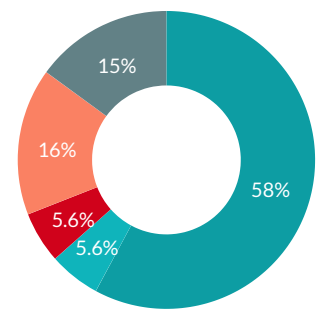


# COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND ITS IMPACT ON DENTISTRY: A DENTAL PROVIDERS PERSPECTIVE

The Central Valley Health Policy Institute surveyed dental providers nationwide, as a timely response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey aimed to understand the dental providers' perspective on how dentistry is and will be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and to know their suggested policy recommendations to support the dental community.

Ninety-two dental providers responded to our survey from 47 states. Practices located in California made up 34% of responses. Respondents worked at different types of dental settings.

## RESPONDENTS

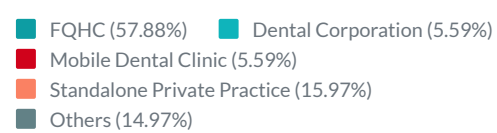


## EFFECTIVENESS OF INFECTION CONTROL AND PREVENTION AT THE DENTAL OFFICE

Amid COVID-19 pandemic, the Center for Diseases Prevention and Control has released guidance for dental providers for infection control and prevention.

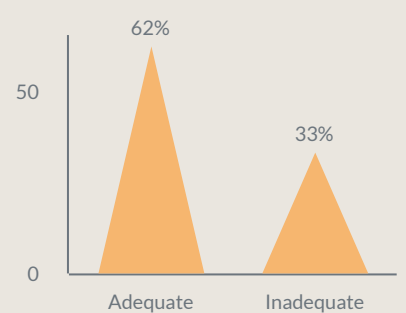
**82%** of respondents believe the CDC guidance for infection control is more than moderately effective to protect the **dental team** from the Novel Coronavirus.

**81%** of respondents believe the CDC guidance for infection control is more than moderately effective to protect the **their patients** from the Novel Coronavirus.



## ADEQUACY OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT OFFERED TO DENTAL PROVIDERS DUE TO THE PANDEMIC

Among those who applied for the financial support, the percentage of respondents who believed that the amount was adequate to their business needs was **62%** while **33%** believed it was not adequate, and **5%** perceived the amount as neither adequate nor inadequate for them.



## SUPPORT THAT WAS NEEDED AND NOT PROVIDED

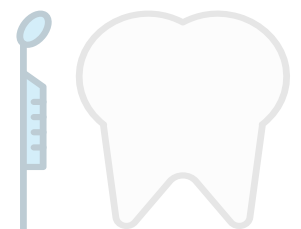
Legal advice, technical assistance to apply for the financial support, availability of personal protective equipment (PPE), dental practice guidance, and mental health support were some of the lacked support that respondents expressed they needed.

*"More concrete guidance on office practice settings. What we should be doing?"*

*"We are the most at risk profession but do not get allotted any N95 from the public health department"*

## CHANGES IN THE DENTAL PRACTICES DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Many respondents shared that they added some modification to their facility such as: removing all fabrics from the waiting room for easier disinfection, adding an air purifier, ultraviolet light disinfection lamps, plexiglass to protect their front desk staff, consider air filtration, enclose operatory rooms, use the extraoral suction device, and ensure enough stock of PPE.



Reducing patients' volume seen every day, reducing the number of staff, staff and patients' screening, using Teledentistry, focusing more on prevention and patient education, and increasing the fees were some of the measures that some respondents intend to employ due to the pandemic. Few respondents were not optimistic and considered *"looking for alternative careers."*

Most of the required measures to ensure safety for the dental team and patients will cause an increase in the overhead expenses.

**27%** is the average percentage increase in the cost of dental care due to the pandemic, as seen by respondents.

The potential increase in the cost of dental care may have an impact on the ability of dental providers to keep all their staff employed and their ability and willingness to treat patients with different kinds of insurance.

**56%** of respondents were more likely to keep all their staff employed

**44%** of respondents were more unlikely to keep all their staff employed

**40%** of respondents were unlikely to keep treating Medicaid (public insurance) patients

## POLICIES AND CONSIDERATIONS TO SUPPORT



Increasing the reimbursement rates for most covered services by all dental insurances, reimbursing dentists suitably for the infection control and prevention measures and for the Teledentistry code, prioritizing dental providers in the provision of PPE, and the need to focus more on the preventive dentistry were some of the policies and considerations that our respondents supported.