

Dental Health Services in Canada in 2007

Statistics on Numbers of Dentists

1. Number of dentists

In January 2007, there were 18,861 licensed dentists in Canada. Among these, males accounted for approximately 76% of the total. Roughly 37% were 40 years of age or under. About 14% were over the age of 60. Approximately 86% of all dentists are in general practice. **The total number of dentists in Canada (licensed and non-licensed) can only be estimated at 20,500. We arrive at this figure by making a determination on the number of retired dentists who are still alive but not renewing their license.*

Most are in solo private practice (54%) or are a partner (19%) or associate (19%) in a private practice. In addition 2% are in an academic setting, 1% in public health, 1% in the military and 3% in other settings or retired. Whereas 54% of dentists are in solo practice, approximately 7% of dentists work in a practice with 5 or more dentists.

Source: 2006 CDA Membership Survey

2. Number of dentists per 100,000 persons

In June 2007, there were 57.5 dentists per 100,000 people in Canada. There were wide variations from province to province. In Newfoundland and Labrador, the number of dentists per 100,000 people was 31.4 whereas this number was 65 in British Columbia. There were 2100 dental specialists in 2007, or roughly 6.4 dental specialists per 100,000 people.

Sources: CDA Membership Database, Statistics Canada

3. Number of Dental Schools

There are 10 dental schools in Canada. All dental schools are in publicly funded universities. Entrance to dental school requires at least 2 years of undergraduate university pre-requisites. Although most students entering dental programs have a bachelor's degree in Canada. The course of study covers four years in dental school, although in one school it is 5 years. The number of students in Canadian dental schools (for all years) in the 2006-2007 school year was 1964. There were 456 graduates from all dental schools in Canada in 2007. Approximately 58% of the student body is female.

Source: CDA

4. Regional Distribution of Dentists

There are wide variations on the distribution of dentists in Canadian cities and rural areas with a much denser concentration in urban areas. The resident: dentist ratio for rural areas in Canada in 2004 was 5096 whereas it was 1734 for all areas. Therefore there were about 3 times as many dentists serving the urban areas than the overall population in Canada. The province with the greatest density in 2007 is British Columbia (1538 persons per dentist) and the least density is Newfoundland (3186 persons per dentist).

Sources: CDA Membership Database, Statistics Canada 2001 Census Survey

5. Dental Hygienists and Other Oral Health Providers

In June 2007 there were over 18,763 dental hygienists, 30,000 dental assistants, 2100 denturists, 2050 dental technicians and 290 dental therapists in Canada.

Source: CDA

Statistics on Dental Usage

1. Number of Dental Patients

In 2005, approximately 63.7% of the Canadian population aged 12 and older consulted a dentist. The highest consultation rate was in the 12-19 years age group (78.6%) and the lowest in the 75 years and older age group (40.8%). Over 23 million Canadians consult dentists annually.

Source: Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI)

2. Private Insurance Coverage

In 2007, approximately 63% of Canadians had private dental insurance coverage to some extent. Those in high-income levels and those with higher education levels also had higher insurance coverage.

Source: CIHI

Statistics on Dental Expenditures collected by CDA over year 2007

1. Changes in Dental Services in Last 10 years

Health care in Canada is under provincial jurisdiction, and each province has its own dental legislation that impacts dental services. Dental services are not included as medicare services under the national Canada Health Act, however dental services provided in hospitals are covered under medicare. However these and other public dental services represent a very small proportion of the overall dental services in Canada (ie. approximately 5% of dental expenditures in 2007 were public sector dental expenditures). Federal spending on public dental programs in 2005 was \$225 million.

There have also been changes to health care legislation in some provinces impacting the scope of practice of dental hygienists and denturists. The term “dental services” as defined by the Canadian Institute of Health Information in their National Health Expenditure Trends report is: Dental Services- expenditures for professional fees of dentists (includes dental hygienists and assistants) and denturists, as well as the cost of dental prostheses, including false teeth and laboratory charges for crowns and other dental appliances. (This encompasses pretty much all dental services, but not products like tooth pastes etc.)

Source: CIHI

2. Expenditures on Dental Services

Total expenditures on dental services in Canada in 2006 have been estimated at \$9.94 billion. Of this, \$9.45 billion are private sector expenditures and only 4.9% are public expenditures. The expenditures on dental services are 6.7% of the total health expenditures in Canada. The increase

in dental service expenditures from 2005 to 2006 was 4.8%. Per capita spending on dental services in 2006 was \$308.

Source: CIHI