

POSITION STATEMENT

Dental Hygiene Workforce Shortage

The American Dental Hygienists' Association (ADHA®) recognizes the dental hygiene workforce shortage and supports appropriate strategies to retain and build the workforce.

As the largest organization advocating for the dental hygiene profession, the ADHA recognizes the workforce shortage of dental hygienists, dentists and other allied oral healthcare workers. An increase in the recruitment and retention of trained, educated, licensed professionals to restore and grow the oral healthcare workforce is needed.

In order to fully address the dental hygiene workforce shortage, it is critical to rely on data that have been collected from dental hygienists regarding their current and future needs. The 2022 research report, "[Dental Workforce Shortages: Data to Navigate Today's Labor Market](#)", produced through a collaboration between the ADHA, the American Dental Association (ADA) Health Policy Institute and other oral healthcare organizations, identified several chronic factors, beyond pandemic-related and retirement reasons, driving dental hygienists to leave the profession. The report revealed staff retention challenges citing inadequate benefits, non-responsive compensation, poor communication, lack of professional fulfillment and negative workplace culture as key contributing factors to workforce attrition.

While the ADHA does not support the [resolutions adopted in October 2024 by the American Dental Association \(ADA\)](#) concerning dental workforce shortages, we look forward to addressing the identified workforce-related issues in partnership with the ADA and other related dental professional organizations.

The ADHA supports addressing the issues that underlie workforce departures and enhancing recruitment into the profession as more appropriate strategies to retain and build the dental hygiene workforce. The ADHA is leading efforts to resolve dental hygiene workforce shortages through constructive measures. These include supporting and advising on the creation of additional entry-level dental hygiene programs and on the increase in capacity of current entry-level dental hygiene programs, where appropriate. The ADHA offers webinars and workshops on addressing workplace culture, leadership, professional empowerment and autonomy. Additionally, the ADHA is developing a [new chairside recruitment](#) program aimed at expanding the dental hygiene workforce. We encourage other dental professional organizations to address their specific workforce issues.

The ADHA recognizes the complexity of the situation and supports collaborating with other dental-related groups on fostering professional autonomy and empowering dental hygienists to work to their full scope of practice, which will lead to better health outcomes for the public and improve workplace culture.