

ANNUAL RENEWAL QUESTIONNAIRE REPORT: 2023 ACCESS TO CARE KEY FINDINGS

June 2023



BACKGROUND

Ontario dentists are required to renew their certificate of registration with the College each year. The renewal process includes a mandatory Annual Renewal (AR) Questionnaire that dentists must complete. The AR can also be used to collect additional information about the membership to inform policy decisions and improve College programs and initiatives.

Beginning in 2021, the AR expanded to include questions focused on Access to Care. The questions are intended to better understand member activities related to Access to Care, inform RCDSO initiatives, and support strategic objectives to advance Access to Care.

The following report provides a summary of registrants' responses to Section 5 of the 2023 ARP (Access to Care) and is divided into four sections:

- **Section 1:** Summary of Findings
- **Section 2:** Patient Forms of Payment
- **Section 3:** Accepting New Patients on Government Sponsored Programs
- **Section 4:** Volunteering

DATA AND LIMITATIONS

The following analysis provides a summary of the AR data collected related to Access to Care during the 2022 calendar year. The report includes data from all registered members (N=10,694) as responses were mandatory. 94.7% of dentists in Ontario reported that they treat patients within a clinical capacity.

Data presented within the report is preliminary, and requires further analysis and validation. Limitations that may impact the accuracy of results include that data are self-reported. Additionally, some questions have asked registrants to provide estimates, which may further impact accuracy.

AR results require consideration against external data on access to oral health care in Ontario. RCDSO staff will continue to collect and analyze data to form a clear picture of issues related to access to care in Ontario. Council will be apprised of any further analysis of the information that has been collected to date.



2023 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following bullets summarize key findings from the questionnaire.

- Dentists report that most of their patients (58%) pay for services using private insurance, while 13% pay using government sponsored dental plans.
- The majority of dentists (75%) report that their primary practice accepts new patients on government sponsored dental plans.
- Dentists report that there is variation in which government programs are accepted among their primary practices. For example, dentists reported that nearly 68% of the primary practices where they work accept new patients on Healthy Smiles Ontario, yet only 50% of practices accept new patients on Ontario Works. Detailed findings about specific government sponsored programs can be found on page 5.

- Dentists also reported information about volunteer activities. Responses indicate that 15% of registrants provide volunteer dentistry services. Of the members that volunteer, 12% do so in their local communities.

This initial analysis suggests that the majority of dentists accept new patients on government sponsored dental plans. Additional inquiry is needed to better understand the rationale for practices that do not, and the impact on patient experience, particularly for marginalized and/or low-income Ontarians reliant on government sponsored programs. Further analysis is also needed to reconcile this data against other data sources that indicate challenges in patients accessing care.





PATIENT FORMS OF PAYMENT

The AR inquired about the ways in which patients pay for treatment. Dentists were asked to provide an estimate of the percentage of patients treated that fall within the following categories:

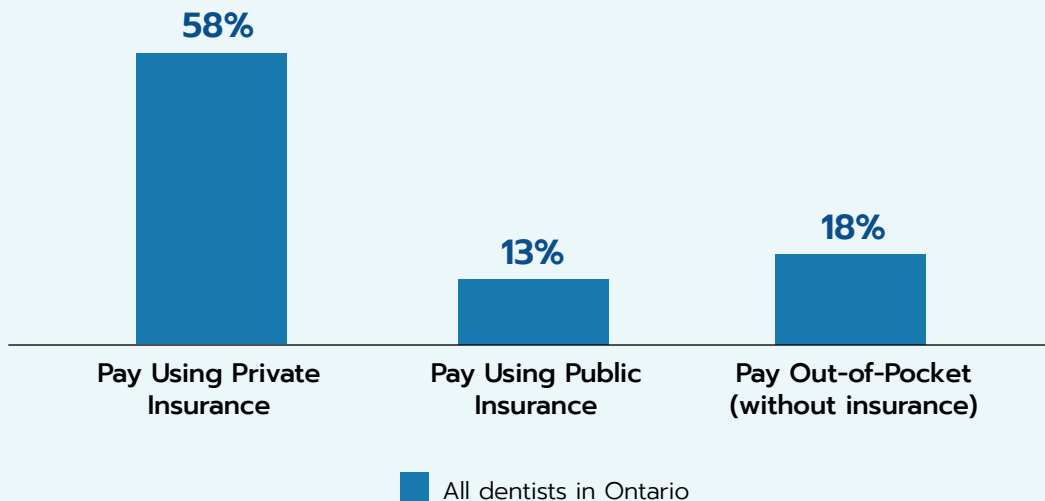
- Pay Using Private Insurance
- Pay Using Public Insurance (government sponsored programs)
- Pay Out-of-Pocket (without insurance)

The average percentage of patients treated within each category was calculated based on the estimates provided by registrants (N=10,694). Key findings include:

- Dentists report that on average, the majority of their patients (58%) pay using private insurance.
- Dentists report that on average, 13% of their patients pay a government sponsored dental plan.
- Dentists report that on average, 18% of their patients pay out-of-pocket (without insurance).

Fig: 1: Patient Forms of Payment

How many patients (estimated percentage) are treated within the following categories?



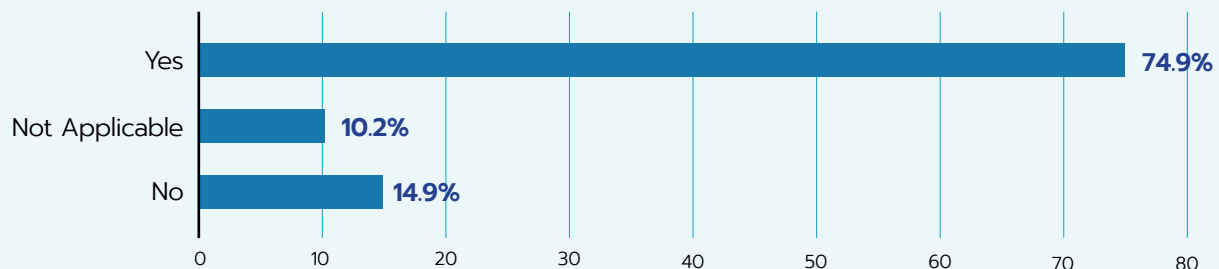


ACCEPTING PATIENTS ON PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Dentists in Ontario were asked if they accept payments from patients on government-sponsored dental plans (N=10,694).

Fig. 2: Accepting Patients on Public Programs

Does the primary practice where you work accept payment from patients on government sponsored dental plans?



Note: Not Applicable refers to members of the profession who do not treat patients in a clinical capacity.

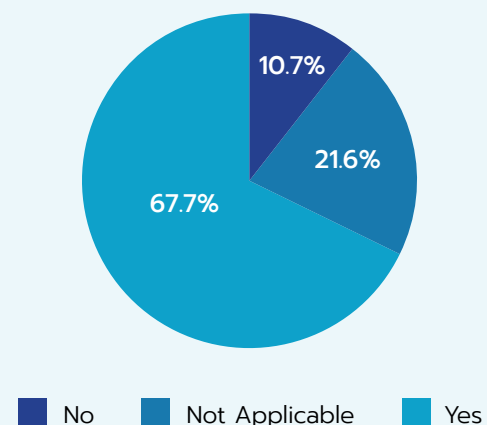
Responses indicate that 75% of dentists self-report that their primary practice accepts patients on government sponsored programs.

- Detailed findings from the 2023 AR can be seen below:¹

Members of the profession were also asked if the primary practice where they work accepts payments from new patients who rely on the following government-sponsored dental plans: *Healthy Smiles Ontario (HSO)*, *Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)*, *Non-Insured Health Benefits for Indigenous and Inuit People (NIHB)*, *Ontario Works (OW)* and the *Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program (OSDCP)*. Highlights from the 2023 Annual Renewal include:

- Half (50%) of dentists report that their primary practice accepts new patients on OW (Fig. 4).
- Members report that 60% of their primary practices accept new patients who rely on NIHB to access treatment (Fig. 3).
- 32.6% of respondents stated that the primary clinic where they work accepts new patients on OSDCP (Fig.5), the lowest number compared to other government sponsored programs captured within the AR.

Fig. 3: Does the primary practice where you work accept new patients who rely on Healthy Smiles Ontario (HSO)?



¹ Not Applicable (Fig. 3-7) refers to members of the profession who work within a non-clinical dentistry capacity.

Fig. 4: Does the primary practice where you work accept new patients who rely on Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)?

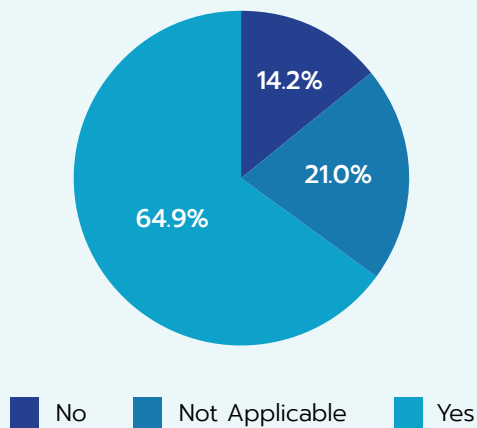


Fig. 5: Does the primary practice where you work accept new patients who rely on Non-Insured Health Benefits for First Nations and Inuit (NIHB)?

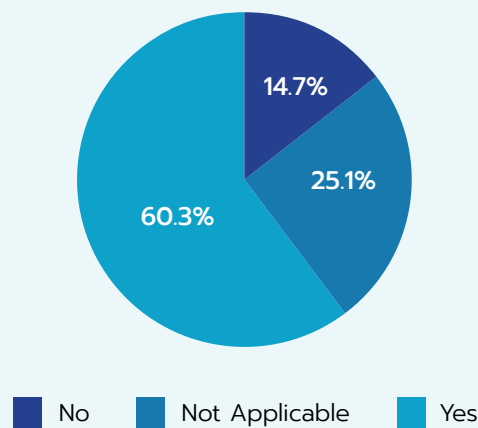


Fig. 6: Does the primary practice where you work accept new patients who rely on Ontario Works (OW)?

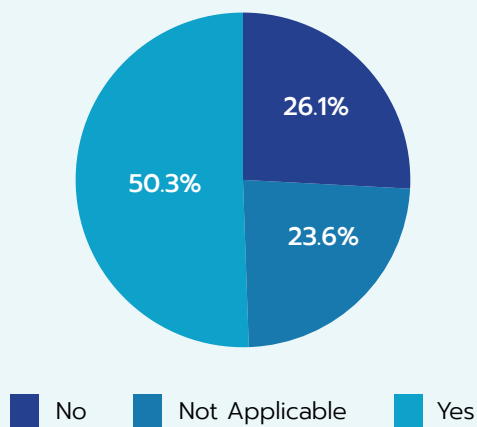
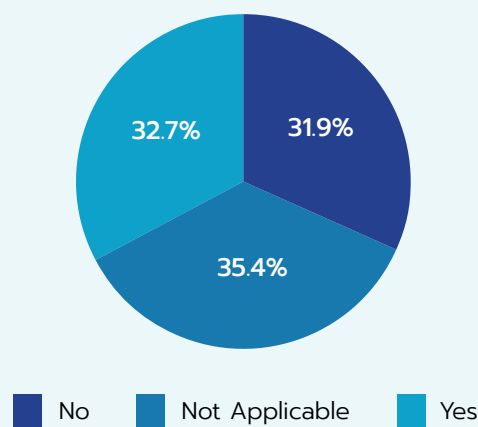


Fig. 7: Does the primary practice where you work accept new patients who rely on Ontario Senior Dental Care Program (OSDC)?



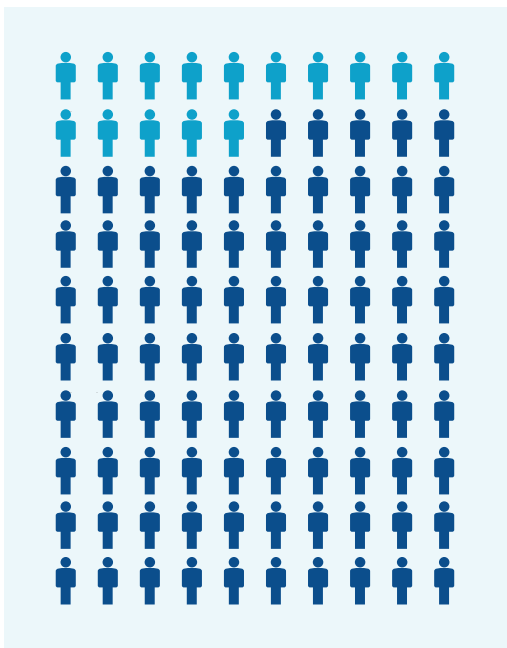
ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS

Registrants were asked for information regarding additional programs their primary practice accepts for new patients. A sample of responses include:

- Ontario Health Insurance Plan
- Ontario Cleft Lip and Palate/Craniofacial Dental Program
- Children’s Aid Services
- Interim Canada Dental Plan
- The Canadian Armed Forces Dental Plan
- Green Door Project (Green Shield Canada)
- Federal Interim Health Benefit Program
- Thames Valley Children’s Center
- Essential Health and Social Supports Program



VOLUNTEERING



Dentists were asked about the provision of volunteer dentistry services. Key findings include:

- 15% of dentists in Ontario report that they provide volunteer services. Of the dentists that report providing volunteer services:
 - 12% do so in their local communities.
 - 1.7% report volunteering outside of their local communities within Ontario.
 - 0.5% volunteer outside of their local communities within Canada.
 - 4% report volunteering internationally.²



² Dentists may volunteer in more than one location.