# The transformative shift in dental healthcare: trends and innovations



The dental healthcare industry is currently experiencing a transformative phase, influenced by evolving patient preferences, increased administrative requirements within practices, and rapid technological advancements. A recent report from Benevis outlines pivotal trends that are reshaping oral health, notably the surge in dental service organizations (DSOs), the incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI), and enhanced access to dental care.

Data from the Health Policy Institute (HPI) at the American Dental Association (ADA) highlights a striking trend: the proportion of dentists affiliated with DSOs has nearly doubled since 2015. This increase is partly attributed to ongoing staffing shortages and complicated reimbursement processes that are prompting dentists to seek support from organisations like Benevis—a prominent dental healthcare provider dedicated to delivering quality care to underserved populations—and larger group practices. Recent surveys indicate a significant struggle in recruitment, with one-third of dentists actively seeking hygienists and dental assistants. The 2024 HPI-ADA survey reflects broader concerns in the sector, revealing that 72% of respondents face significant hiring challenges for dental assistants, while 46% report similar difficulties for hygienists. With 82% of dental professionals feeling the weight of career-related stress from these issues, many are turning to DSOs to alleviate operational pressures.

Dr. Jane Whang, DDS, regional director of clinical at Benevis, remarked, “The rise of DSO models has proven to benefit providers and patients, especially in disadvantaged communities, by offering more affordable and accessible dental care with broader insurance network options.” She emphasized the positive impact these organisations have on clinical teams, enabling them to prioritise patient care, establish trust, and enhance the overall patient experience and outcomes.

A notable trend observed between 2022 and 2023 is the increasing focus on preventive oral healthcare among adults in the U.S. The percentage of adults seeking preventative dental services has seen a rise from 78% to 83%, according to a report from Delta Dental, indicating a heightened awareness of the correlation between oral health and overall well-being.

Furthermore, the utilisation of oral health services has rebounded to levels seen prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, suggesting improvements in access to care. The Benevis report notes a significant drop in the number of uninsured children, reaching its lowest level in two decades at 8%. Dental visits have surged across the country, with nearly 45% of Americans attending a dental appointment between 2021 and 2022.

The advent of artificial intelligence in the dental sector is another critical area of development. In 2024, Benevis, along with various dental and medical organisations, started to implement AI-driven appointment scheduling systems to enhance patient management and operational efficiency. Experts predict that AI will expand its role in diagnosing and managing administrative tasks, as well as in performing select dental procedures by 2025. These innovations not only aim to ease the burden on dental professionals but also to minimise errors, ultimately improving the patient experience.

As the dental healthcare industry adapts to meet the needs of modern consumers and navigates an increasingly intricate operational landscape, the coming years are expected to witness ongoing transformation. Emerging technologies, administrative advancements, and patient-centred innovations will continue to redefine oral healthcare delivery.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

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