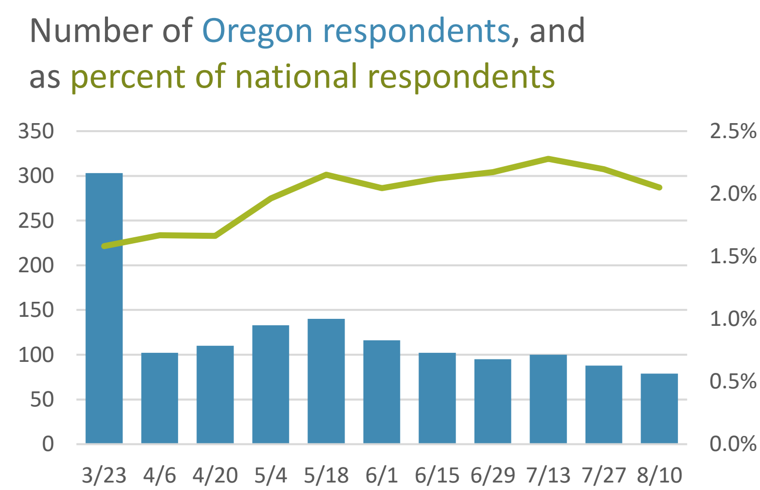
COVID-19 ECONOMIC IMPACT ON DENTAL PRACTICES: SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

To better understand the impact of COVID-19 on dental practices, the American Dental Association's Health Policy Institute has been conducting a biweekly survey with dentists across the country since March. National and state level data are available through ADA HPI.[1]

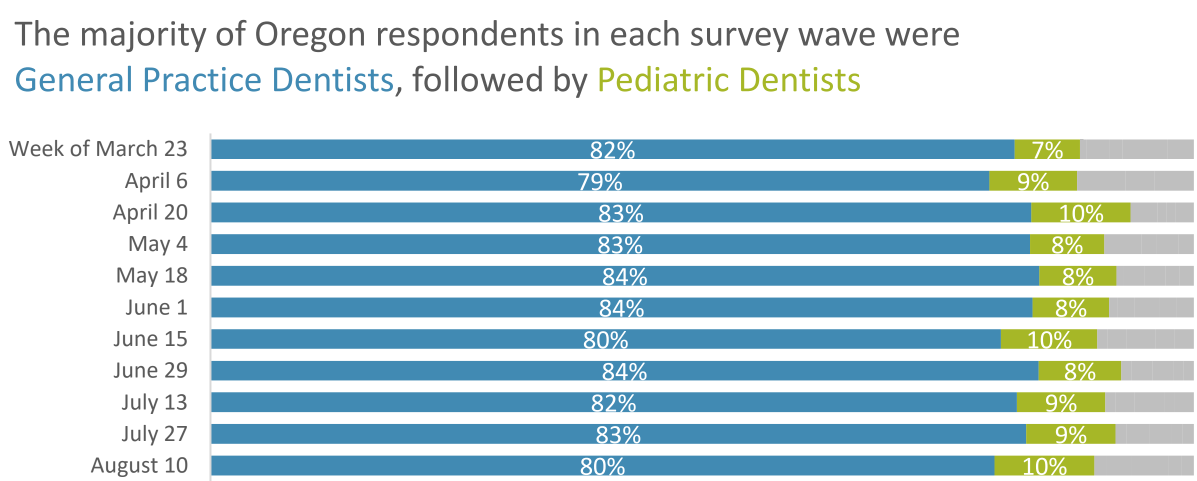
We reviewed the responses from Oregon dental practices from 11 survey waves (March 23 – August 10) and summarized key findings below. Data presented in this brief are raw, differences were not tested for statistical significance.

OREGON RESPONDENTS

Across the 11 waves of surveys we reviewed, the number of Oregon respondents averaged 124, with the most respondents in the baseline survey (the week of March 23rd), followed by Wave 5 (week of May 18th). Oregon respondents made up 2.0% of the national sample.

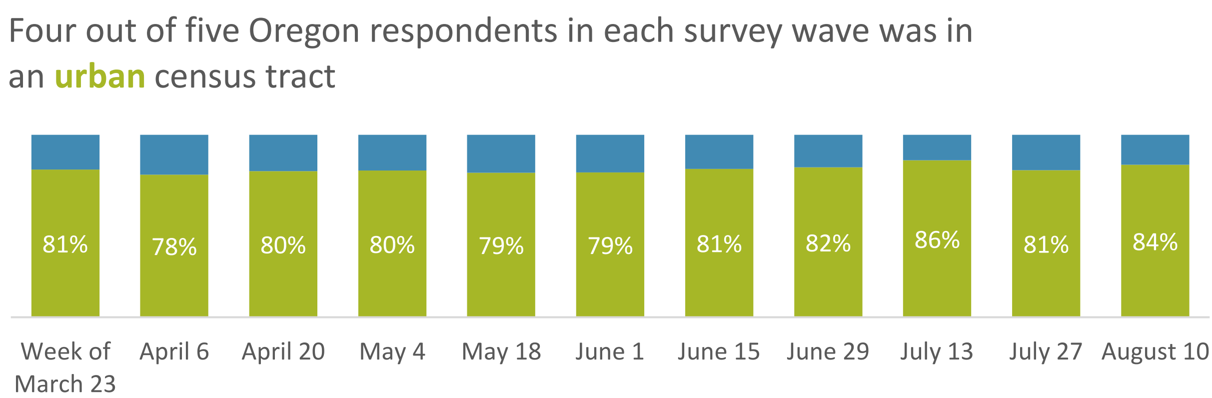


The majority of Oregon respondents in each survey wave were general practice dentists, followed by pediatric dentists. Other specialties (represented in the grey bars below) included public health dentistry, oral surgery, endodontics, orthodontics, periodontics, and dental anesthesiology.

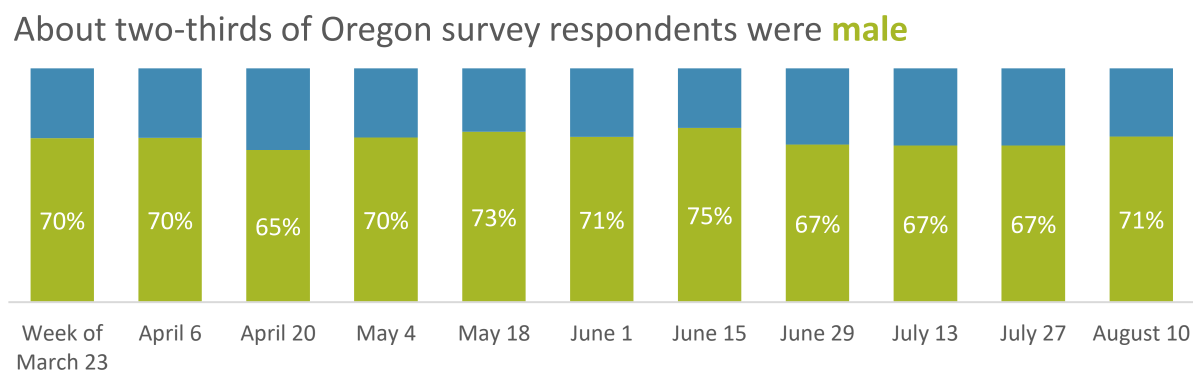


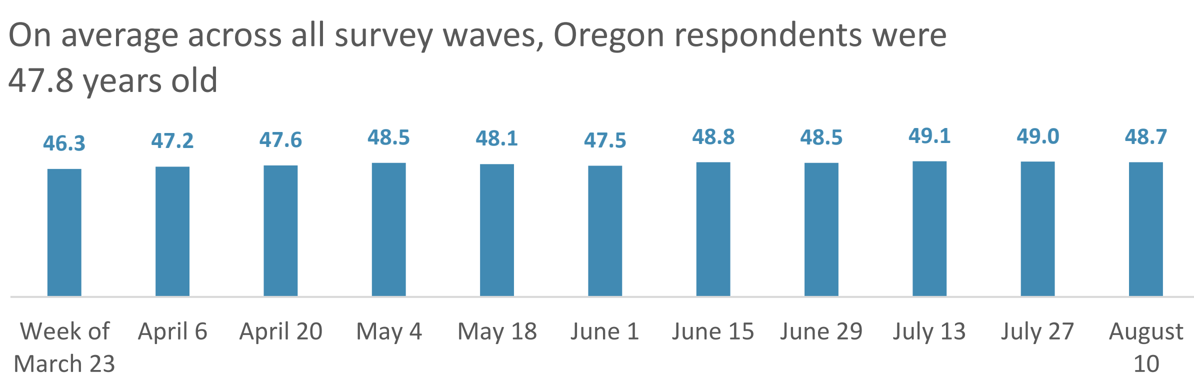
[1] https://www.ada.org/en/science-research/health-policy-institute/covid-19-dentists-economic-impact

RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS



Rural census tract responses have been combined for Large Rural, Small Rural, and Isolated.



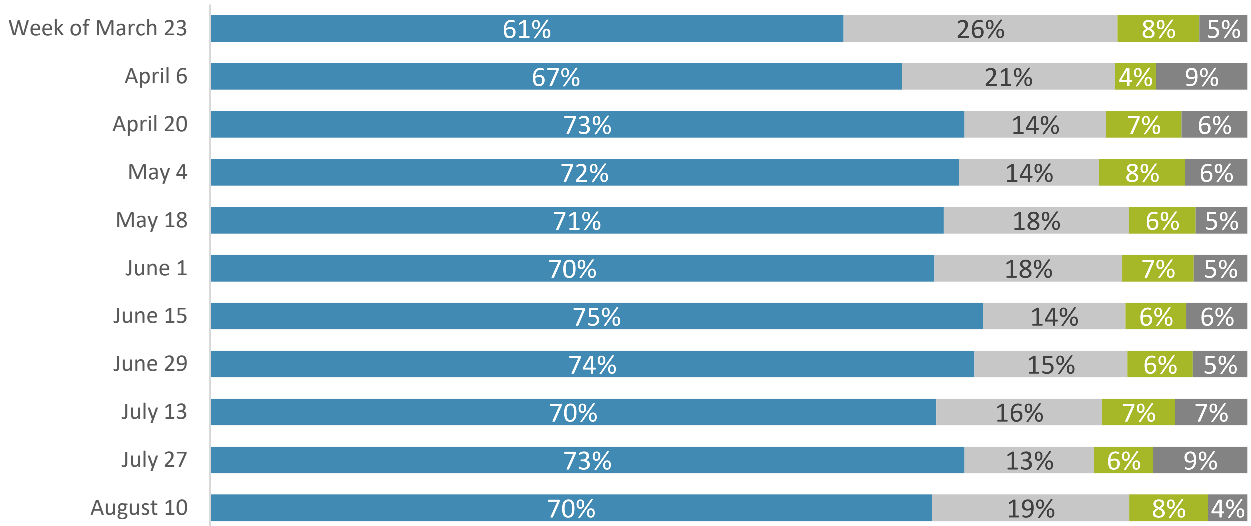


Compare to all dentists practicing in Oregon in 2020: 54.7% are between 35 and 54 years of age. 72% of are male.[2]

[2] Oregon Healthcare Workforce Reporting, 2020. https://www.oregon.gov/oha/hpa/analytics/Pages/Health-Care-Workforce-Reporting.aspx

Oregon respondents by race/ethnicity: **white**, **not reported**, **Asian**, **other***

* Data combined due to small numbers for American Indian, Black, Hispanic, Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander, and Other respondents.

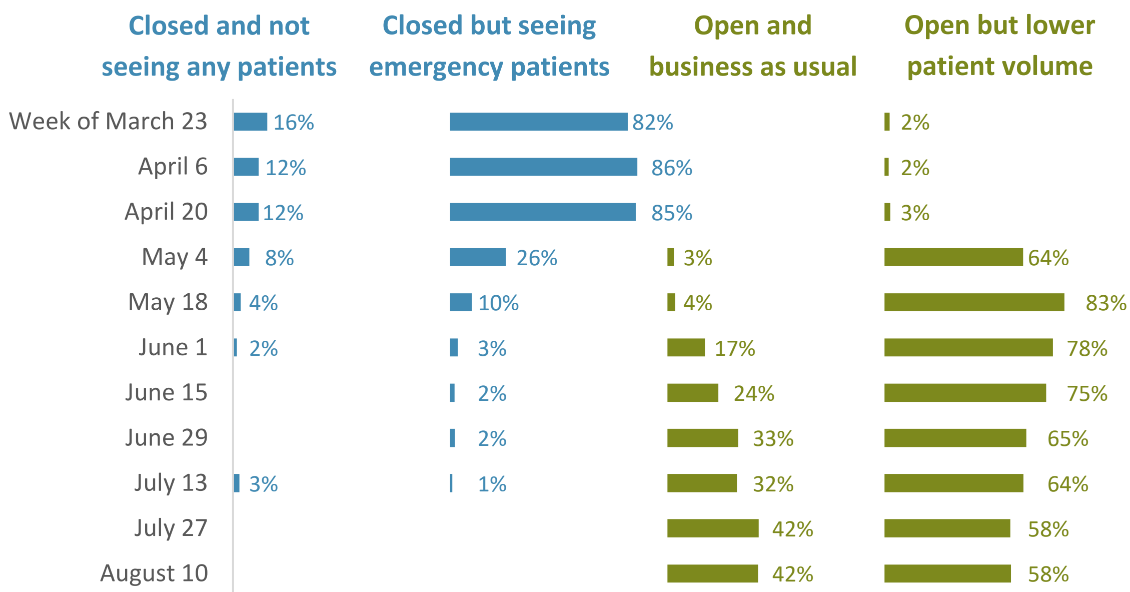


Compared to all dentists practicing in Oregon as of January 2020: 66.1% are white, 12.3% are Asian, 6.9% are another race, and 14.7% declined to answer.[3]

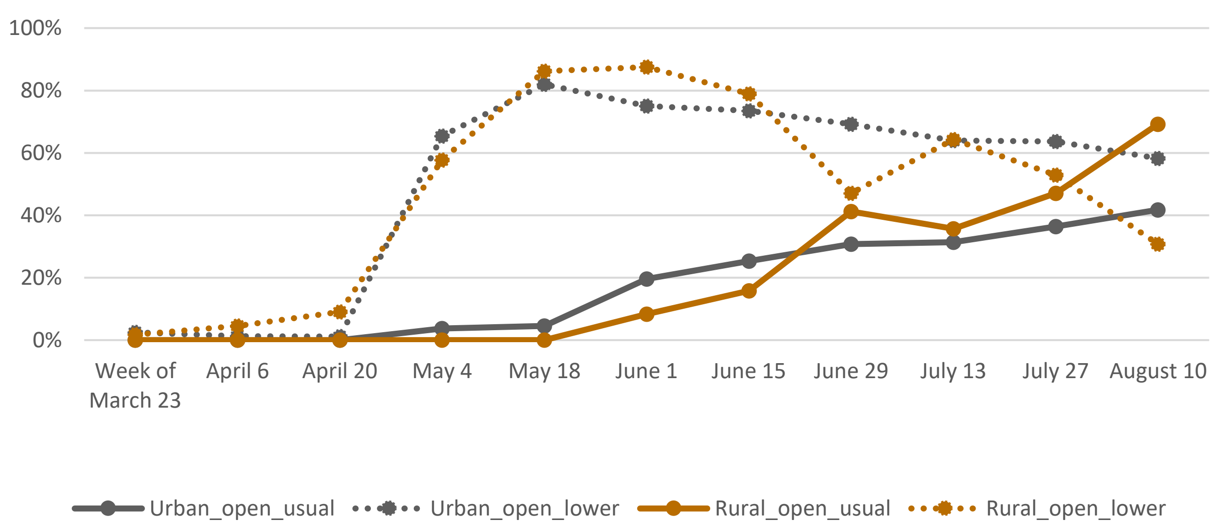
[3] Oregon Healthcare Workforce Reporting, 2020. https://www.oregon.gov/oha/hpa/analytics/Pages/Health-Care-Workforce-Reporting.aspx

CURRENT STATUS OF DENTAL PRACTICES

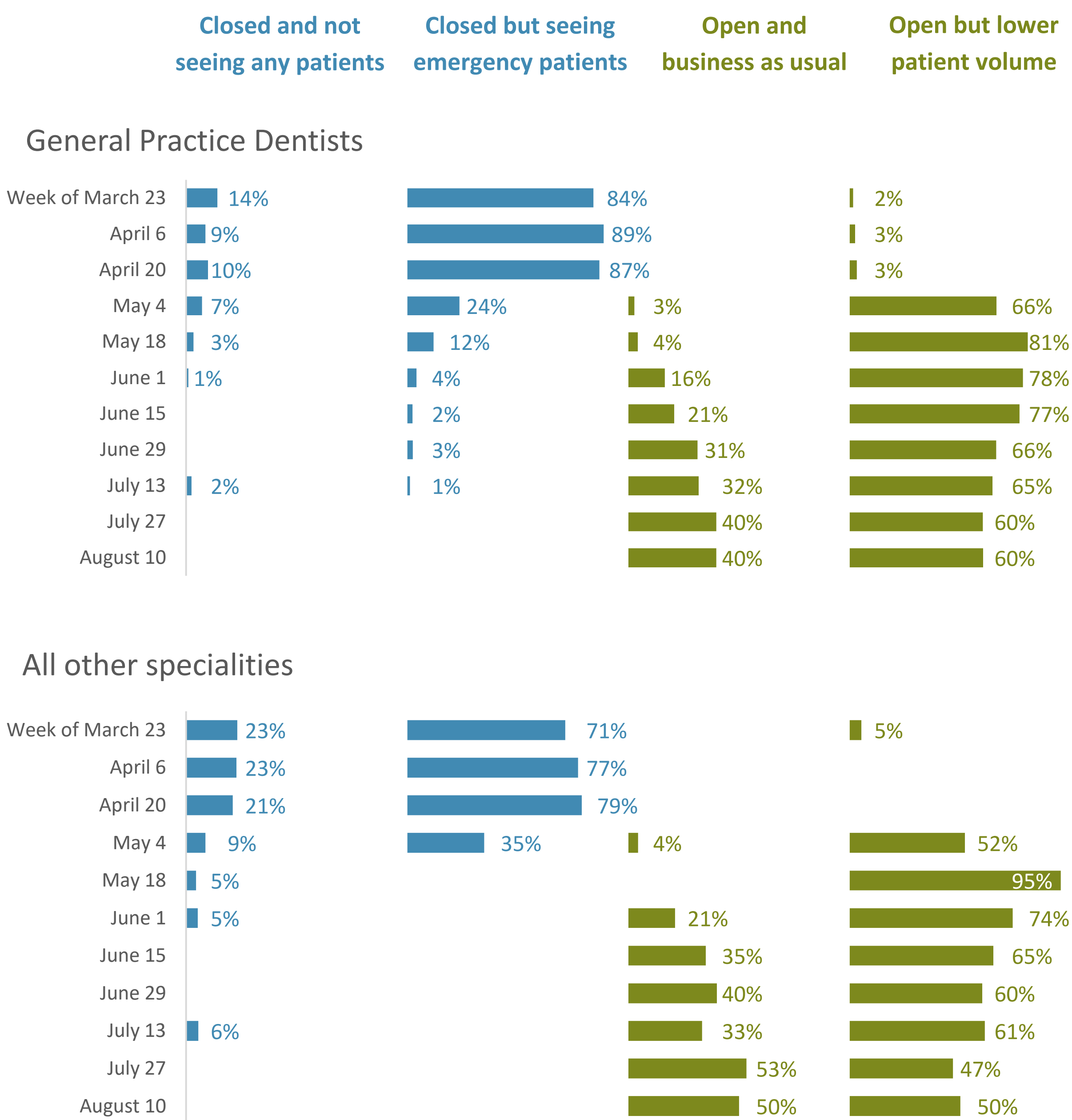
When asked about the current status of their dental practice, Oregon respondents were initially closed, although most continued to see emergency patients through April and May. By late July, no Oregon respondents reported that their practices were closed, although a majority reported lower patient volume than usual.



Rural dental practices were faster to report they were back to business as usual than **urban practices,** who were more likely to report lower patient volume once they opened.



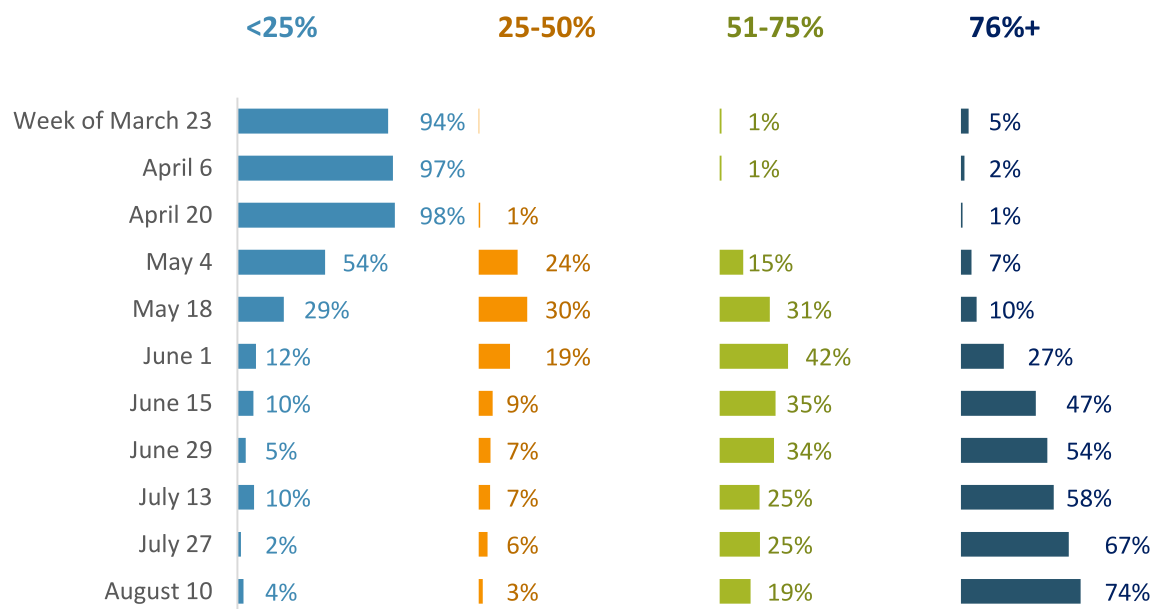
General practice dentists were less likely to be closed entirely than other specialties and were more likely to be closed but seeing emergency patients than other specialties.



PATIENT VOLUME

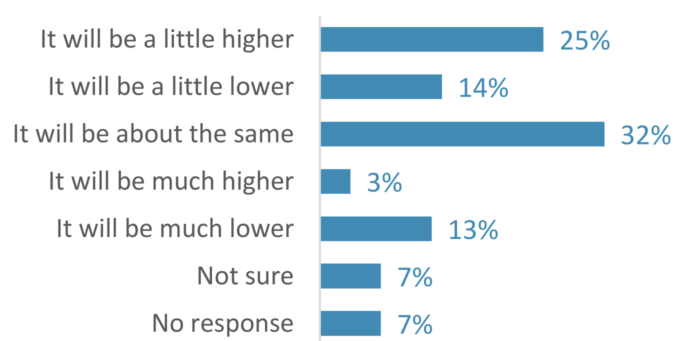
CURRENT PATIENT VOLUME COMPARED TO A TYPICAL WEEK

Dental practices were asked in each survey wave how the week compared to what was typical for their practice (prior to the COVID-19 pandemic) in terms of patient volume. In March and April, almost all Oregon respondents reported less than 25% of typical patient volume (with many reporting less than 5% of typical volume). In May and June, this began shifting to closer to half of typical patient volume, and by early August, two-thirds of Oregon dental practices were reporting 76-100% of typical patient volumes.



EXPECTED PATIENT VOLUME

In wave 10 (week of July 27), dental practices were asked how they thought their expected patient volume in September and October would compare to this week.



The majority of dental practices believed their patient volume would be a little higher or about the same and responses were generally similar across urban and rural practices, and across general practices and specialist practices. Rural practices were more likely to believe patient volume would be about the same (50% of rural providers, compared to 30% of urban providers).

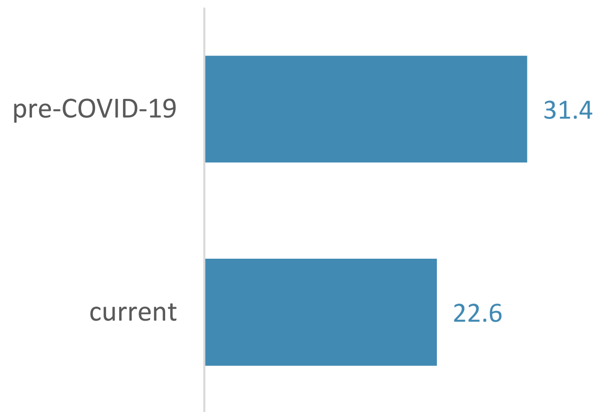
DAILY PATIENT VOLUME

In wave 8 (week of June 29), dental practices were asked about the maximum number of patients their practice could see in a day prior to COVID-19 and how that compared to the maximum number of patients they can see in a day currently.

The 55 responding practices averaged 31.4 patients per day pre-COVID (ranging from 6 to 90), compared to 57 responding practices currently averaging 22.6 patients per day currently (ranging from 4 to 90). The 55 practices that responded to both survey questions reported an average drop of 8.9 patients per day.

The 55 responding practices also reported their average daily volume for the past week; across all 55 responding providers, the average daily volume was 17.1 patients. This was mostly driven by general practice dentists, who averaged 16.1 patients per day in the past week.

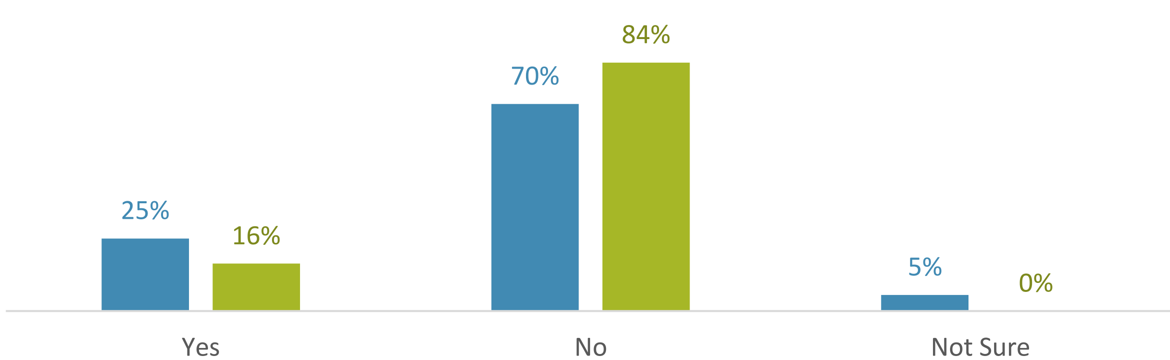
Average patients per day across all responding Oregon dental practices



TELEDENTAL SERVICES

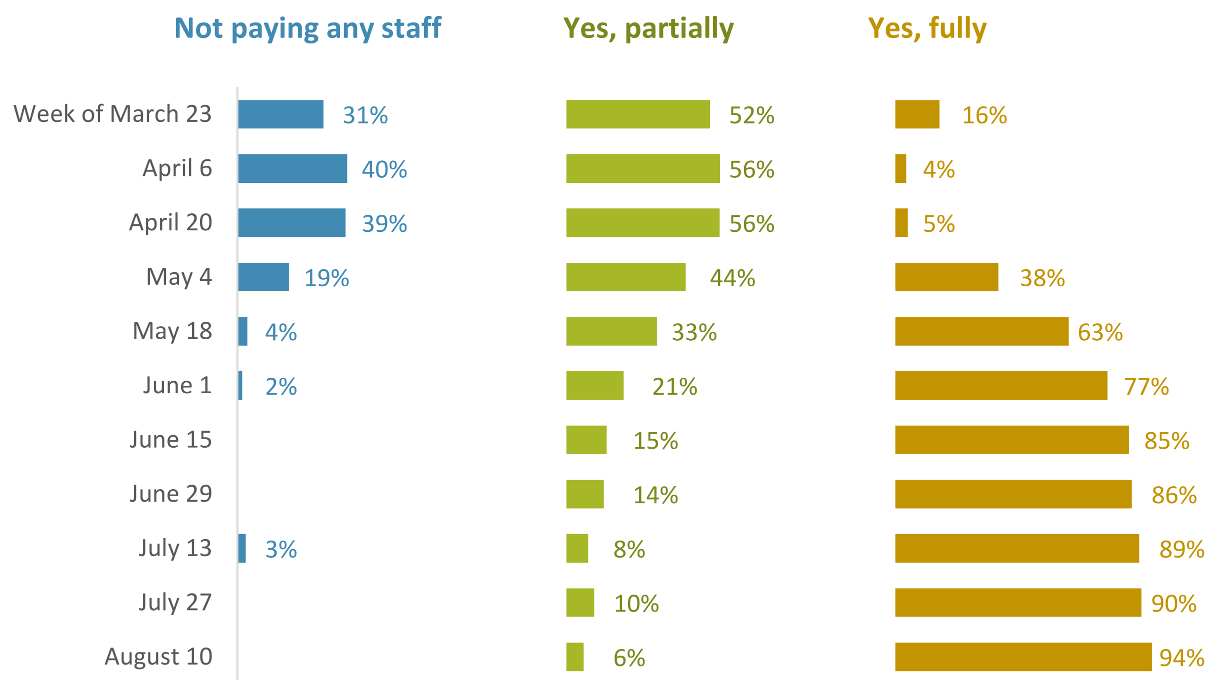
Survey waves 3 and 9 (week of April 20 and July 13, respectively) asked dental practices whether they were using virtual technology/telecommunications to conduct remote problem-focused evaluations (CDT code D0140). The majority of Oregon dental practices in both waves reported they were not.

Percent of Oregon dental practices reporting whether they were using virtual technology for remote problem-focused evaluations the week of **April 20** and the week of **July 13**



STAFFING

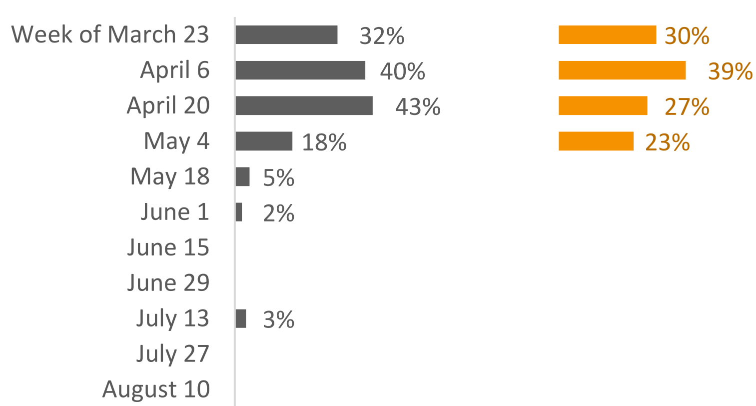
Dental practices were asked in each survey wave if they were paying their staff that week. Just over a third of Oregon dental practices reported not paying any staff in the first few months; more than half of Oregon dental practices were paying staff at least partially throughout the entire COVID-19 pandemic. By August, more than 90% of dental practices were fully paying their staff.



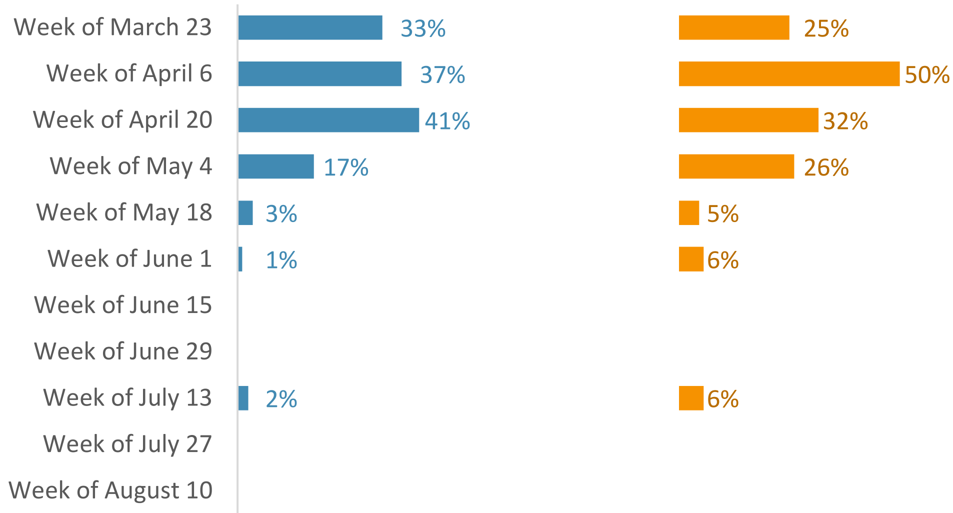
Rural dental practices were slightly less likely to not be paying any staff than urban practices in the early weeks of the pandemic. Urban dental practices continued to report not paying any staff as late as mid-July. This aligns with rural dental practices getting back to “business as usual” faster than urban practices, as reported above (page 4).

Rural responses are combined for Large Rural, Small Rural, and Isolated practices.

Percent of **Urban** and **Rural** dental practices that report not paying any staff that week

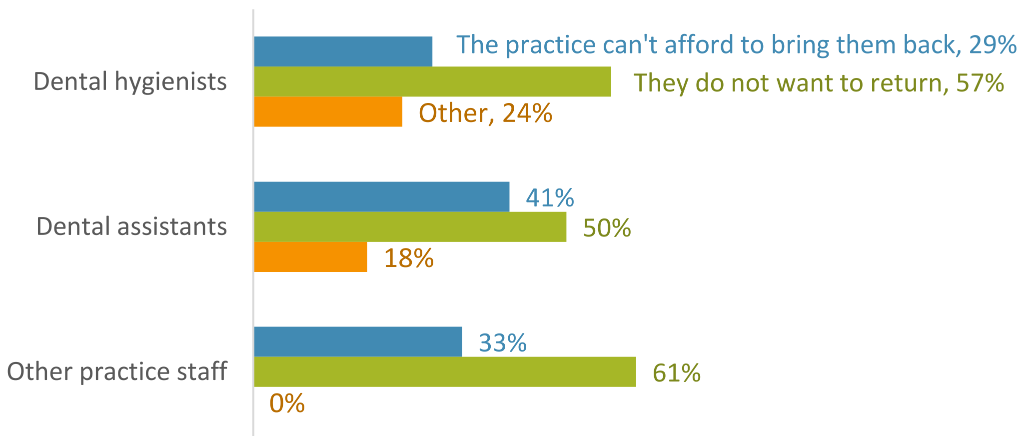


General Practice dentists and all other specialities varied in whether they were not paying any staff in a given week



In wave 9 (week of July 13), respondents were asked whether their dental practices were back to pre-COVID-19 staffing levels, and if not, why. Just over 20% of dental practices reported that they were back to pre-COVID-19 staffing levels for dentists, but most respondents left this question blank. Data were more complete for other staff.

Dental practices were asked why staffing has not returned to pre-COVID-19 levels



Respondents could report more than one reason. Other practice staff includes office managers, receptionists, financial coordinators, etc.

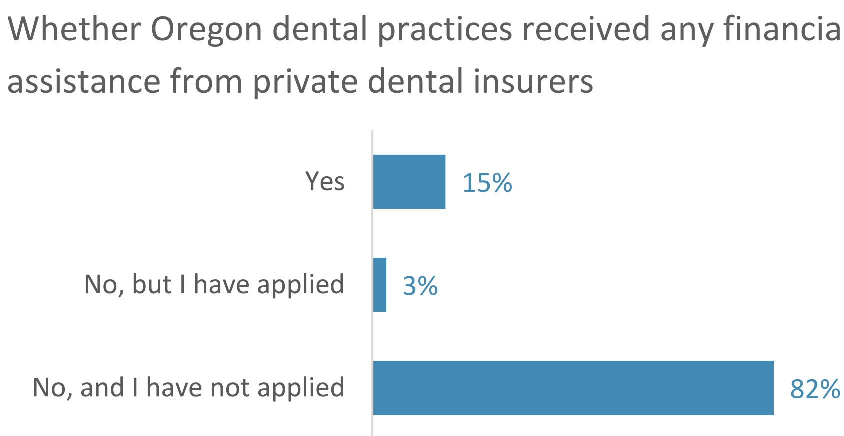
FINANCIAL SUPPORTS

Multiple questions across survey waves asked about dental practices' financial situation. These snapshots give some insight into how Oregon dental practices are faring, but not a complete picture.

SUPPORT FROM PRIVATE DENTAL INSURERS

Wave 5 (week of May 18) asked if dental practices had received any financial assistance from private dental insurers (e.g. grants or advanced payments).

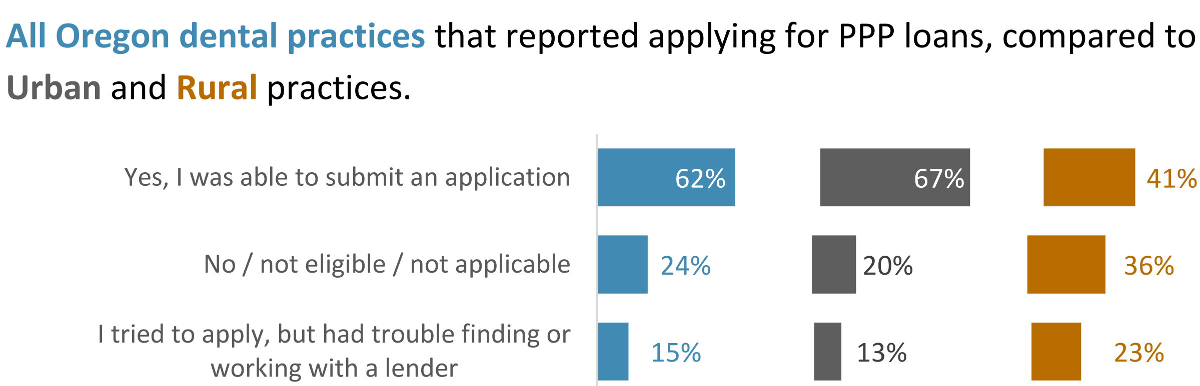
There was no difference between rural and urban dental practices, and between general practice dentists and other dental specialists.



FEDERAL SUPPORT

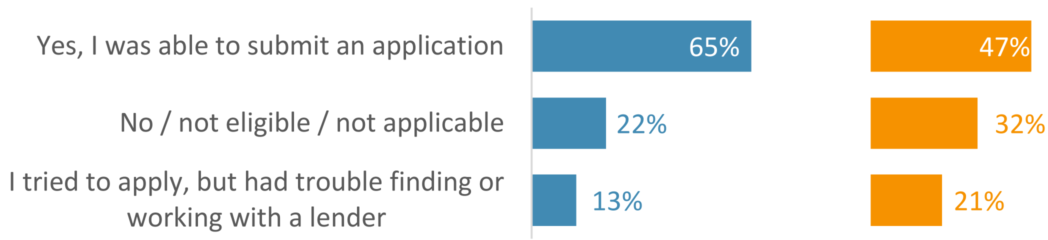
Wave 3 (week of April 20) asked whether dental practices had applied for, been approved for, and received federal supports, including loans from the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and the Small Business Association (SBA) Economic Injury Disaster Loans.

PPP Loans: About two-thirds of all Oregon dental practices reported submitting an application for the SBA 7(a) PPP loan program; however, less than half of rural dental practices were able to submit an application, citing both ineligibility and difficulty finding or working with a lender.[4]



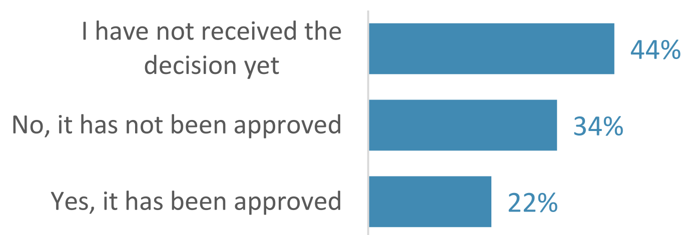
[4] PPP loan eligibility criteria included: Small business concerns that meet SBA size standards; Sole proprietors, independent contractors, and self-employed persons; Any business with NAICS Codes for Accommodations and Food Services with more than one physical location and fewer than 500 employees per location; and any business, 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, 501(c)(19) veterans organization, or Tribal business concerns with the greater of 500 employees or the SBA industry size standard.

General practice dentists were more likely to submit applications for PPP loans than other specialty dentists.



Of the almost 70 Oregon dental practices who reported they did submit an application for PPP loans, only 22% reported their application had been approved. Almost half were still waiting for a decision as of April 20th.

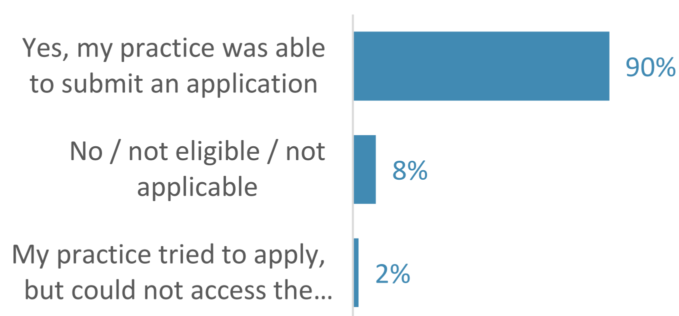
Of Oregon dental practices who applied for PPP loans:



EIDL Loans: Economic Injury Disaster Loans are designed to provide economic relief to businesses that are experiencing a temporary loss of revenue due to COVID-19. A higher percent of Oregon dental practices submitted EIDL loan applications than PPP loan applications.

Of the almost 90 Oregon dental practices who submitted EIDL loan applications, 36% reported their application had been approved, 13% reported it had *not* been approved, and 51% were still waiting on a decision.

All Oregon dental practices that reported applying for EIDL Loans



CARES Act Provider Relief Funds: Dental practices were not eligible for initial distributions of Provider Relief Funds (PRF), but eligibility was expanded to include dentists in July 2020. Eligible dentists could apply to receive up to 2% of their annual reported patient revenue.

Additional information about PRF distributions is available online at https://www.oregon.gov/oha/FOD/Pages/Provider-Financial-Supports.aspx and https://www.hhs.gov/coronavirus/cares-act-provider-relief-fund/data/index.html