

Dental/DSO Industry Newsletter

Dental/DSO Industry Market Intelligence

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INDUSTRY SPOTLIGHT

Interview with Dana Collins, Discover Growth, Ltd.

Dana Collins is the Owner/Growth Partner of [Discover Growth, Ltd.](#), a consulting firm specializing in Growth Planning & Implementation, Leadership Development & Team Health, and Marketing Strategy & Coaching. She has spent more than 25 years working alongside purpose-driven entrepreneurs to help grow their businesses and their impact. As a former COO and CMO, Dana recognizes the obstacles to growth and have navigated many of them herself.



How was Discover Growth started? What led you to start the business?

Prior to starting my coaching business, I spearheaded the growth of a dental group, partnering with the founder to 10X the business from a single doctor practice to a multi-location dental group.

The growth outpaced the operations and we found ourselves in desperate need for structure. I implemented a business operating system that brought structure, accountabilities, systems, and alignment to the organization. I enjoyed the process and appreciated the positive impact it had so much that I decided to dedicate my career to helping businesses and their teams live out their purpose and potential.

What services do you offer?

Services include growth planning and implementation, leadership development and team health, and marketing strategy and coaching. The approach goes beyond traditional coaching and consulting. As a Growth Partner, I help implement the right strategy, culture, people, structure, and processes to achieve a practice's vision and goals. Having served as both an EOS Implementer and Integrator, I have experience on both sides of coaching and executing an operating system. Additionally, as a Maxwell Leadership Certified Team Member, I work with organizations to improve team health, which is a crucial element of successful execution.

Talk a little about Discover Growth's work in the dental industry.

While I work with a variety of industries, the dental field holds a special place for me, with over 13 years of experience in this sector. Dentistry has become increasingly competitive, making it crucial to have the right people, processes, and systems in place to deliver an exceptional patient experience while also managing everything that goes into operating a dental practice—managing clinical care, insurance and billing, scheduling, marketing, etc.

Aligning employees from different locations to move in the same direction with clear processes and systems can be challenging. When everyone on the team understands the vision and their role in achieving it, it creates a strong rallying point throughout the organization. Bringing clarity and teamwork to these aspects is the most rewarding part of my job.

What challenges are you seeing in the dental industry right now? What opportunities?

The growing emphasis on consumer convenience has increased demands on dental practices. This is especially challenging as the workforce has developed its own set of demands. Practices have had to significantly raise pay to retain and attract top talent, yet many employees are less willing to work the later hours that are most convenient for patients.

While a challenge, this situation presents an opportunity for dental practice owners to differentiate themselves as employers. By creating workplaces where employees find purpose and camaraderie in their daily work, and offering leadership and development opportunities, practices can keep their teams engaged and motivated.

What is your favorite type of vacation?

Mountains. I love clearing my head and being in nature.

What advice would you give a dentist that wants to expand their practice and open a second location?

Start creating strong systems and documenting processes. In a single practice, there can be a lot of tribal knowledge that is hard to transfer over to a new office without good systems and solid training. With growth comes complexity and that can lead to chaos. It's more important to stay high level in documenting a process than it is to document so many details that it becomes overwhelming and unread. Look for ways to simplify as much as possible. Focus on the 20% that gets you 80% of the result.

Even more importantly, now is the time to start developing leadership. It's going to take strong leadership to build or transition a team that aligns with your vision for the practice and is effective and healthy. The last thing you want is a toxic culture that doesn't deliver according to your standards and has a lot of turnover. It's more important than ever to recognize and communicate your vision and values and identify who is and isn't on board.

This is when having a coach can be one of the best decisions you can make. A coach can facilitate the process of creating clarity around what you want for your business, who you need on your team, and how to get there.

To contact Dana and learn more about [Discover Growth](#), you can reach her at (419) 579-6782 or dana@discover-growth.com.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DSO Technology Summit 2024

SEPTEMBER 4–6, 2024, Nashville, TN

Recognized as the 'Premier Technology Event' for DSOs, Group Practices, and Industry Partner Organizations, this year the DSO Tech Summit will deep dive into helping you understand that the integration of hardware and software systems is a major factor for optimizing practice revenue and efficient business management.

For more information, please click [here](#).

DentalForum USA

SEPTEMBER 9–10, 2024, Bonita Springs, FL

OpenRoom is hosting this event on a biannual basis, which will connect DSOs from across the country with a wide range of product and solution providers. The unique format combines talks from industry leaders, hosted roundtable sessions and its signature program of speed meetings based on mutual interest.

For more information, please click [here](#).

DSO Leadership Summit 2024

SEPTEMBER 26–28, 2024, Atlanta, GA

The DSO Leadership Summit is where the best dental service organizations come together to network, learn, and grow. This dental event brings together a community of professionals who want to take their organizations to the next level.

For more information, please click [here](#).

Supercharge Your Dental Practice

SEPTEMBER 27–29, 2024, Scottsdale, AZ

This is a concentrated two-day session which focuses on the marketing and business sides of running a dental practice. This event is ideal for the dental professional who is struggling to find new patients, thinking about selling to a DSO, or looking to boost their skills outside of the clinical realm.

For more information, please click [here](#).

SmileCon 2024

OCTOBER 17–19, 2024, New Orleans, LA

Registration is open for SmileCon 2024, where participants can join dental professionals on October 17–19 in New Orleans.

For more information, please click [here](#).



Please contact us if you would like to post information regarding your upcoming events or if you'd like to guest author an article for this newsletter.

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KEY FINDINGS

Study shows positive results for dental students' use of AI chatbots

A study at the University of Illinois Chicago College of Dentistry developed a chatbot using information reviewed by faculty members to answer questions about clinical procedures.

Cortino Sukotjo, DDS, PhD, a professor of restorative dentistry at UIC and director of the college's predoctoral implant program, led a [study](#) examining the effectiveness of chatbots at answering students' questions to increase efficiency during procedures. While the study showed promising results, skeptics continue to question whether AI-based tools can effectively replicate or supplement human instruction, and whether the information they provide can be trusted as reliable enough for the classroom.

Dental students at UIC use an online learning platform, Blackboard, for more information on clinical procedures, however they often turn to professors to answer specific questions, which can be time consuming and can create bottlenecks. For the study, two groups of students used either Blackboard or the chatbot for their questions. The group using the chatbot rated the technology as being significantly more timely, interactive, and anxiety-reducing, however concerns about the potential for incorrect information was high compared to the group receiving information from their professors.

Unlike many other AI tools, this chatbot was not built with large-language models, which have dominated headlines about AI advances. Instead, the researchers used a rule-based system, fed with information that was assembled and reviewed by College of Dentistry faculty members. In the clinic, the chatbot can answer simple questions, such as what instruments students will need for a procedure or which code is appropriate for logging information in the electronic patient record. Unlike faculty, it is available 24 hours a day.

"The more questions students ask, the smarter the chatbot becomes," said Dr. Qiao Fang, clinical assistant professor and an author of the paper. "Faculty members in the implant clinic also calibrate chatbot answers and strive to avoid providing inaccurate responses to students, thereby maintaining consistent standards in the clinic."

The [study](#) concluded that the integration of chatbot technology into dental clinical education significantly enhanced learning and student engagement, and there is the potential for future technological enrichment of the educational landscape in this area. Dr. Sukotjo is currently working on improving the chatbot and is also [collaborating](#) with software developers to turn the chatbot into a smartphone app.

Sources: University of Illinois Chicago College of Dentistry, The Journal of Prosthetic Dentistry, UIC Today, Becker's Dental and DSO Review

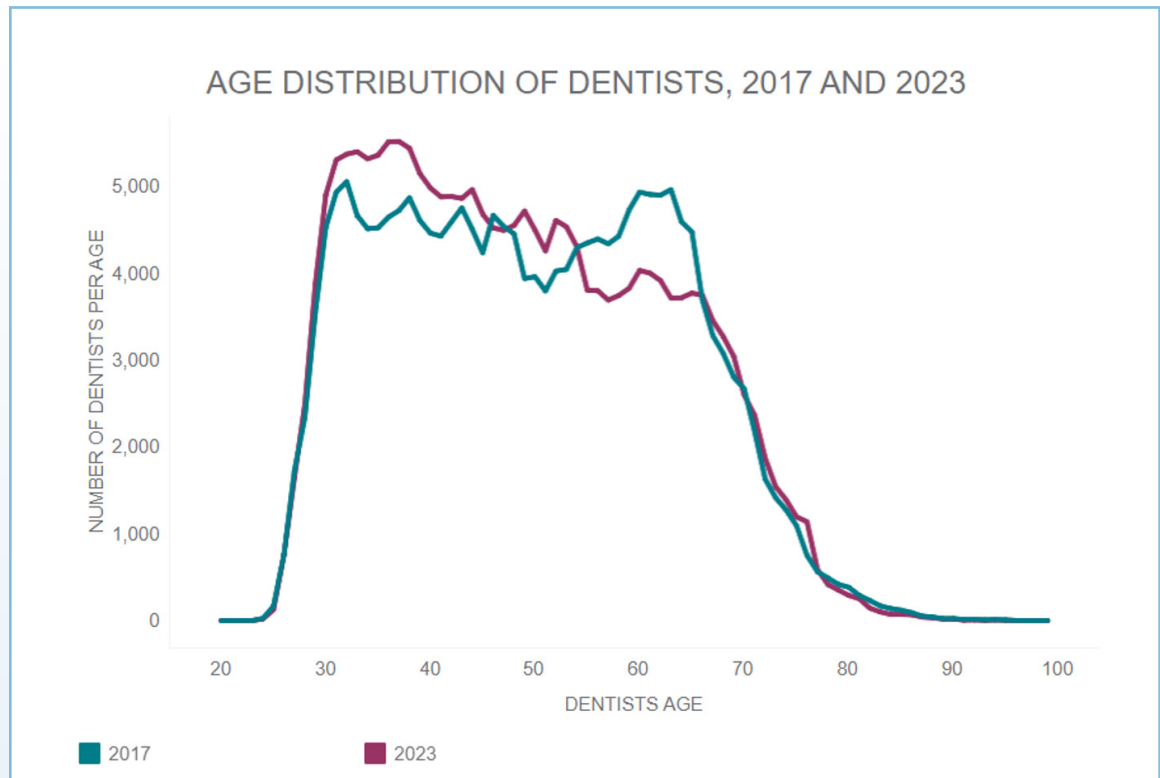
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KEY FINDINGS (cont'd)

A generational shift toward younger dentists is underway

According to data from the ADA Health Policy Institute, the average age of dentists is decreasing, indicating a younger generation of dentists will be shaping the industry.

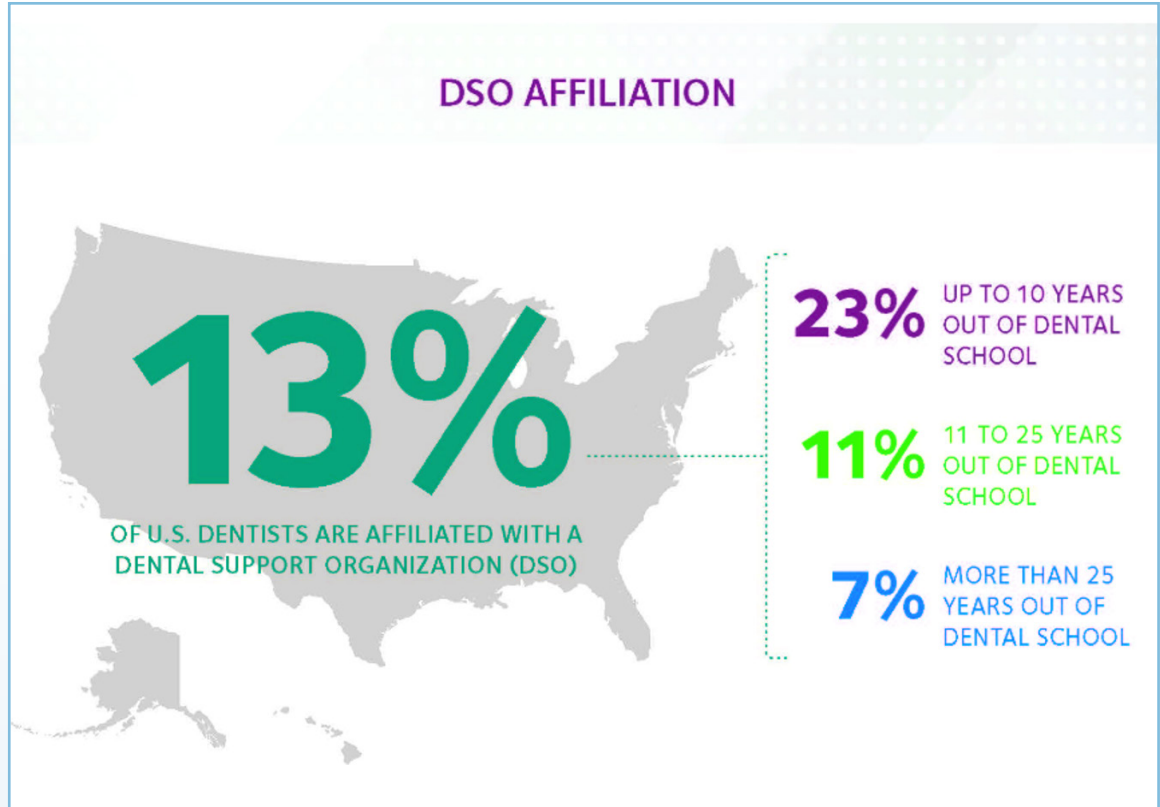
According to the ADA Health Policy Institute, which tracks U.S. dentist retirement and age distribution patterns to predict the future dental workforce, the average age of dentists is [decreasing](#). The data found that more dentists are in the 35 -44 year age range than ever before.



This trend could have far-reaching impacts to the dental industry, as more younger dentists are selling and consolidating their practices, [according](#) to oral health groups. Younger dentists are more informed about the opportunities that consolidation can bring to their practices and careers. Joining a DSO is one way that dentists can see a path toward an exit, as an alternative to traditional partnerships. ADA data [supports](#) this claim, which found that among dentists who are within 10 years of graduating from dental school, the affiliation rate with DSOs rises to 23%. This suggests that younger dentists are more likely to be attracted to the benefits and opportunities offered by DSOs.

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KEY FINDINGS (cont'd)



Sources: American Dental Association's Health Policy Institute, Dr. Bicuspid.com

GENERAL DENTISTRY NEWS

Florida Legislature Receives Two Bills to Revise Dental Standards, License Process

[HB 855](#) creates requirements for dentists to provide patients with specific information, including dentist's name, contact information, after-hour contact information for emergencies, and license information. The bill also requires dentists who provide telehealth services to perform an in-person examination on a patient or review records from an in-person exam from the past year before making an initial diagnosis for an orthodontic appliance.

[SB 938](#) updates the license requirements in Florida. Some of the revisions include getting rid of language that requires prepared dental students to wait until their final year of school to apply for licensure and replacing the National Board of Dental Examiners' dental exam with the exam administered by the Joint Commission on National Dental Examinations.

If approved, both bills would go into effect July 1.

Source: Click Orlando

American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry Names New Board Officers and Trustees at Annual Meeting

[The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry](#) (AAPD) installed new board officers and trustees during the AAPD 2024 General Assembly meeting.

Members assuming new appointments include:

- Scott D. Smith – President
- Thomas G. Ison – President-Elect
- Carlos A. Bertot – Vice President
- Jacob K. Lee – Secretary-Treasurer
- James R. Boynton – Parliamentarian
- John Blake – Affiliate Membership Trustee
- Jennifer L. Cully – Academic At-Large Trustee
- Vineet Dhar – ABPD Director
- Katherine L. Chin – Southwestern District Trustee
- Donald C. Schmitt – Western District Trustee

These appointees will join current members of the AAPD Board of Trustees for the 2024-2025 term.

Source: American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry

DSO EXPANSION & CONSOLIDATION

California, Ohio, Arizona, Colorado and Pennsylvania saw DSO Expansion in May

The five states saw the most activity with regards to practice additions, acquisitions, and openings in May. The states also saw two DSO moves in May, according to Becker's Dental & DSO Review. There were four moves in California, two in Arizona, two in Colorado, two in Ohio, and two in Pennsylvania, which included:

California:

- Cal Dental's [acquisition](#) of LA Dental Braces, which has offices in Los Angeles and San Diego.
- Affordable Care [opened](#) Affordable Dentures & Implants locations in Vista and Kearny Mesa.
- MB2 Dental [partnered](#) with Cosmetic and Implant Dentistry of La Jolla.
- Image Specialty Partners [added](#) Hulse Orthodontics in Carlsbad.

Arizona:

- Specialized Dental Partners [added](#) Chandler Implants and Periodontics.
- MB2 Dental [partnered](#) with CooperMine Dental Studio in Rancho Sahuarita and Madera Canyon.

Colorado:

- Affordable Care [opened](#) an Affordable Dentures & Implants location in Centennial.
- MB2 Dental [partnered](#) with a dental practice in Castle Pines.

Ohio:

- Cordental Group [acquired](#) The Healthy Smile Center in Ashtabula, Ohio.
- Heartland Dental [affiliated](#) with Lake West Dental in Willoughby Hills, and Macedonia Dental Arts.

Pennsylvania:

- ClearChoice Dental Implant Centers [opened](#) a location in Chadds Ford.
- Affordable Dentures & Implants [opened](#) a practice location in Ross Township.

Source: Becker's Dental & DSO Review

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DSO EXPANSION & CONSOLIDATION (cont'd)

Cal Dental USA Expands Into Orthodontics With the Acquisition of LA Dental Braces

The DSO, which currently supports over 20 offices in California, acquired LA Dental Braces, which has offices in Los Angeles and San Diego, marking its first entry into the orthodontic market. The integration of LA Dental Braces into Cal Dental USA's network supports its greater mission to provide comprehensive dental solutions under one brand. This acquisition also strengthens its position as a comprehensive dental care provider in the Southern California region.

Source: Cal Dental

Affordable Care's Affordable Dentures & Implants Network Opened Six New Locations

The opening in Vista, California highlighted [special offers](#) and a list of payment [options](#) available, which include financing. The full list of new locations include:

- Affordable Dentures & Implants in Centennial, CO
- Affordable Dentures & Implants in Greensboro, NC
- Affordable Dentures & Implants in Kearny Mesa, CA
- Affordable Dentures & Implants in Vista, CA
- Affordable Dentures & Implants in Cedar Park, TX
- Affordable Dentures & Implants in Columbia, MO (Rebranded from DDS Dentures + Implant Solutions).

Source: Group Dentistry Now

Cliff Ridge Specialty Partners Plans Further Growth Across Pacific Northwest Through Orthodontic, Pediatric Acquisitions

Cliff Ridge Specialty Partners, an orthodontic platform formerly known as 49 Mile Ventures, founded in 2023, closed its first acquisition with Angolkar4Smiles, an orthodontic practice with two clinics located in the Greater Seattle Area. The acquisition represents Cliff Ridge's entry into the Pacific Northwest market, where it plans to continue expanding through partnerships with other orthodontics and pediatric dentists. The platform provides doctors with the support, data, tools, resources, and capital they need to grow.

Source: Cliff Ridge Specialty Partners

OTHER DSO NEWS

Straine Dental Management Appoints its First Chief Engagement Officer

The Sacramento-based DSO appointed Scott Jolly, DDS, as its Chief Engagement Officer. Dr. Jolly has served as a consulting client with Straine for more than 13 years and has more than 20 years of experience in private practice. His practice in North Little Rock, Arkansas partnered with Straine Dental Management in April. Straine Dental Management has been an industry leader for three decades in developing employee engagement strategies for the dental industry. More than ever, employee engagement is a strategic business objective and Dr. Jolly has an extensive record of implementing and innovating strategies at the practice level that lead to long-term employee retention, higher employee performance, improved quality of work, and organizational success.

Source: Straine Dental Management

PDS Health Founder Earns Association of Dental Support Organizations Award

Pacific Dental Services founder and CEO Stephen E. Thorne IV received the 2024 Presidential Award from the Association of Dental Support Organizations (ADSO). The award was presented to Thorne during the 13th Annual ADSO Summit in Denver, Colorado, recognizing his leadership and service within the association. The award marks the second consecutive year he was recognized for his service, corporate social responsibility, and societal contributions. PDS' [mission](#) includes recognizing the importance of bridging dentistry and medical care to improve patient outcomes and reduce overall healthcare costs.

Source: Pacific Dental Services

Dentists becoming Increasingly Open to DSOs in 2024

An increasing number of dentists have become more open to joining DSOs as these organizations work to refute misconceptions and support dental professionals. Barry Lyon, DDS, is a Chief Dental Officer for the division of orthodontics and pediatric dentistry for Dental Care Alliance. According to the [American Dental Association](#), 8.8% of dentists were affiliated with a DSO in 2017. That number rose to 10.4% in 2019, and to 13% in 2023. The substantial growth trajectory of the global DSO market anticipates a promising future with a projected market size of \$765.20 billion by 2030. The DSO market is experiencing a remarkable compound annual growth rate of 11.3% during the forecast period spanning from 2024 to 2030.

Source: Becker's Dental & DSO Review

PRIVATE EQUITY DEALS

[The Smilist's Roadmap for 50% Growth in 2024 After New Investments](#)

Great Neck, N.Y.-based [The Smilist DSO](#) is focused on improving its provider and patient experience while continuing to grow its footprint throughout the rest of 2024. The DSO, secured a \$285 million debt facility in 2024, including a commitment of nearly \$100 million of new growth capital. Per The Smilist's CEO, Andrew Mintz, the funds will be used for organic and inorganic growth. The DSO has refinanced to give it the ability to grow its facilities and add new services, doctors and specialists to its existing sites. It's also expecting to be making acquisitions with the funds, and grow by 50%.

Source: Becker's Dental & DSO Review

[Viva AI Secures Investment to Advance Dental AI Receptionist](#)

The investment, which it said was from a leader in the dental industry, will allow it to expand its engineering team to further build out the capabilities of its AI receptionist technology. The company's AI program offerings include practice and communication optimization to improve patient care quality and business operations of dental practices. The investor name, or the amount of the deal was not disclosed.

Source: Office Management Solutions, Viva AI

[Guardian Dentistry Partners Receives Investment from Morgan Stanley Private Credit](#)

The Miami-based DSO received an undisclosed investment from Morgan Stanley Private Credit. The company said it will use the funds to accelerate its growth and expand its geographical reach. In 2020 the DSO was named an [Emerging Group to Watch](#) by Group Dentistry Now, and has expanded to support dental partners in Alabama, D.C., Florida, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia.

Source: Guardian Dentistry Partners

PARTNERSHIPS AND INNOVATION

Startup Offering Pay-as-you-go Dental Closes Strategic Equity Round

Flossy, which says it is the first pay-as-you-go discount dental solution that connects patients with and without dental insurance to a highly-rated dentist in their area, closed a new equity round with Forecast Labs, a consumer venture group within Comcast NBCUniversal. Forecast Labs has worked with leading fintech and health companies such as Public.com, Nurx, and Acorns. Current investors TTV Capital and The Family Fund also participated in the round, along with new investor, B Capital. Flossy previously raised \$14.7 million in series A funding to support its growth in 2022.

PAXTON'S RECEIPT

RETAIL PRICE	\$ 4,049.42
FLOSSY DISCOUNT	- \$ 2,105.70
FINAL PRICE	\$ 1,943.72

**You Saved 48%
Booking With Flossy**

Q Zip Code **Find a Dentist**

Source: Flossy

LITIGATION

[Two Physicians Join Dentists, Testifying About Dental Affordability, Accessibility](#)

Physicians Myechia Minter-Jordan, MD, and Lisa Simon, MD, DMD, [joined](#) two dentists to testify before the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions at a hearing on May 16 about how to improve dental care affordability and accessibility. The hearing was held after Sen. Bernie Sanders [introduced](#) the Comprehensive Dental Care Reform Act of 2024, which aims to expand dental care coverage for veterans and low-income individuals, as well as to increase the oral healthcare workforce. Another goal of the act is to bring more dental care services to community health centers, schools, nursing homes, and mobile units.

Source: Becker's Dental & DSO Review

[Report Finds FDA Never Inspected Lab That Made Controversial Retainer-like Dental Device](#)

FDA documents reportedly show that the FDA did not inspect [Johns Dental Laboratories](#) which manufactured the Anterior Growth Guidance Appliance, a retainer-like device. The device has become the subject of several lawsuits after patients alleged it caused severe damage to their teeth. The FDA began evaluating safety concerns related to the device after the lawsuits, with the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Western District of Tennessee and the U.S. Department of Justice launching criminal investigations into the AGGA device shortly after. Johns Dental settled lawsuits from 20 patients and has stopped making the device as of 2023.

Source: Becker's Dental

[Homeopathic Manufacturer Issues Voluntary Nationwide Recall of Oral Care Spray Due to Microbial Contamination](#)

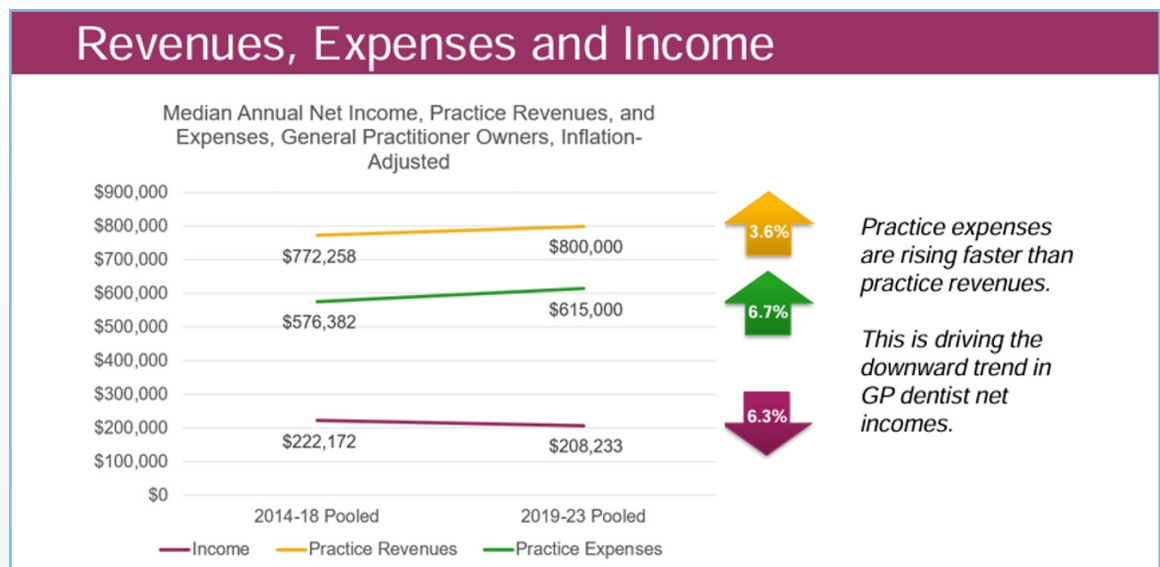
[HomeoCare Laboratories Inc.](#), a manufacturer of homeopathic products, is voluntarily recalling two batches of Homeopathic [StellaLife](#) Oral Care Products in 2024 due to FDA findings of microbial contamination. The two products were found to contain higher than acceptable levels of Total Aerobic Microbial Count (TAMC) and Bacillus sp. The products in question are StellaLife Advanced Formula Peppermint Vega Oral Care Rinse and StellaLife Vega Oral Spray, Unflavored.

Source: FDA

STAFFING

ADA Survey Finds Dental Practice Expenses Rose Faster Than Revenues in 2023

According to the American Dental Association’s Health Policy Institute, billing data for 2023 that was collected from the ADA’s 2024 “Survey of Dental Practice,” revealed that while the average hourly gross billings for solo dentists in private practice rose to \$572 per practice hour in 2023, compared to \$539 per hour in 2022, overall practice expenses rose faster than revenue.



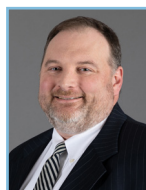
Other insights from the report found that due to the impact of rising practice expenses, there was an overall decline in average net income. In addition, general practitioner dentists are busier than ever and are working longer hours since the pandemic.

Sources: American Dental Association’s Health Policy Institute, ADA News

For more information regarding our Dental Industry/DSO Practice, or if you would like to contribute to the newsletter, please contact:



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