



THE CANADIAN DENTAL  
HYGIENISTS ASSOCIATION  
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE  
DES HYGIÉNISTES DENTAIRES

# 2019 JOB MARKET & EMPLOYMENT SURVEY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA) retained Nanos Research to conduct the 2019 Job Market and Employment Survey to obtain key labour force information about the profession from dental hygienists across Canada.

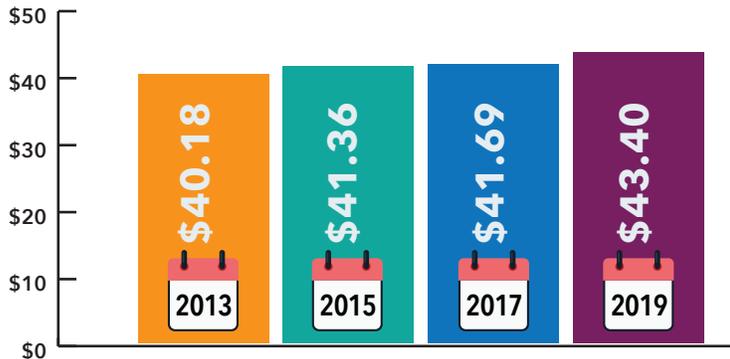
The response to the survey was very strong. Nanos Research received 5,347 completed questionnaires through a secure website that was promoted via email to CDHA members, 18 years of age or older. The survey ran from May 6 until June 18, 2019; analysis and reporting were completed in September 2019.

## Pay & Employment Rates

The hourly pay rate of dental hygienists at their first practice setting has increased by 4.1% since 2017. The percent change in the value of a “basket” of goods and services over the same time period was 4.8%, as reported by the Bank of Canada.<sup>1</sup>

### Pay

- The reported average hourly rate for 2019 is \$43.40, which continues the trend of incremental increases seen in previous years (\$41.69 in 2017, \$41.36 in 2015, \$40.18 in 2013).

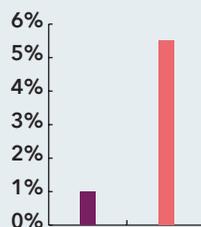


△ Average hourly rate

- The reported average hourly rate at the second practice setting is \$44.77 (\$42.56 in 2017), which is slightly higher than that reported for the first job.
- Consistent with previous years, Alberta has the highest hourly rate at \$55.26; New Brunswick has the lowest hourly rate at \$32.99.

### Unemployment Rate

- The unemployment rate among respondents is 1%, which is well below the current Canadian unemployment rate of 5.5%, as reported by Statistics Canada in June 2019.<sup>2</sup>



◁ Unemployment rate

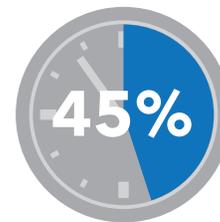
■ respondents ■ national average

### Hours of Work

- Satisfaction with the number of hours of work per week is increasing. In 2019, 73% of respondents say they work as many hours as they would like (71% in 2017, 65% in both 2015 and 2013).
- Respondents from Saskatchewan and New Brunswick report higher levels of satisfaction with the number of hours worked (average rating of 8.5 out of 10), which is consistent with the findings of the 2017 survey.
- 51% of respondents say they work 31 to 40 hours per week, 45% of respondents say they work 30 hours per week or less, and 4% say they work 41 to 50 hours per week. This is consistent with findings from 2017. On average, respondents report working 30 hours per week.



work 31 to 40 hours per week



work 30 hours per week or less



work 41 to 50 hours per week

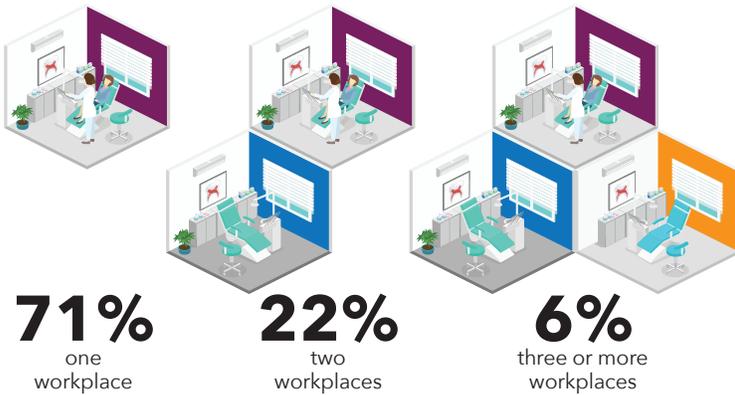
<sup>1</sup>Bank of Canada, <https://www.bankofcanada.ca/rates/related/inflation-calculator/>

<sup>2</sup>Statistics Canada, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/190705/dq190705a-eng.htm>

# Workplace & Environment

## Professional Setting

- 91% of respondents report working in a private practice as their first practice setting, followed by public health (3%) and education (3%).
- 71% of respondents report working in one workplace, consistent with 2017 (72%); 22% say they work in two, while 6% say that they work in three or more workplaces.



- The number of respondents reporting that they have written contracts has been trending up, from 40% in 2015 and 44% in 2017 to 51% in 2019.

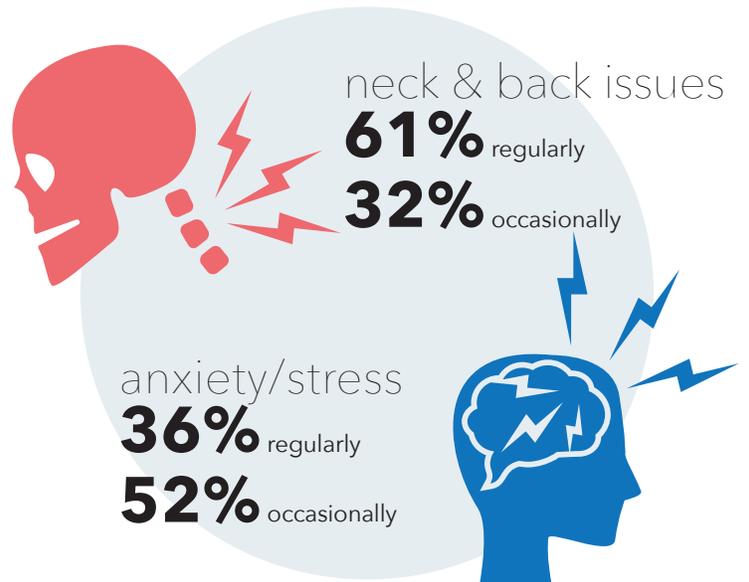


△ Percentage of respondents with written contracts

- 42% of respondents say that their employer undertakes an annual performance review, consistent with previous waves of the survey (39% in 2017, 38% in 2015 and 34% in 2013).
- Respondents most frequently report collaborating with dentists (83%), followed by denturists (29%) and physicians (28%), which is consistent with 2017 results.
- Respondents give a mean agreement score of 8.6 out of 10 to feeling valued by their clients, 8.1 to feeling valued by their peers, and 7.4 to feeling valued by their employer.
- Most frequently, respondents working in a specialty practice report that they work in orthodontic (41%) or periodontic (36%) practices.

- Respondents are most satisfied with infection control practices (85%), location (74%), colleagues and staff (74%), and practising to full scope (73%).
- 75% of respondents report experiencing work-related pain in the past year. Most frequently, respondents report pain in the neck area (58% say regularly, 38% say occasionally), shoulders (55% regularly, 37% occasionally), and upper back (50% regularly, 41% occasionally).
- 23% of respondents report having experienced work-related medical issues in the past year. Most frequently, respondents report having neck and back issues (61% regularly, 32% occasionally each), followed by anxiety/stress (36% regularly, 52% occasionally).

## Work-related medical issues among 23% of respondents



- Respondents who provide clinical care and do not own their own practice most frequently agree that they have decision-making authority over implementing dental hygiene services (88%) and over documenting dental hygiene diagnoses (87%).
- Respondents report having the least decision-making authority over making referrals to other health professionals (63%).

### Benefits

- Respondents most frequently report having dental benefits (58%), paid vacation/holidays (51%), uniform allowance (44%), and professional development (37%).
- Among the least common benefits received by respondents are retirement savings plan (6%), pension plan (7%), life and disability insurance (12%), and sick leave (19%).



**58%**  
dental benefits



**51%**  
paid vacation/holidays



**44%**  
uniform allowance

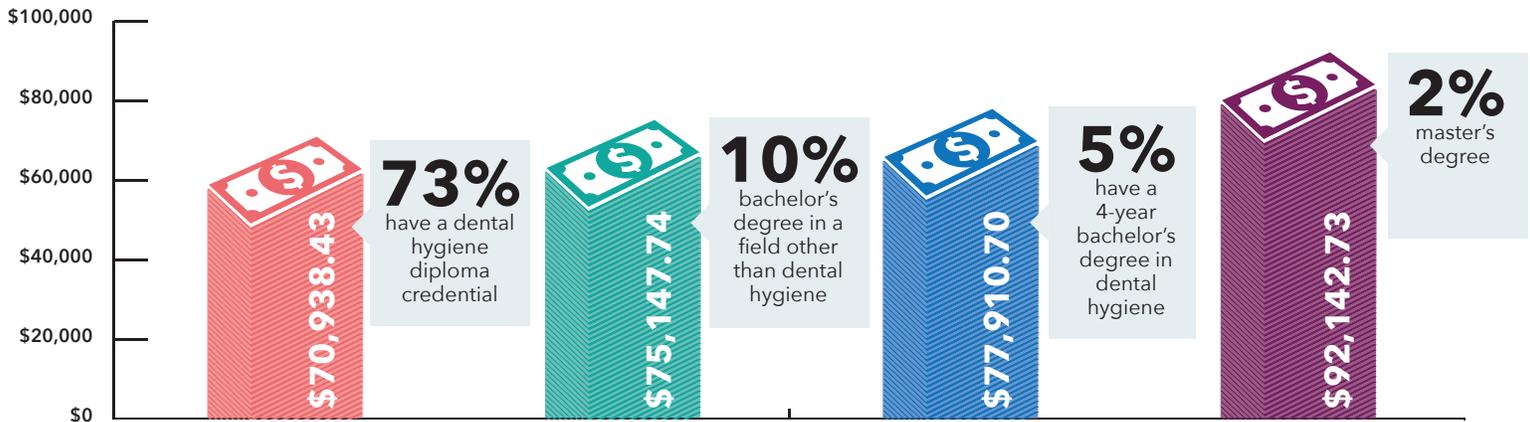


**37%**  
professional development

△ Most common benefits

### Dental Hygiene Education and Mean Annual Income (working more than 30 hours/week)

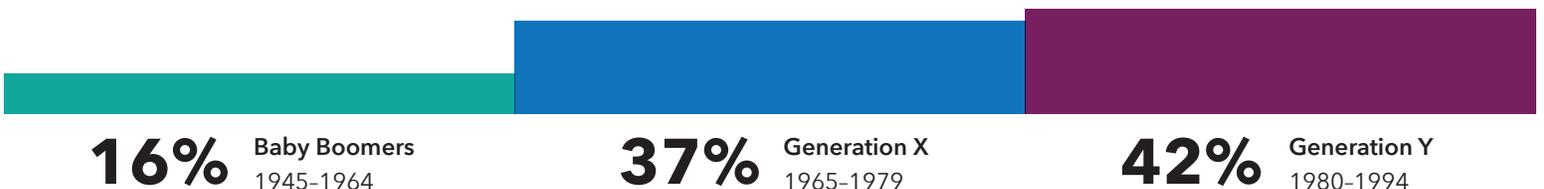
- Stating the highest level of dental hygiene education completed, 73% of respondents have a dental hygiene diploma credential and earn \$70,938.43, on average.
- The second most common academic credential is a 4-year bachelor's degree in a field other than dental hygiene (10%), with average annual earnings of \$75,147.74.
- The third most common academic credential is a 4-year bachelor's degree in dental hygiene (5%), with average annual earnings of \$77,910.70.
- Respondents with a master's degree (2%) have the highest average annual income (\$92,142.73).



△ Average annual income

### Generational Breakdown

- In 2019, the percentage of Generation Y respondents surpassed that of Generation X for the first time. Defined as those born between 1980 and 1994, Generation Y comprises 42% of the survey population. Generation X, defined as those born between 1965 and 1979, comprises 37%, and Baby Boomers, defined as those born between 1945 and 1964, comprise 16% of the survey population.



### Provincial Variance

- As in previous survey years, the highest reported hourly wage is in Alberta (\$55.26) and the lowest is in New Brunswick (\$32.99).
- Respondents from Newfoundland more frequently report being employed full time in dental hygiene (86%), followed by those from Prince Edward Island (82%) and Nova Scotia (82%). Manitoba has the lowest reported rate of full-time employment (58%) compared to other parts of Canada.
- Quebec has a higher self-reported rate of salaried employees (41%) than other parts of Canada.
- British Columbia (89%), Saskatchewan (85%), Manitoba (85%), and Prince Edward Island (85%) have the highest self-reported rates of employees who earn hourly wages.

Percentage of full-time employees by province



	NL (n=10)	NB (n=109)	NS (n=195)	PE (n=29)	QC (n=27)	ON (n=1588)	MB (n=169)	SK (n=159)	AB (n=740)	BC (n=916)	North (n=8)
Mean hourly wage		\$32.99	\$35.12			\$38.92	\$42.84	\$43.38	\$55.26	\$46.10	
Median hourly wage		\$32.34	\$35.00			\$38.00	\$42.50	\$43.05	\$55.00	\$46.00	

△ Average hourly rate  
Responses shaded due to small n-value

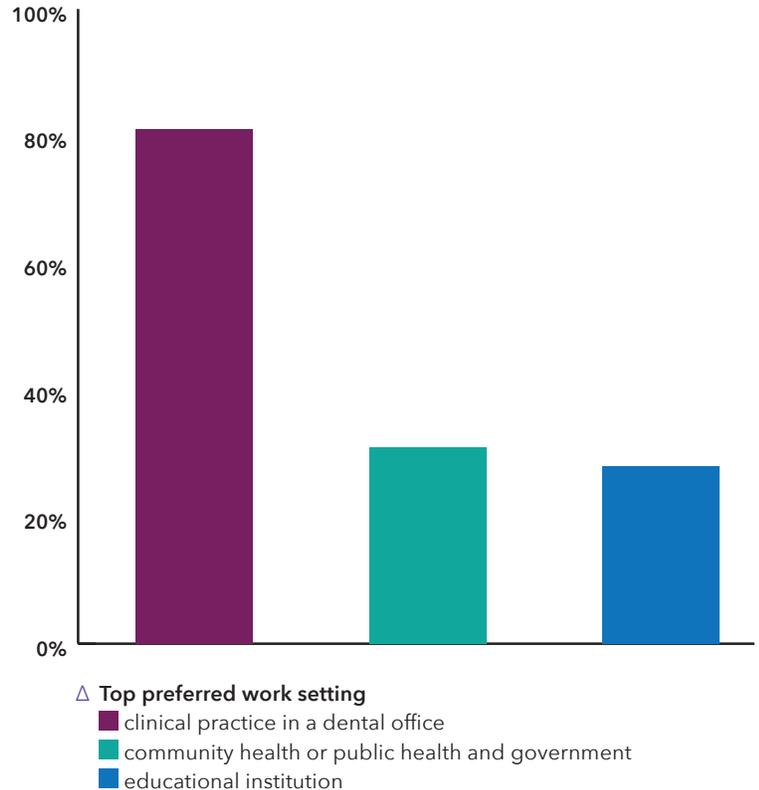
### Independent Practice Owners

- 5% of respondents report currently practising as an independent dental hygienist (6% in 2017, 3% in 2015). The highest reported rate of independently practising dental hygienists is in Ontario (7%).
- On average, respondents report having owned their independent practice for 5 years.
- Respondents most frequently report owning an independent practice in a store-front or fixed location (56%), followed by a mobile practice (30%) and residential or long-term care practice (16%).
- Reported levels of satisfaction with independent practice are high, with respondents rating their level of satisfaction as an 8.7 on a 10-point scale. The primary reasons for their satisfaction are flexibility, control, freedom, client access, and autonomy.



## The Future

- 53% of respondents are planning to stay in the profession for over 10 years.
- 4% of respondents plan to leave the profession in less than two years, which is consistent with previous waves of the survey (5% in 2017, 4% in 2015).
- Retirement is the most frequently cited reason for leaving the profession (64%).
- Among those who plan to stay longer than two years in the profession, the top preferred work setting is a clinical practice in a dental office (81%), followed by community health or public health and government (32%), and educational institution (28%).
- More than half the respondents (57%) think the economy in their town or city will stay the same over the coming year. 17% say it will improve, and 7% say it will worsen.



## Conclusion

**Dental hygienists are committed to preserving, promoting, and improving the oral and systemic health of all Canadians. The main challenges faced by dental hygienists are providing care to the most vulnerable populations and utilizing their full scope of practice to provide appropriate care.**

Across Canada there seems to be an upward trend in salary, an increase in the number of dental hygienists with written contracts and who receive an annual performance review, and a more positive job market with only a 1% unemployment rate. The survey shows an increase in the number of respondents who are working full time in dental hygiene.

Dental hygienists continue to feel highly valued by their clients, which may reflect growing public recognition of their role as primary health care providers. CDHA will continue to raise awareness of the dental hygiene profession and to advocate and engage with stakeholders to improve access to oral health care for all Canadians.



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HYGIENISTS ASSOCIATION  
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DES HYGIÉNISTES DENTAIRES

1122 Wellington St W  
Ottawa, ON K1Y 2Y7  
1-800-267-5235  
[www.cdha.ca](http://www.cdha.ca)