

## COVID-19: Return to Practice Survey

### Process and Methodology:

- On June 4, 2020 the CDAA Director from Nova Scotia brought forward an idea to the CDAA Board to conduct a survey of CDAA members on the factors impacting their decision to return to practice and their concerns related to working during the Covid-19 pandemic. A draft survey was developed following editorial discussions on the questions between the CDAA and NSDAA Executive Directors and a subsequent review by the CDAA Board of Directors.
- A short three (3) question survey was finalized in both official languages and the link to both the English and French surveys was provided to all CDAA Organizational Member (provincial) representatives for distribution to their dental assistant members on June 18, 2020.
- In total, CDAA received 792 responses to the English survey and 96 responses to the French survey for a total of 888 responses over the six (6) week period during the time the survey was live.
- While the survey was sent out to CDAA provincial member organizations exclusively, the results show that a small number of dental assistants responded from provinces whose provincial associations are not CDAA members. It is likely they received the information through other means, such as via social media posts by our CDAA member organizations.
- The survey had a response rate of 27.5% amongst CDAA members. With the largest number of responses received from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Alberta dental assistants.

## Results:

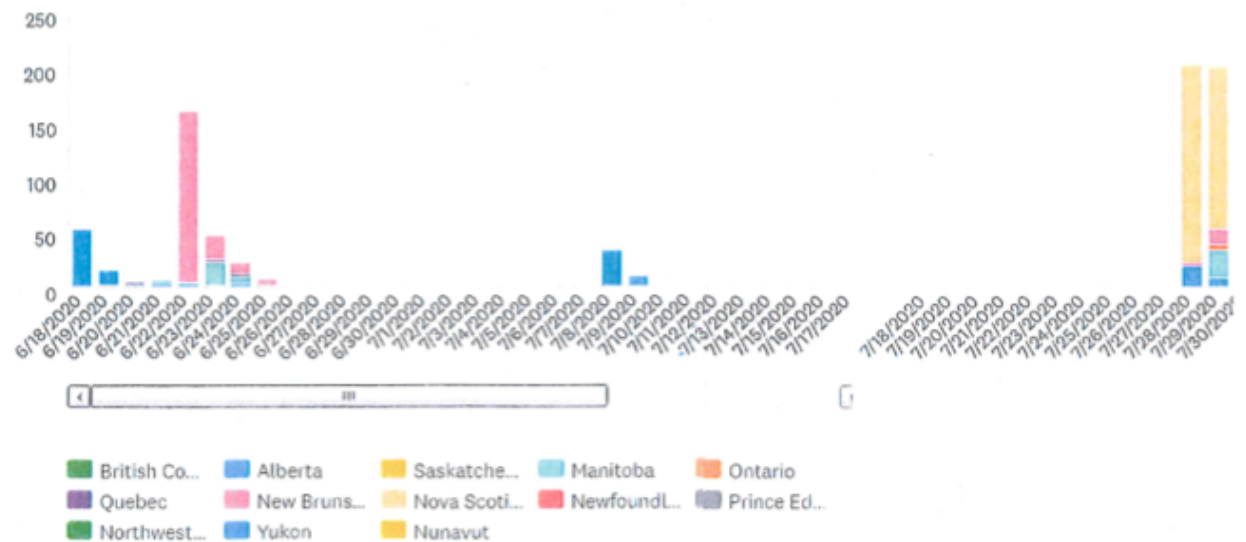
**Q1: In which province/territory do you practice? Please select one.**

**Q1: Dans quelle province/territoire exercez-vous? Veuillez en choisir une.**

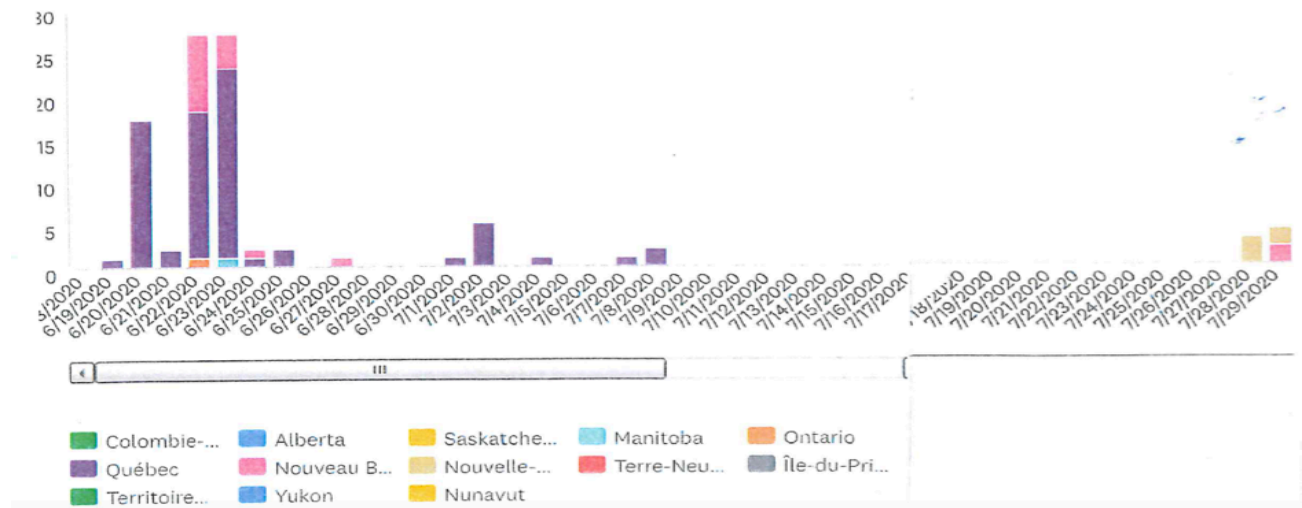
(combination of responses from the French and English surveys)

<u>Answer Choices</u>	<u>Responses (%-age)</u>	<u>Responses</u>
British Columbia:	0.01%	1
Alberta:	17.45%	155
Saskatchewan:	0.00%	0
Manitoba:	7.09%	63
Ontario:	0.09%	8
Quebec:	9.12%	81
New Brunswick:	26.46%	235
Nova Scotia:	38.85%	345
Newfoundland & Labrador:	0.00%	0
Prince Edward Island	0.00%	0
Northwest Territories	0.00%	0
Yukon	0.00%	0
Nunavut	0.00%	0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100% (rounded)</b>	<b>888</b>

The follow graph demonstrates the responses collected by date and by province on Question 1 of the English survey during the six (6) weeks the survey was live.



The follow graph demonstrates the responses collected by date and by province for Question 1 of the French survey during the six (6) weeks that the survey was live.



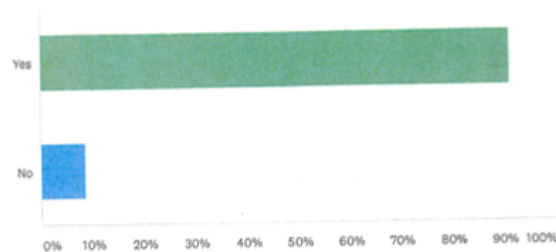
**Q2: During the Covid-19 pandemic do you intend to return to practice as a dental assistant?**

**Q2: Pendant la pandémie Covid-19, avez-vous l'intention de reprendre votre activité comme assistant(e) dentaire?**

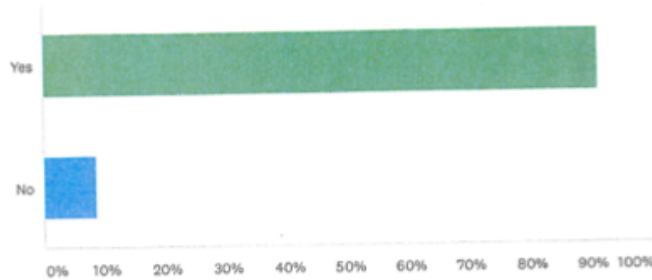
(combination of responses from the French and English surveys)

<u>Answer Choices</u>	<u>Responses (%-age)</u>	<u>Responses</u>
Yes	91.0%	808
No	9.0%	80
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>888</b>

The follow graph demonstrates the responses collected for Question 2 of the English survey during the six (6) weeks that the survey was live:



The follow graph demonstrates the responses collected for Question 2 of the French survey during the six (6) weeks that the survey was live.



**Q3: What factors have impacted your decision?**

**Q3: Quels sont les facteurs qui ont influencé votre décision?**

(combination of responses from the French and English surveys)

<u>Answer Choices</u>	<u>Responses (%-age)</u>	<u>Responses</u>
Feel generally unsafe/Se sentir généralement en danger	3.15%	28
Believe return to practice guidelines are inadequate/Croire que les lignes directrices sur le retour à la pratique sont inadéquates	1.35%	12
Believe recommended guidelines for use of PPE are inadequate/Estiment que les lignes directrices recommandées pour l'utilisation des EPI sont inadéquates	1.46%	13
Have compromised health issues that increase my risk/J'ai compromis des problèmes de santé qui augmentent mes risques.	1.58%	14
Responsible for family member(s) with compromised health issues/Responsable des membres de la famille ayant de problèmes de santé	0.09%	8
Childcare responsibilities / Responsabilités en matière de garde d'enfants	2.93%	26
Concerns about adequacy of ventilation systems/Préoccupation concernant l'adéquation de systèmes de ventilation	1.24%	11
Concerns about putting family members' health at risk/Préoccupation concernant la mise en danger de la santé des membres de la famille	3.49%	31
Concerns about lack of recommended PPE / Préoccupation concernant l'absence d'EPI recommandé	1.58%	14
Concerned I will be asked to perform treatment without adequate PPE / Je crains qu'on me demandes d'effectuer un traitement sans EPI adéquat.	1.46%	13
Retiring /Retraite	0.09%	8

I won't return during the pandemic but intend to return to practice after the risk has passed / Je ne reviendrai pas pendant la pandémie mais j'ai l'intention de reprendre la pratique après que le risque soit passé.	2.82%	25
I intend to return to practice as a dental assistant/ J'ai l'intention de reprendre mon pratique comme assistant(e) dentaire.	72.64%	645
Other / Autre	4.50%	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>100% (rounded)</b>	<b>888</b>

### Respondent Comments:

**In addition to selecting from among the options presented in Question 3, respondents were invited to provide additional comments. These are their comments:**

"don't want to be working at this time, but need \$ and my office and patients need me."

« Changement de carrière »

« J'ai décidé de changer de carrière, car les salaires d'assistantes ne suivent pas la réalité du coût de la vie »

« Trop de dentiste négligent les protections ! Soit la ventilation n'est pas bonne , ils ne respecte pas le temps d'attente entre les patients, obligent les filles à porter le même ÉPI toute la journée à cause des coûts, ont pas de masque N95 ,leurs cliniques ne sont pas rénovées, ils y en a qui ont des rideaux de douche pour séparer les salles ,les équipements de l'aseptic comme les ultrason ou stérilisateur sont complètement desués etc... »

« Pas le choix il faut travailler ! »

« Je vais me réorienter parce que je ne suis pas satisfaite des conditions de travail. »

"I have many concerns but need to work."

"(Working) but I do feel concerned for my safety!"

"I have returned to work as a dental assistant but do feel that it is not safe in respect to the fact that when working out of one room we do not have a break between patients . It's like there is no attention to the fact that we are producing aerosols . If we use a dam we only use faceshields, level 3 masks , gloves and goggles."

"Practice has done everything possible but masks don't fit properly and having a mask fitting would be useful if proper fitting masks were available. Boss told us all we will all get COVID-19 that doesn't sit well with me. He only tested for mask fitting himself other dentist, his daughter who is helping and one D.A."

"i am returning to work but i still have concerns about the adequacy of ventilation systems and putting family members at risk."

“Also concerns about putting family members health at risk, Lack of recommended PPE, how effected the guidelines really are.”

“I manage an office. We have all recommendations in place.”

“I didn’t have a choice but to return to work. Risk having no job to come back to after the pandemic. I will not feel comfortable working in this environment during a second wave of Covid 19.”

“I have returned to practice, but have many concerns.”

“I won’t return until i feel safe and i have adequate childcare arranged. I also have concerns about offices keeping the guidelines.”

“I have returned as first wave has passed - I am unsure what I will do when second wave arrives.”

“Concerned about ALL protocols not being followed”

“returning to school in sept for dental hygiene work when I can filling in as an RDA”

“I work in a University setting and we were open during the pandemic full time”

“Need my salary (money/income)” (5 comments)

“Maternity leave” (2 comments)

“I have no choice but to continue to work but am concerned about risk as I have underlying medical conditions and am currently pregnant.”

“If I had a choice I would not of went back so soon”

“I have returned to work but am worried for the second wave and what will be happen then”

“Retuned due to fear of losing my EI, because I requested to return other wise I would not have returned until things were stable.”

“Had no choice but return, due to the fact I have a family to support”

“Need income so have gone back, but I really wish clinics were still closed! Daily headaches from less oxygen due to ppe :(“

“I have worked through the pandemic and feel safe doing so by following the guidelines and assessing our patients as they call in and day of appointment.”

“Although I am an RDA I work at a dental supply company but if I did work in private practice I would not go back due to underlying conditions and my age”

“Child care responsibilities and the possibility of putting my family at risk are huge concerns. As well our office is only functioning two full days a week and that’s not worth it for me to pay for child care/ summer camp for a whole week when dental assistants make so little. May as well be a stay at home mom.”

“I have returned to work but with change of duties to limit me doing chairside assisting in high aerosol procedures because of my age. I am properly equipped with proper PPE so I can jump in should the need arise. Grateful to be working for a caring dentist.”

“I need to work and would have difficulty finding employment with equivalent pay. I intend to keep looking for alternate employment, this profession does not respect dental assistants...we are simply a tool to generate revenue and placed in a position of risk. Unlike dental hygiene we can't refuse to remove dangerous procedures from our scope of work. A dental office runs on profit fee for service above all else. I will not renew my licence after this 3 year period, and will never work in this field again...pending future employment (Hopefully soon).”

“i am just doing reception now not helping out with assisting as we are restricted to seeing only one patient at a time”

“I work front desk now”

“Dentists are wearing better protection than assistants. Assistants have to purchase their own if they want the best protection.”

“i have returned, but still am unsure about the PPE and protocols that are "in place" i feel they need to be revisited and adjusted to better.”

“I have returned as a full time receptionist and performing limited assisting”

“I am a military member so the choice to return isn't up to me. However DND has implemented IPAC protocols that are above and beyond. I feel completely safe and trust we are doing the absolute best practice for our patients”

“I work reception now and feel very comfortable going back to work”

“I have already returned to work, I feel safe.”

“I work for a dental supply company. I am glad I do not work in private practice as there are too many considerations for safety during these times.”

In addition, 12 respondents noted that they were “already back to work”.