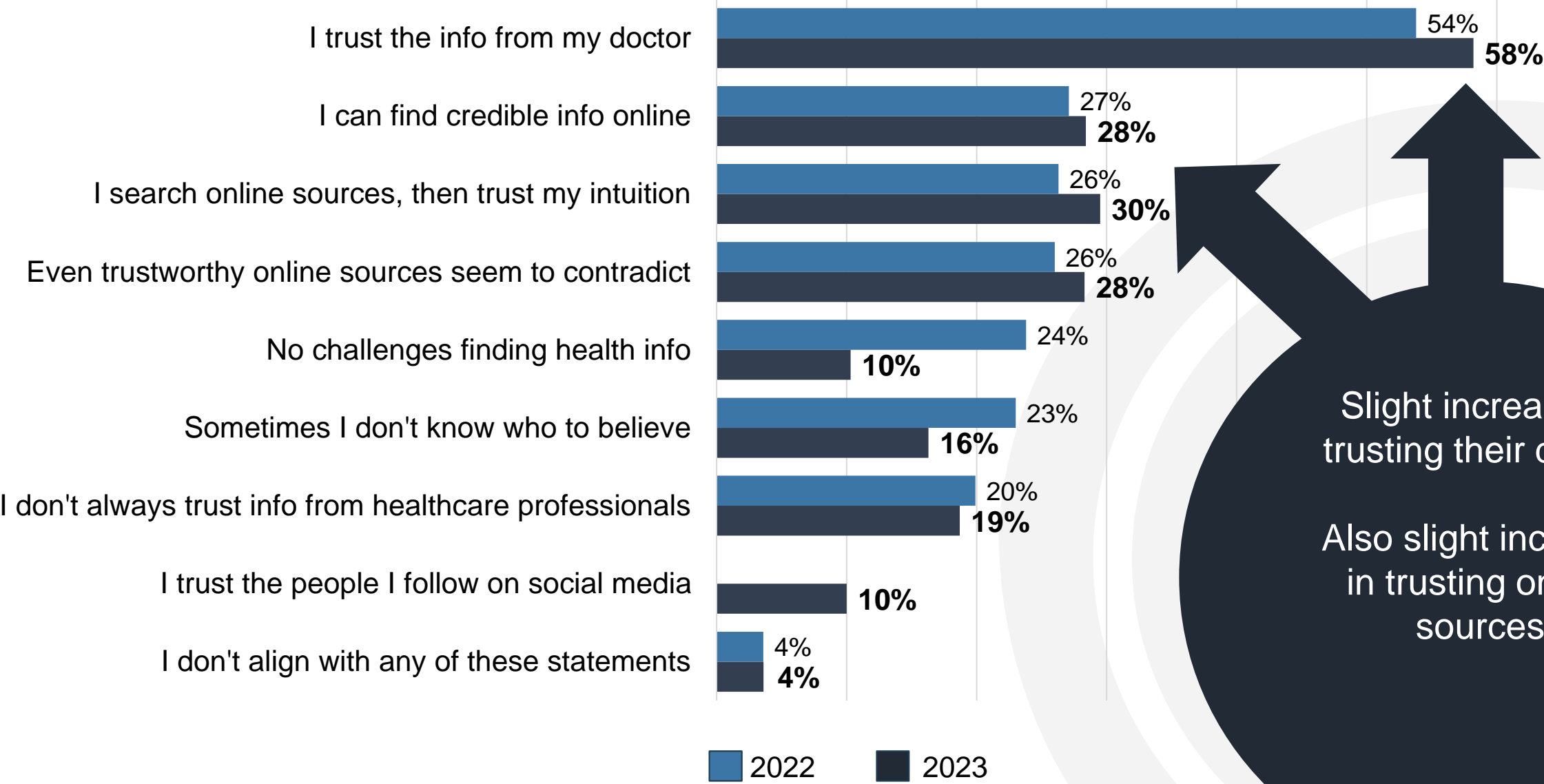


**Other mentions: extractions, dentures



Where Consumers Seek Health Information

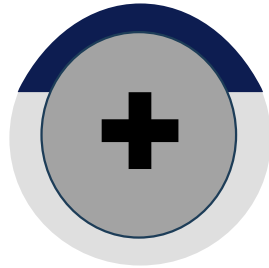
(They could select all that apply)



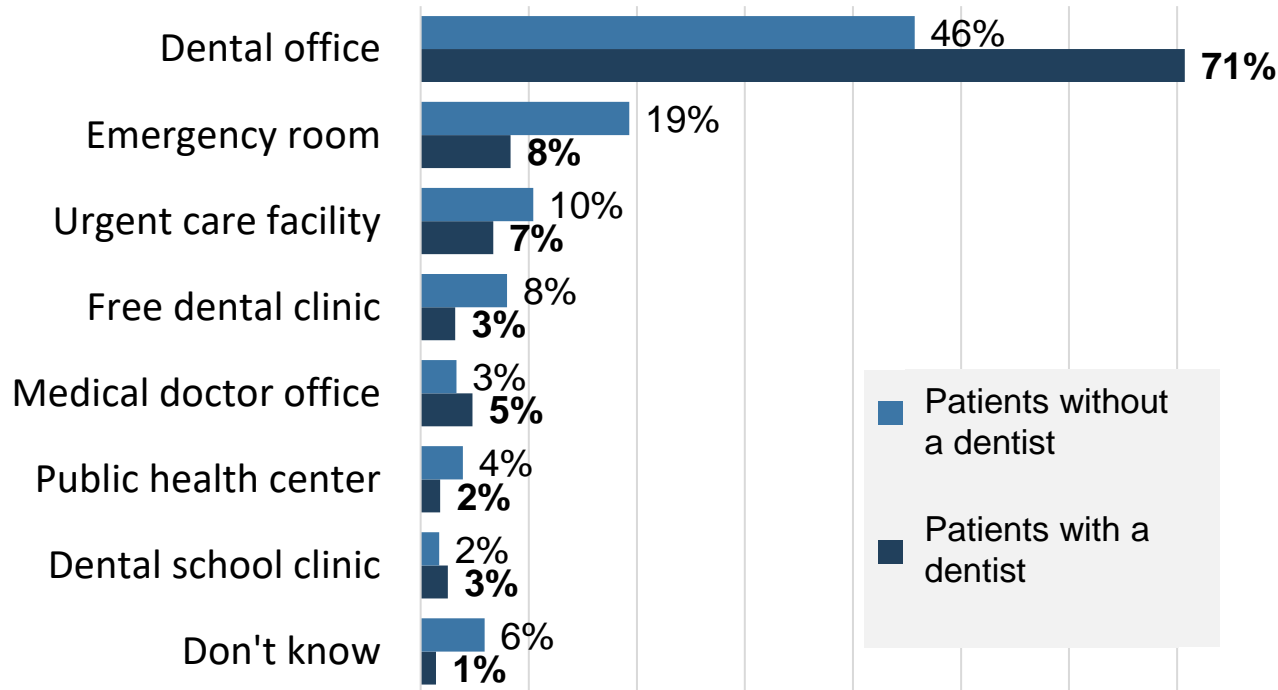
Slight increase in trusting their doctor

Also slight increase in trusting online sources

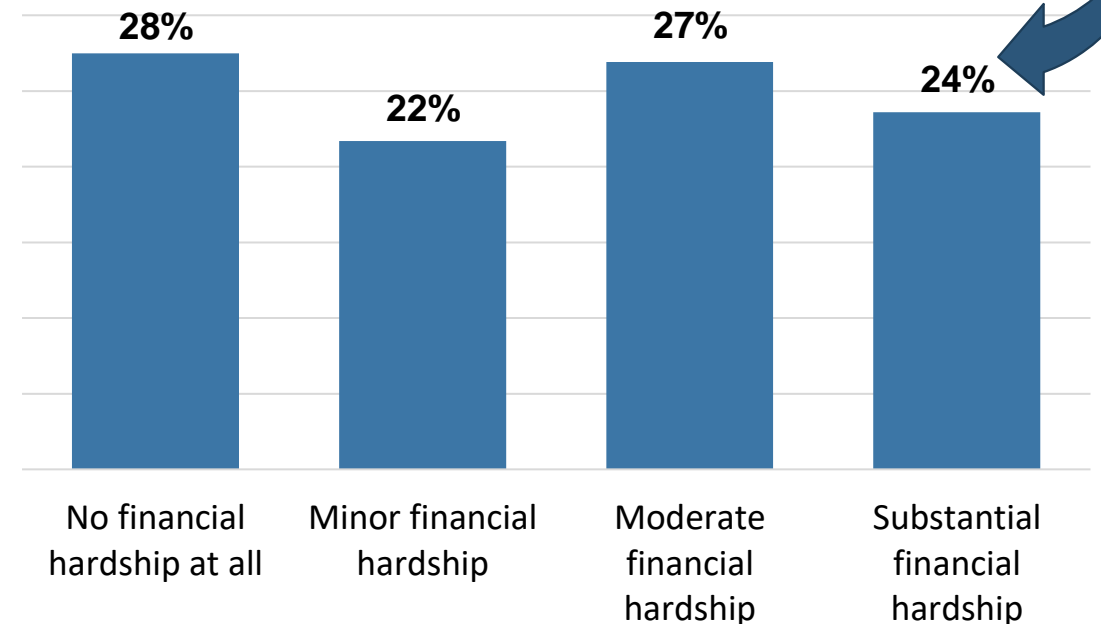
Dental Emergencies



Where would you go if you had a dental emergency?



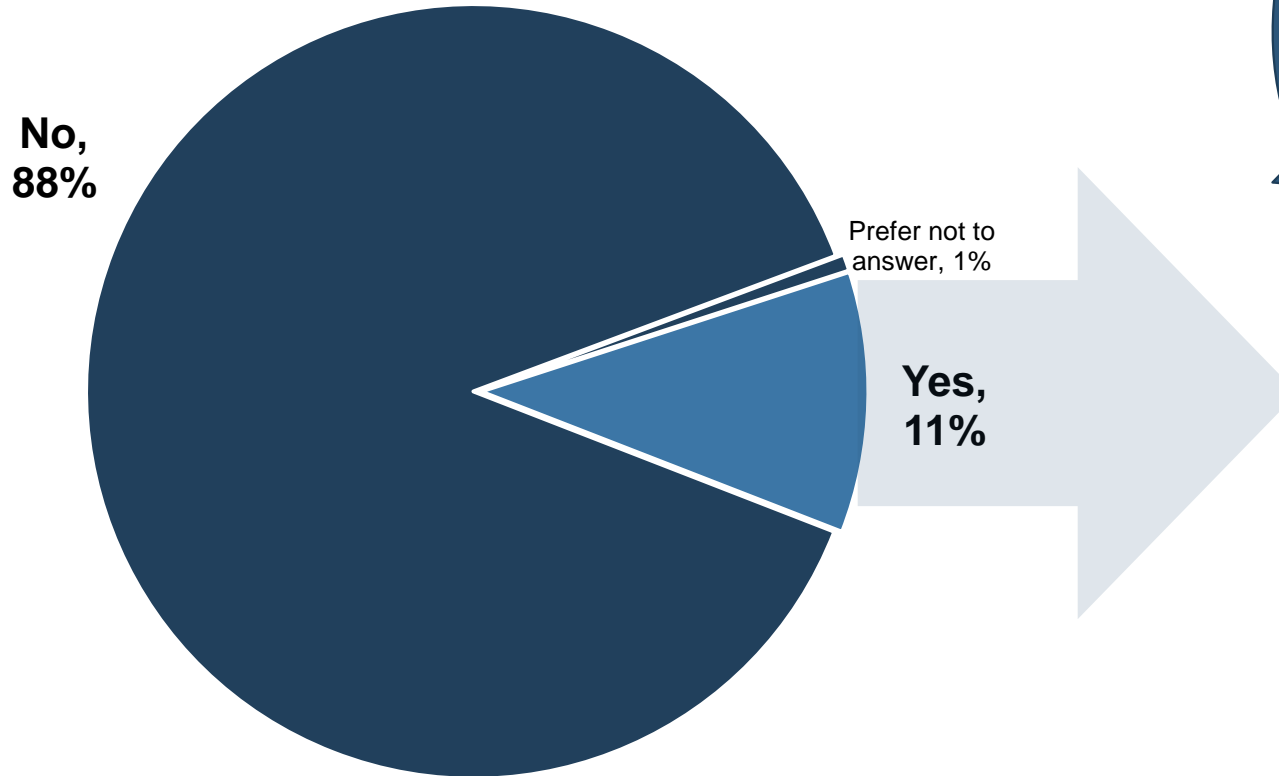
If you had to go to the dentist for an emergency procedure, would it post a financial hardship for you?



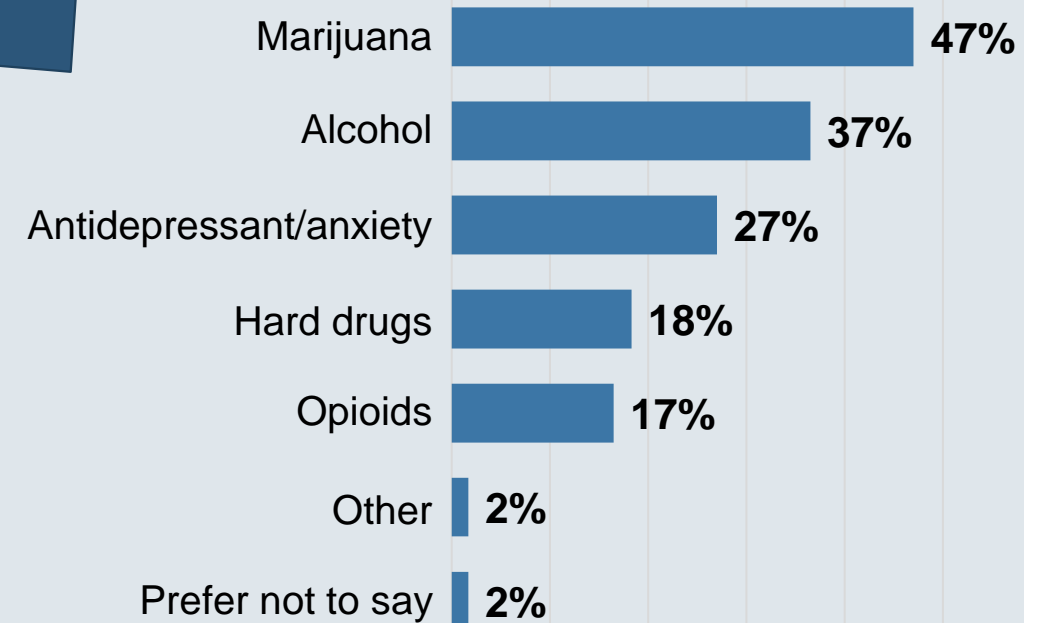
Slight 2% increase over 2022 in substantial financial hardship

Patients Under the Influence of a Drug

In the last 3 years, have you visited a dentist when you were under the influence (high) or intoxicated?

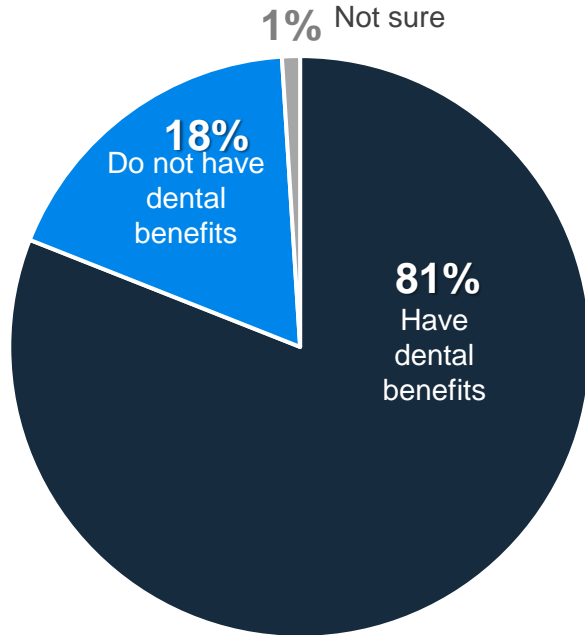


What were you under the influence of?
(select all the apply)

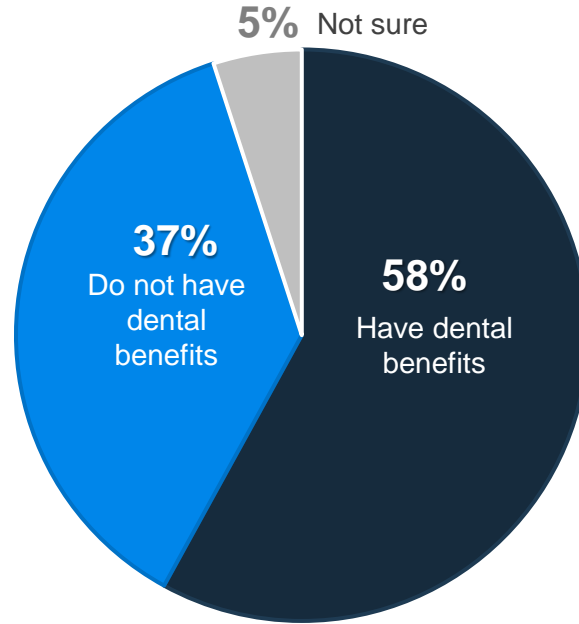


Dentists report seeing higher drug use by patients than what they self-report

Dental Benefits – by Dentist Status



Have a Dentist
Approximately 139 million U.S. adults



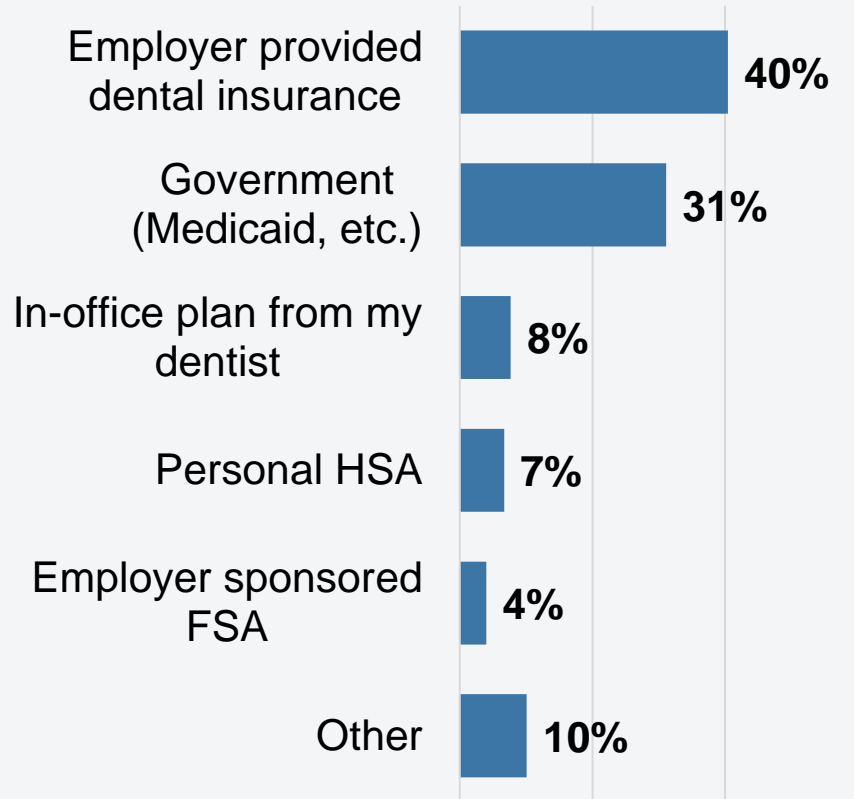
Do Not Have a Dentist
Approximately 113 million U.S. adults

58% (65 million) consumers without a dentist have dental benefits

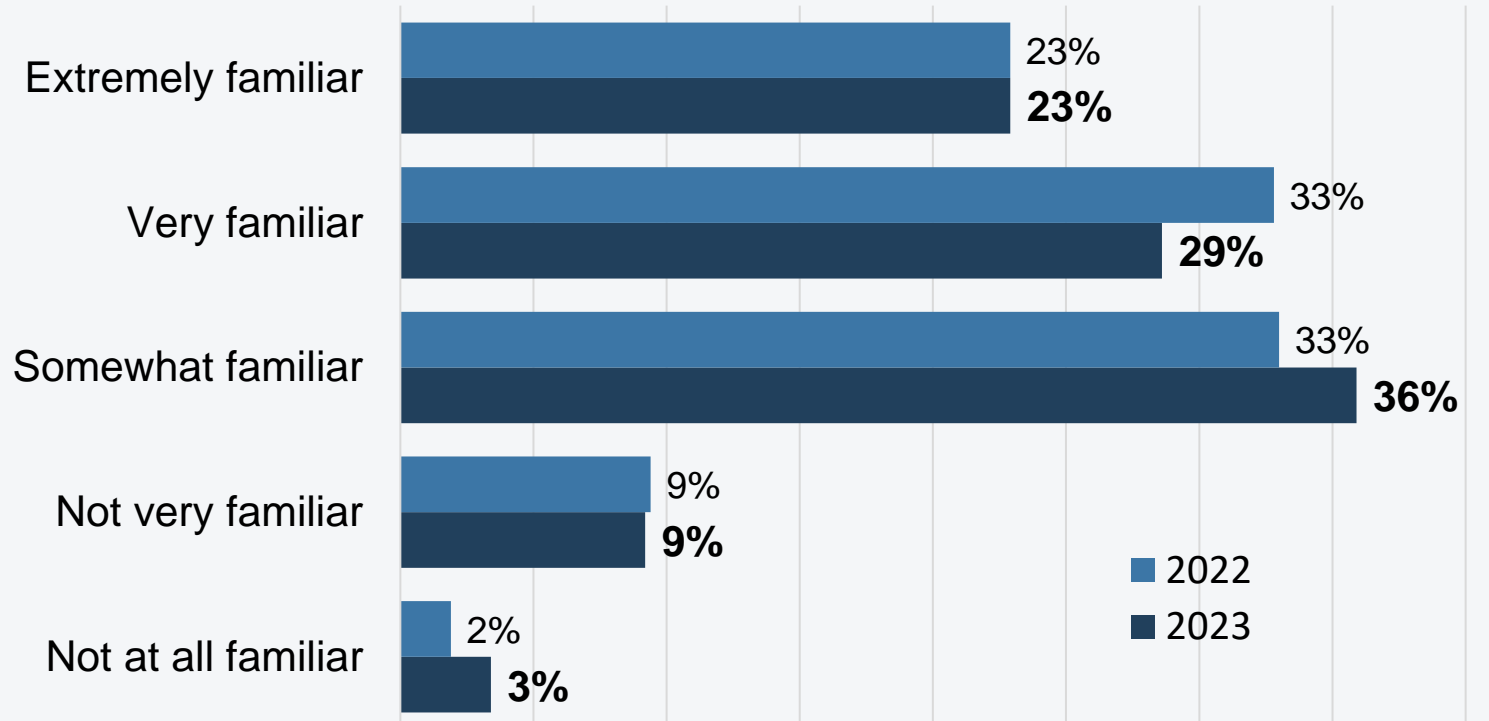


Dental Benefits – Awareness

What type of dental benefit do you have?*



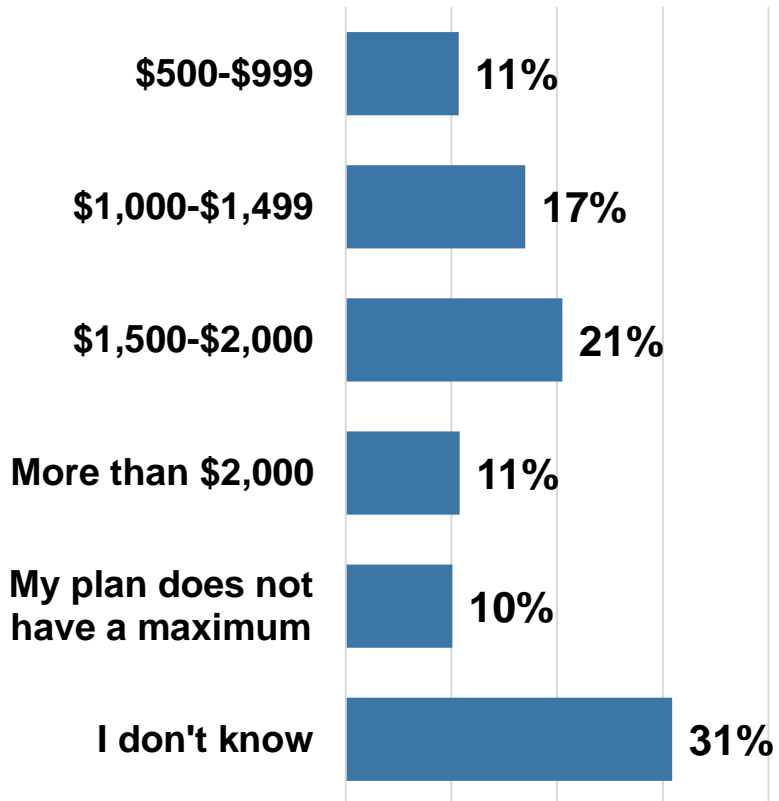
How familiar/knowledgeable are you with the benefits provided by your dental insurance? (i.e., annual \$ benefit, co-pays, covered services, dentist network.)



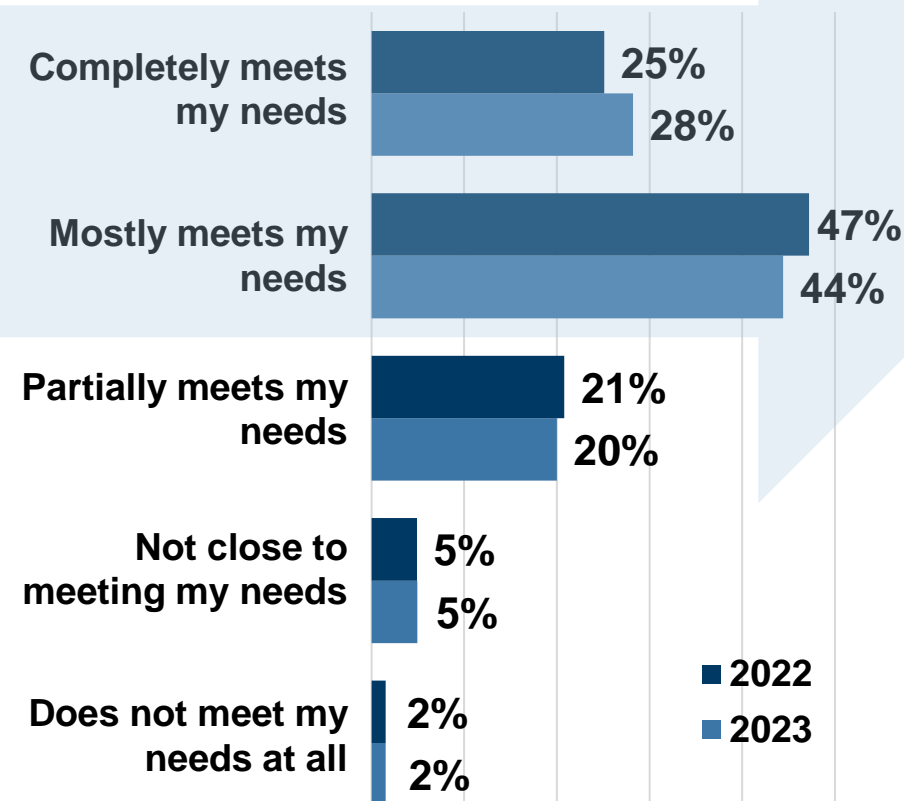
*This question was presented to those who answered "Yes" that they have dental benefits.

Dental Benefits – The Financials

What is the maximum annual per person benefit of your dental insurance?



To what extent would you say your dental insurance meets your needs?



72%

said their dental insurance “completely” or “mostly” meets their needs.

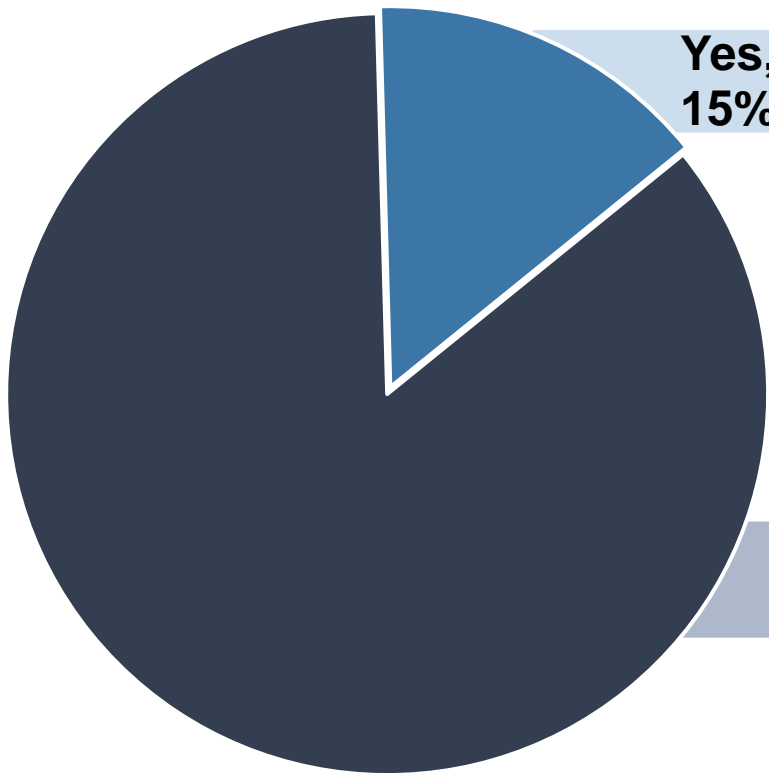
Yet...

51%

said a dental emergency would cause them “moderate” to “substantial” hardship

A Career in Dentistry?

Have you ever considered a career in dentistry (dentist, hygienist, dental assistant, etc.)?



Yes,
15%

What aspects of dentistry interest you?

- Helping people
- Dentistry is a great career
- Becoming a dental hygienist
- Becoming a dental assistant
- Promoting public health

No,
85%

Why not?

- Don't want to work inside someone's mouth
- The high cost of dental school
- Not interested in science
- Takes too long to get a degree
- Don't want to deal with the public



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