

# Skilled Nursing Facilities Dental Care Survey

In October 2021, the Department of Health Services' Oral Health Program surveyed Administrators and Directors of Nursing at all of Wisconsin's Skilled Nursing Facilities. With a response rate of 50.4%, the intent of the survey was to learn about the needs and experiences of providing dental care to residents of nursing facilities.



**19%** of respondents reported obtaining dental care is very or extremely difficult.



**35%** of respondents noted that quite a few or most of their new residents have unmet dental needs.



**14%** of respondents reported that dentists and dental hygienists never visit their facility.

## Greatest barriers to optimal oral health

- 1** Access to care issues due to insurance coverage or geography
- 2** Dental workforce bandwidth like scheduling issues or staff availability
- 3** Resident associated issues like underlying comorbid conditions, care refusal, or inability to engage in care

## Common payment methods

Medicaid  
**63.4%**

Out of pocket  
**36.0%**

Private insurance  
**25.0%**

Unspecified insurance type  
**27.3%**

## Interest for dental hygienists



**36%** of respondents reported they were very or extremely interested in having a hygienist always on staff.



**41%** of respondents reported they were very or extremely interested in contracting with a hygienist.

## Top concerns or barriers cited by nursing home staff regarding dental hygienists providing care:

Cost to facility

Billing documentation or process

Space restrictions

Infection control protocols

Resident participation

Reliability of hygienist

## Dental care provided by hygienists in nursing home facilities

Prophylaxis

**69%**

Fluoride treatments

**43%**

Daily oral cleaning

**7%**

Dentures adjustments, repairs, or evaluations

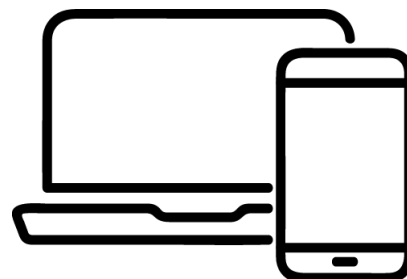
**7%**

\*Radiographs

**17%**

\*Services must be performed under the supervision of a dentist.

Visit the [Wisconsin Oral Health Program webpage](#) to learn more about oral health!



**WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT  
of HEALTH SERVICES**

Division of Public Health  
Oral Health Program

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