



# 2022 INDIANA DENTAL HYGIENIST WORKFORCE BRIEF

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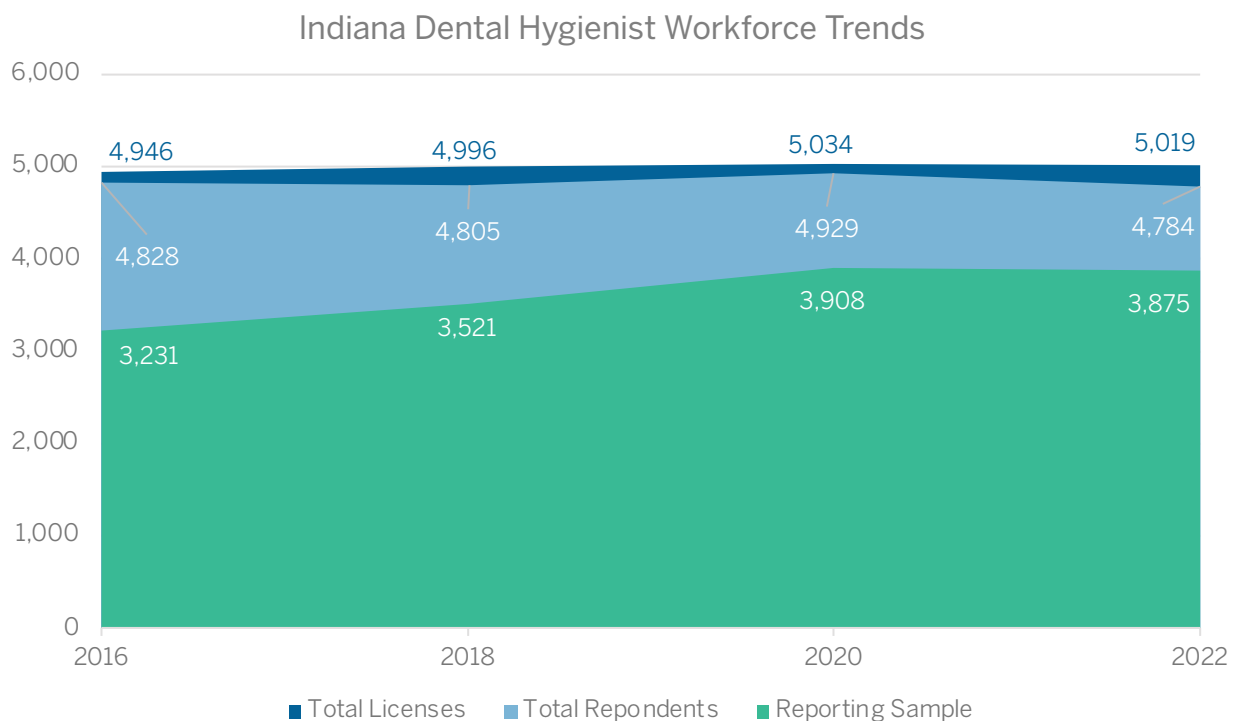
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# 2022 DENTAL HYGIENIST WORKFORCE

**About the Data in this Brief:** In Indiana, dental hygienists are licensed and regulated by the Indiana State Board of Dentistry at the Indiana Professional Licensing Agency (PLA). Indiana’s dental hygienists provide information on their demographic, education, and practice characteristics through a series of supplemental questions that were embedded within the online license renewal process. These data are critical to monitoring trends in the oral health workforce and identifying gaps across the state. As such, dental hygienists completing license renewal online are required to provide key information to inform State policy and planning.<sup>1</sup>

NOTE: Dental Hygienists professions completing their renewal manually (on paper) do not receive the supplemental survey questions.

**Indiana Dental Hygienist Workforce Trends:** The figure below depicts the trends in total Indiana dental hygienist licenses, respondents to the supplemental questions, and providers that were included in the reporting sample (self-identified as actively practicing in Indiana) from 2016 to 2022. As evidenced by the trends, the number of dental hygienist license renewals, online survey respondents, and reporting sample of Indiana dental hygienists have seen a steady increase until 2022. The decrease in dental hygiene workforce is consistent with national health trends observed during and following the COVID-19 Pandemic and dentist reported difficulty in recruiting dental hygienists.<sup>2</sup>



In 2022, 5,019 dental hygienists renewed their Indiana license. Of those renewals, 4,766 (95.0%) were active licenses that were renewed electronically. The remaining 5.0% (253) of renewals were reflect individuals that are either 1) not actively practicing, 2) have inactive licenses, or 3) completed their license renewal manually (paper application) and did not have supplemental questions administered.

## WHO IS INCLUDED IN THE REPORTING SAMPLE?

- Active hygienists who renewed their license online
- Practicing in dental hygiene
- Serving Hoosiers
- The reporting sample is referred to as the “Indiana Dental Hygienist Workforce”

## WHO IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE REPORTING SAMPLE?

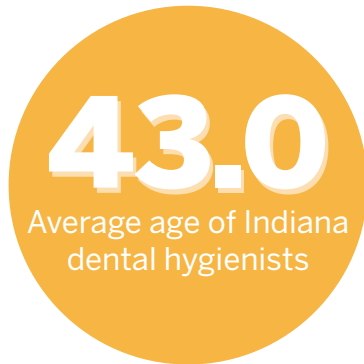
- Hygienists who renewed their licenses offline (paper renewals) (4.5%)
- Inactive providers
- Hygienists who are located out-of-state and do not report serving Hoosiers

1. IC 25-1-2-10. Available at: <https://iga.in.gov/legislative/laws/2021/ic/titles/025#25-1-2-10>  
American Dental Association. Available at: <https://www.ada.org/publications/ada-news/2022/april/hpi-dental-office-employment-declined-in-march>

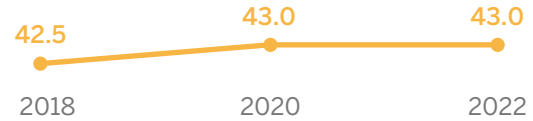
# INDIANA DENTAL HYGIENISTS: DEMOGRAPHICS & EMPLOYMENT

★ **The Takeaway:** The average age of Indiana dental hygienists is stable. Dental hygienists are trending toward more racial and ethnic diversity but remain predominately female. While most of the dental hygienists report plans to continue with their current employment, the percentage of hygienists reporting 1) plans to decrease hours, 2) leave patient care, or 3) uncertain about their future employment plans is increasing.

## AGE

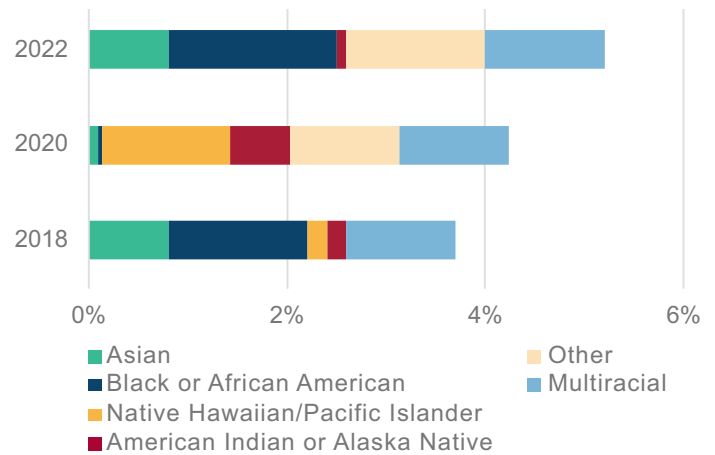


Age Trends among Indiana Dental Hygienists

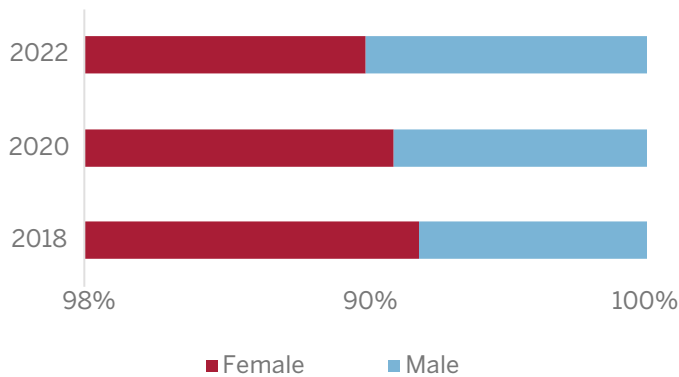


Trends in Indiana Dental Hygienist Racial & Ethnic Diversity

(Displaying Only Non-White Categories)

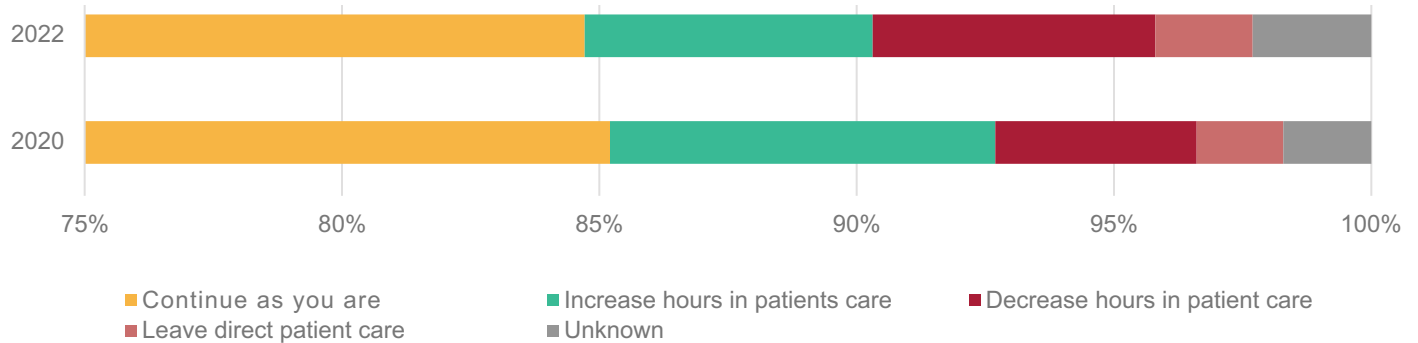


## GENDER AND RACE

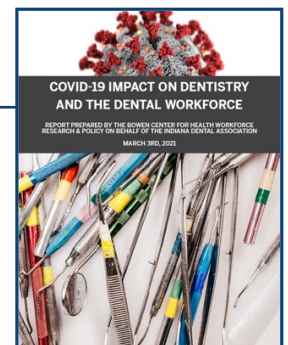


## EMPLOYMENT PLANS

Dental Hygienist Employment Plans



Report Intersection: In 2021, a report was released related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Indiana dentists and dental hygienists. Dental hygiene was cited by Indiana dentists as the top "hardest to fill" position in their office.<sup>1</sup>



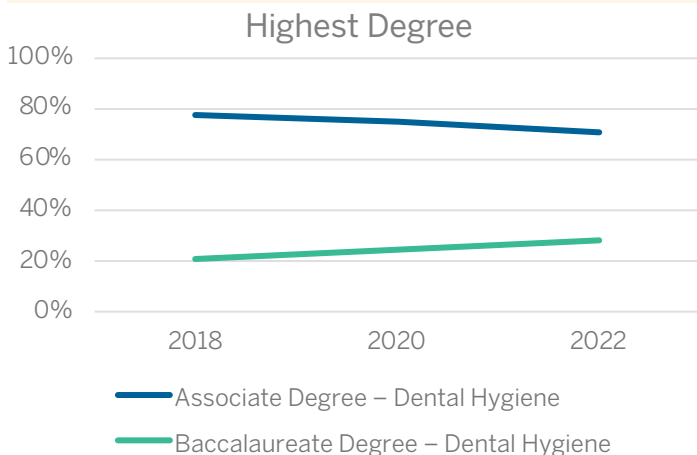
Note: There were reporting variations in how racial information was captured and are reflected in the racial categories for the charts above. Full details can be found in all historical data reports.

1. COVID-19 Impact on Dentistry and the Dental Workforce. Available at: <https://scholarworks.iupui.edu/bitstream/handle/1805/25418/IDA%20Covid%20Brief%203.19.2021.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

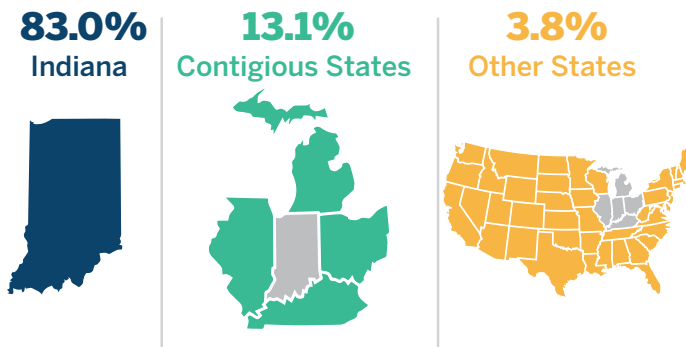


# INDIANA DENTAL HYGIENISTS: EDUCATION CHARACTERISTICS

**★ The Takeaway:** Dental hygienists have begun to report higher levels of educational attainment with more hygienists earning their baccalaureate degree in dental hygiene than ever before. Most dental hygienists trained in Indiana and report their primary field as direct patient care. Forty hygienists report serving in dental hygiene education.



Where do Indiana dental hygienist receive their qualifying education?

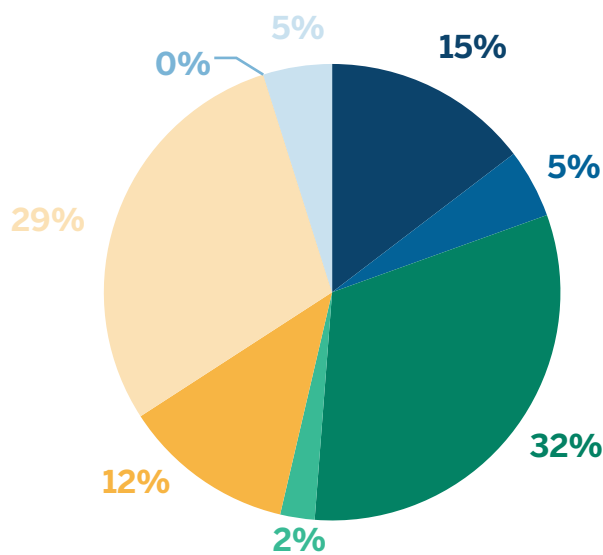


## DENTAL HYGIENIST EDUCATORS

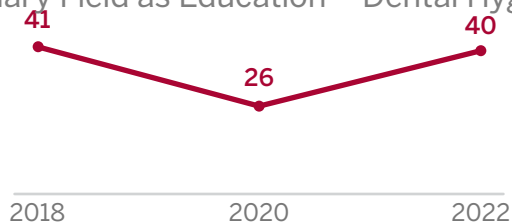
Available data in Indiana and at the national level demonstrate that the dental hygienist workforce is experiencing an increased unmet demand for workers.<sup>2</sup> Dental hygienist is considered a high-demand occupation by the Indiana Department of Workforce Development, with a projected 11% increase in the workforce from 2016-2026.<sup>3</sup> To meet the growing need for dental hygienists, it is helpful to understand capacity of the dental hygiene pipeline. A first step to quantifying pipeline capacity is understanding the workforce of dental hygienist educators.

only **1.0%** of hygienists report their primary role as a “Education – Dental Hygiene” (representing 40 hygienists in 2022)

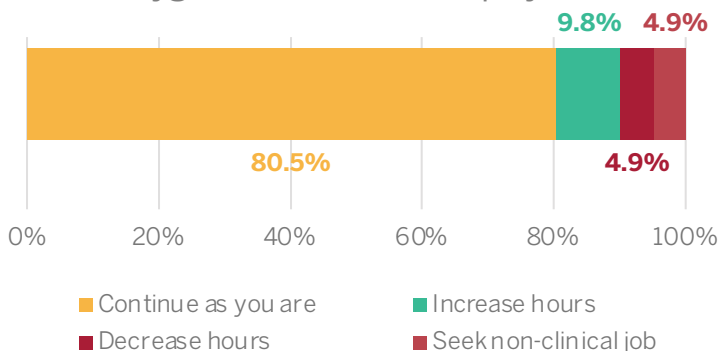
Dental Hygienist Educator Highest Degree



Primary Field as Education – Dental Hygiene



Dental Hygienist Educators Employment Plans



Dental Hygiene Degree

- Associate Degree
- Baccalaureate Degree
- Master's Degree
- Doctoral Degree

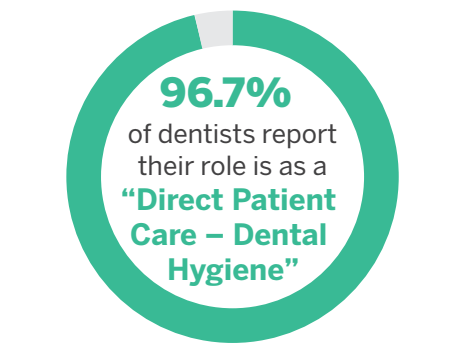
Degree in Another Field

- Associate Degree
- Baccalaureate Degree
- Master's Degree
- Doctoral Degree

# INDIANA DENTAL HYGIENISTS: PRACTICE CHARACTERISTICS

★ **The Takeaway:** The majority of Indiana dental hygienists (88.7%) report practicing in a dental office setting, which is defined as either a solo, group, or partnership practice. This is a small decrease from the 2020 report (94.2%) since capturing Dental Service Organization as a practice setting.

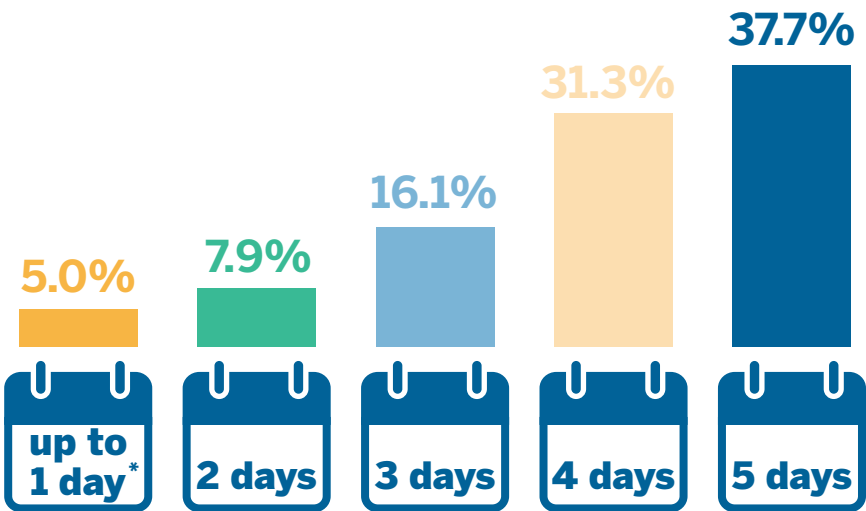
## Dental Hygienist Primary Field



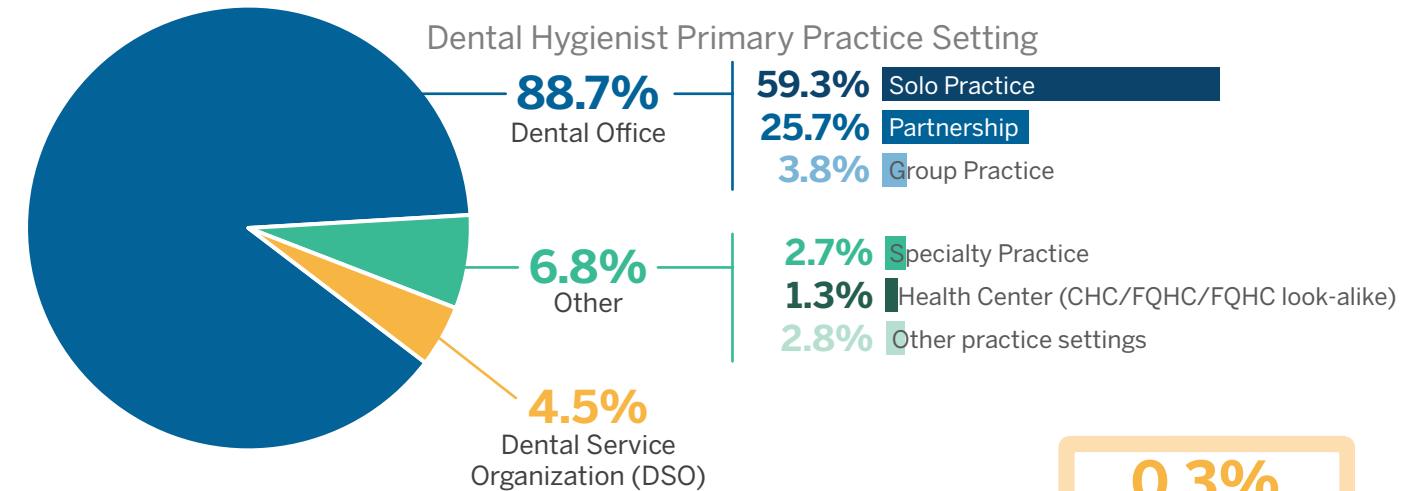
## Dental Hygienist Average FTE



## Time in Patient Care\*

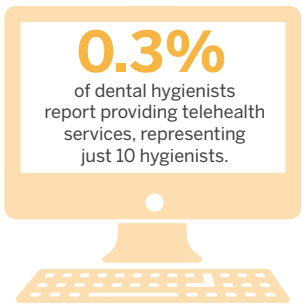


\*Between 1-8 hours per week, Includes two reported practice locations (if applicable)



## TELEHEALTH/TELEDENTISTRY

Dental hygienists were included in the definition of telehealth in Indiana through a 2021 bill.<sup>1</sup> The American Dental Association and Indiana Dental Association have provided guidance related to telehealth in dentistry.<sup>2</sup> The slower uptake of telehealth among dental hygienists may be due to a myriad of factors, such as recent policy change, limited guidance, reimbursement, or slow uptake of telehealth among dentists.



## INDIANA DENTAL HYGIENISTS PRACTICE SETTINGS

For the 2022 renewal period, the Oral Health Workforce Data Advisory Group suggested inclusion of an additional practice setting option: Dental Service Organization. In comparing 2022 responses to 2020, response frequencies suggest that many dental hygienists now reporting a primary practice of a DSO may have previously self-categorized their practice setting as a “Dental Office.”

2020		2022	
Dental Office	93.0	Dental Office	88.7
N/A	N/A	Dental Service Organization (DSO)	4.5

IC 25-1-9.5-3.5 Available at: <https://iga.in.gov/legislative/laws/2022/ic/titles/025#25-1-9.5>; 2021 Senate Enrolled Act 3. Available at: <https://iga.in.gov/legislative/2021/bills/senate/3#document-742b0b09>  
ADA Policy on Teledentistry Available at: <https://www.ada.org/about/governance/current-policies/ada-policy-on-teledentistry>  
IDA Guidelines on Teledentistry Available at: <https://indental.org/ada-guidelines-on-teledentistry/>

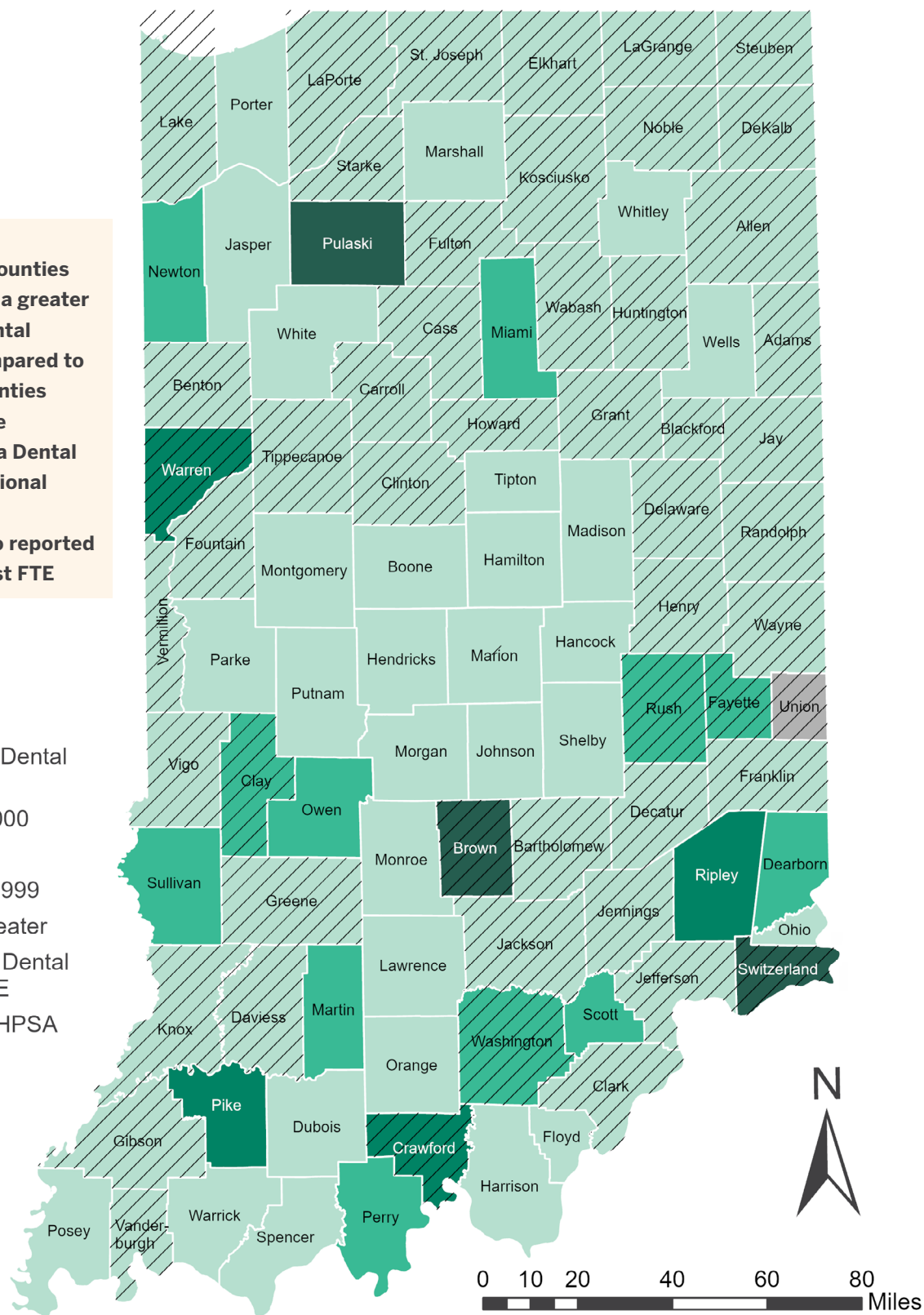
# INDIANA DENTAL HYGIENISTS: CAPACITY AND GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

★ **The Takeaway:**

- Metropolitan counties generally have a greater capacity of dental hygienists compared to more rural counties
- 52 Counties are designated as a Dental Health Professional Shortage Area
- 1 county has no reported dental hygienist FTE

Population to One Dental Hygienist FTE

- Less than 5,000
- 5,000 - 9,999
- 10,000 - 14,999
- 15,000 or Greater
- No Reported Dental Hygienist FTE
- Dental Care HPSA



Source: 2022 Indiana Dental Hygienist License and Supplemental Survey Data; U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 5-Year Estimates.  
 Note: Population-to-provider FTE ratios cannot be calculated with no reported dental hygienist FTE.

# A DEEPER DIVE INTO ORAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE SETTINGS

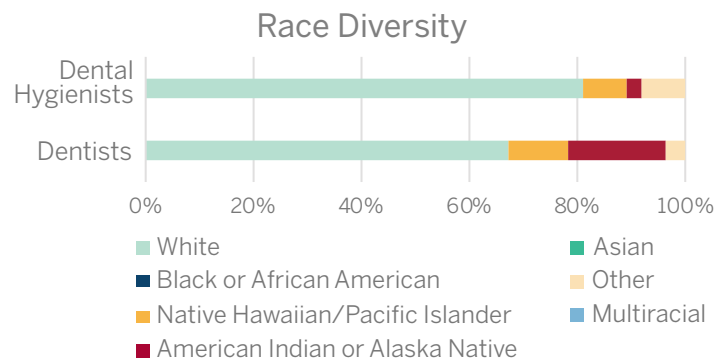
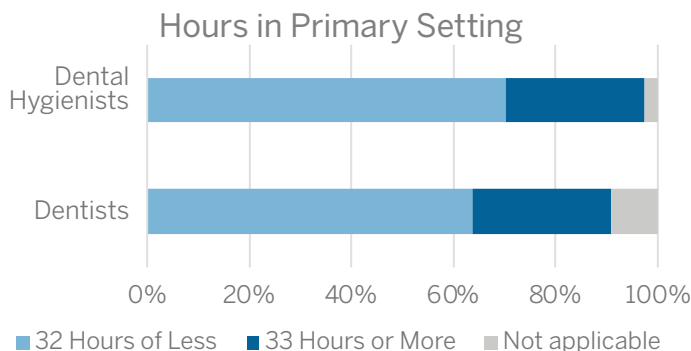
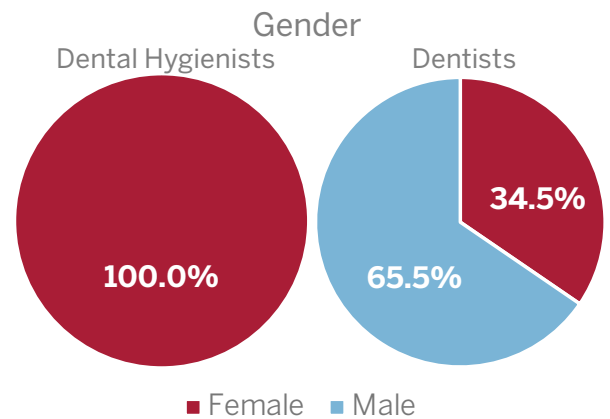
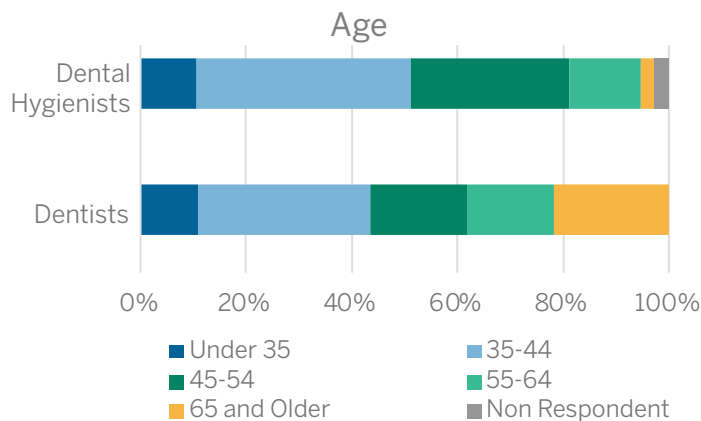
## DENTAL SERVICE/SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS (DSOS)

"DSOs" originally referred to "Dental Service Organizations", but today this acronym stands for "Dental Support Organizations." DSO are entities that dental providers may use to assist with the business activities associated with a dental practice. In general, DSOs do not provide clinical services, as dental services are provided by or under the supervision of a licensed dentist. DSOs support provision of dental services by managing business activities and allowing dental professionals to concentrate on the clinical services.<sup>1-4</sup>

For the 2022 license renewal period, the Indiana Oral Health Workforce Data Advisory Group recommended including "DSO" as a response option for dentist and dental hygienist practice settings. However, with the shift in terminology from dental service organization to dental support organization, it might be more appropriate for DSOs to be incorporated as a type of business or employment arrangement, as opposed to a practice setting. The Bowen Center will work with the Advisory Group before the next license renewal period to determine the most appropriate mechanism to report on the rise of DSOs to support dental practices.

## PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY NET SETTINGS

Oral health is a critical component of primary care, which is increasingly being delivered in public health settings such as home health, local health departments, school-based settings, mobile units, correctional facilities, Indian Health Service sites, and other settings.<sup>5</sup> Many Indiana oral health professionals work in these settings to meet the patient where they are at to deliver dental services. In total, there are 55 dentists and 37 dental hygienists who report providing dental services to Hoosiers in one of these public health settings. Below is additional demographic and practice characteristics for these public health dentists and hygienists.



1. American Dental Association, How Big Are Dental Service Organizations?

Available

at: <https://www.ada.org/resources/research/health-policy-institute/dental-practice-research/how-big-are-dental-service-organizations>

2. American Dental Association, Business Services Agreements with DSOs: What a Dentist Should Know.

Available at: [https://www.ada.org/-/media/project/ada-organization/ada/ada-org/files/resources/careers/ada\\_business\\_services\\_agreements\\_with\\_dsos](https://www.ada.org/-/media/project/ada-organization/ada/ada-org/files/resources/careers/ada_business_services_agreements_with_dsos).

[pdf?rev=49b1f01314754c7496637e19c2becb48&hash=739524707C26F24128285D302F674DD1](https://www.ada.org/publications/ada-news/2022/march/main-types-of-dsos)

3. American Dental Association, DSO 101: What is a dental support organization? Available at: <https://www.ada.org/publications/ada-news/2022/march/main-types-of-dsos>

4. American Dental Association, HPI: Shifting practice patterns. Available at: <https://www.ada.org/publications/new-dentist-news/2021/december/hpi-shifting-practice-patterns>

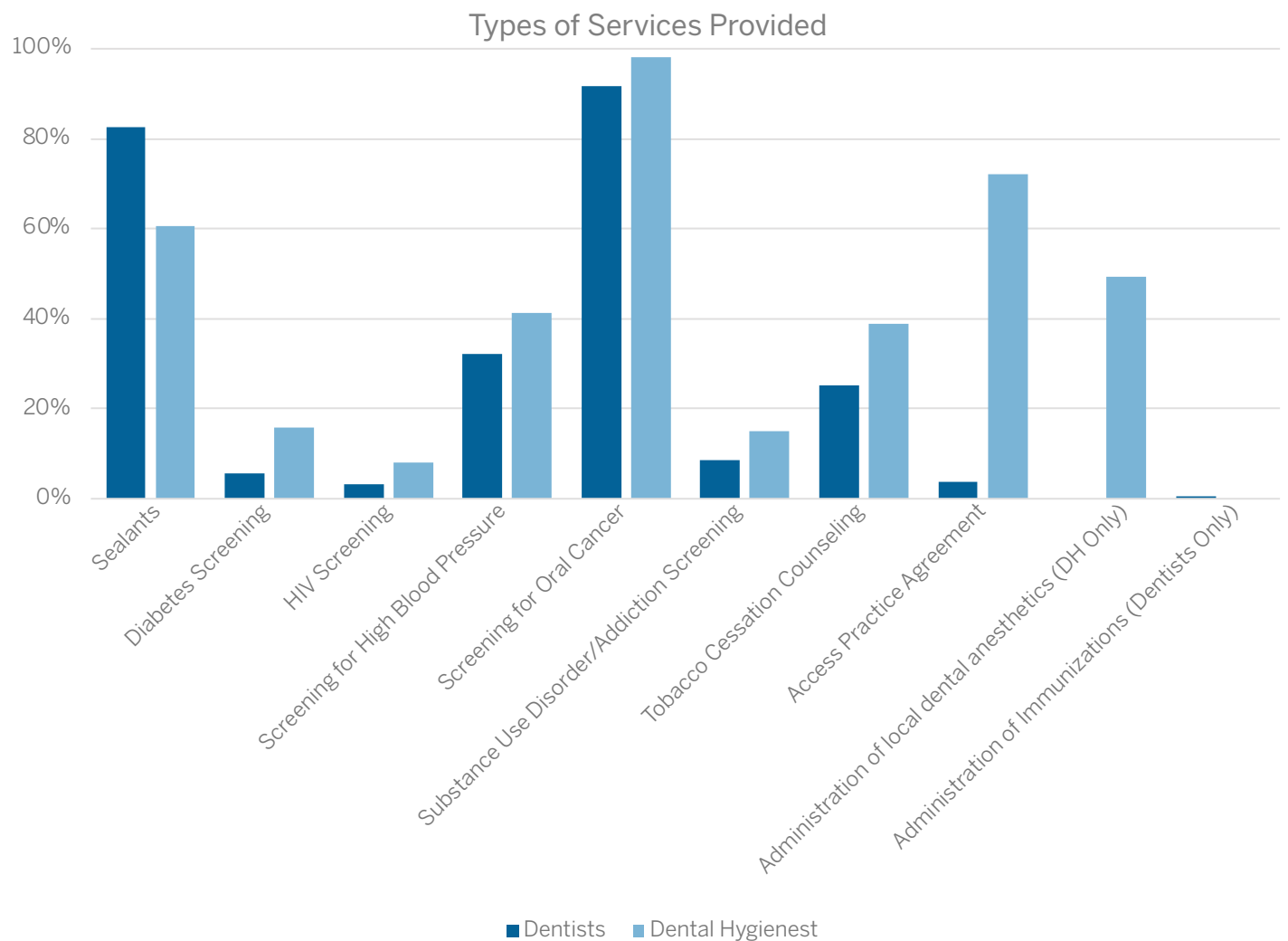
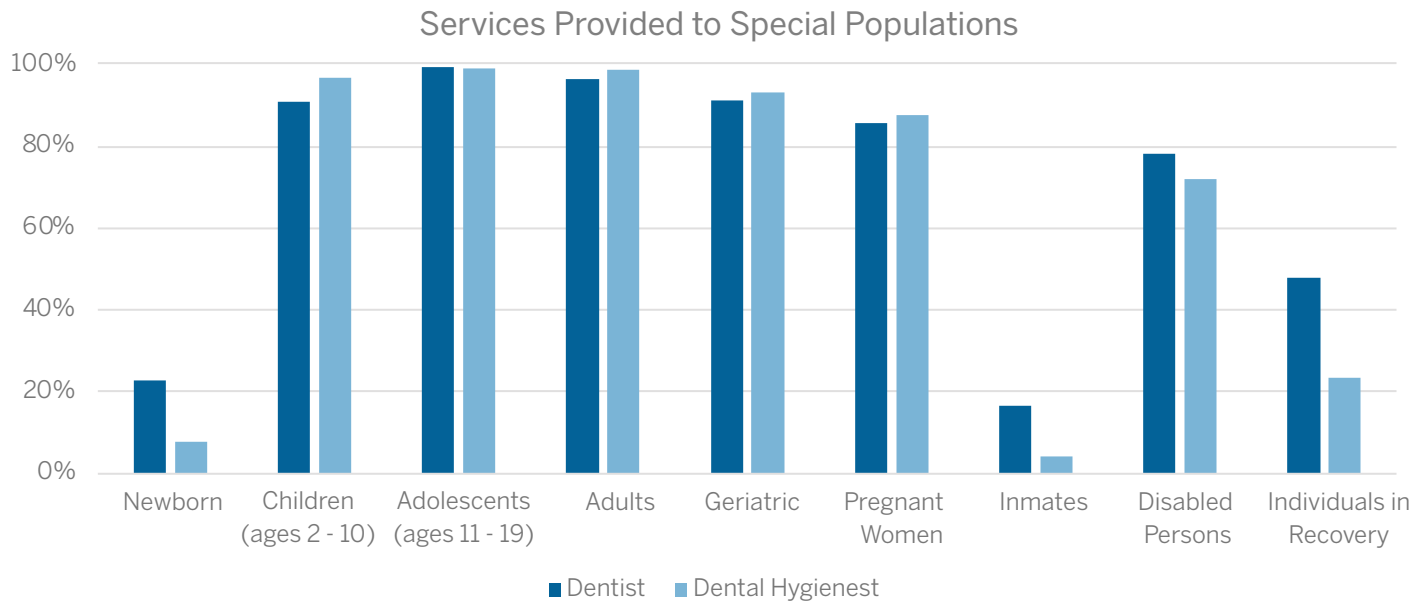
5. Public health and safety net settings were defined to include: Health Center (CHC/FQHC/FQHC look-alike), Long-term Care/Nursing Home/Extended Care Facility (non-hospital), Home Health Setting, Local Health Department, Other Public Health/Community Health Setting, School Health Service, Mobile Unit Dentistry, Correctional Facility, and Indian Health Service.

### Did you know?

Public Health Dentists and Dental Hygienists tend to be more racially diverse than the overall workforce. Take a look at pages 4 and 10 to compare.

## ORAL HEALTH WORKFORCE SERVING SPECIAL POPULATIONS

Indiana dentists and dental hygienists provide a wide variety of services to numerous population groups. The charts below describe the proportion of the total workforces that report providing these services.





# ORAL HEALTH WORKFORCE POLICY UPDATES

## 2022 SENATE ENROLLED ACT 136 - DENTAL PLANS

### What did it do?

- Prohibits a dental plan from requiring a dental provider to provide a dental service to covered persons at a free rate that is:
  - (1) set by the dental plan or
  - (2) subject to the approval of the dental plan
- Unless the specific service is covered under a dental plan, prohibits a third-party from arranging a provider to provide services for a dental plan that sets the fee rate for any dental services unless the services are covered services under the dental plan.

## 2023 SENATE ENROLLED ACT 273 - ADMINISTRATION OF ANESTHESIA IN DENTAL OFFICE

### What did it do?

- Provided that a rule requiring an office-based setting to be accredited by an accreditation agency does not apply to certain individuals providing anesthesia in a dental office.
- Allows an anesthesiologist, a certified registered nurse anesthetist, and an anesthesiologist assistant to administer moderate sedation, deep sedation, or general anesthesia to a patient in a dental office if certain standards are met.

## 2023 HOUSE ENROLLED ACT 1113 - DENTAL COMPLIANCE FUND.

### What did it do?

- Removed a requirement that dentists and dental hygienists pay a \$20 compliance fee during license renewal that is deposited into the dental compliance fund; thereby reducing cost burden for license renewal.
- Requires money in the compliance fund be used for administering and enforcing the provisions of the Indiana Code chapter concerning the regulation of dentists.

## OTHER INDIANA ORAL HEALTH WORKFORCE POLICIES THAT WERE CONSIDERED BY THE INDIANA GENERAL ASSEMBLY, BUT NOT SIGNED INTO LAW:

Modification of dental service reimbursement rates ([2023 House Bill 1112](#))

Authority for dental hygienists to administer immunizations ([2022 House Bill 1331](#))

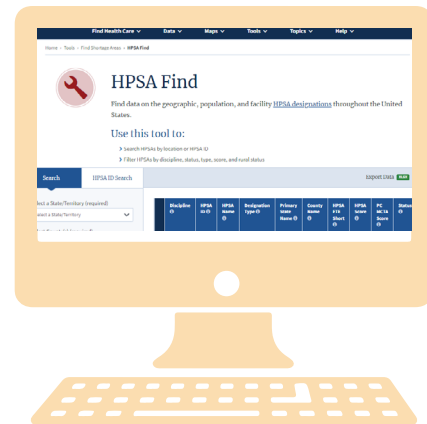
# ARE YOU A DENTAL OR DENTAL HYGIENE STUDENT OR PRACTICING PROFESSIONAL?

## CHECK OUT THE INCENTIVE PROGRAMS THAT MAY BE AVAILABLE!

There are several federally funded, State-operated, and externally-housed incentive programs available to support Indiana dentists and dental hygienists. Most of these programs incentivize service in rural and underserved areas or specialties in Indiana.

DID YOU  
KNOW?

Most federal and state opportunities require service in a shortage area. Check out whether your employer qualifies by reading the program eligibility requirements and exploring health professional shortage area designations in Indiana at: <https://data.hrsa.gov/tools/shortage-area/hpsa-find>



### FEDERAL OPPORTUNITIES :

The federal government offers several opportunities through HRSA to strengthen Dental and Dental Hygienist education pipelines.

- [National Health Service Corps \(NHSC\) Students to Service Loan Repayment Program](#): Supports dentists and dental hygiene students in their last year of training in exchange for service in an underserved area.
- [NHSC Loan Repayment Program](#): Supports practicing dentists and hygienists providing care in underserved communities.



### STATE OPPORTUNITIES:

- The Indiana Department of Health operates [Indiana's State Loan Repayment Program](#) which offers dentists and hygienists up to \$20,000 per year to serve in certain geographies or settings throughout the State.



### OTHER OPPORTUNITIES:

- There are also numerous other incentive programs operated externally to the State of Indiana. For example, a [scholarship](#) is available through the IUPUI-IU School of Dentistry to support students from diverse backgrounds. IU Northwest also has several [scholarships](#) available to support undergraduate dental hygiene students. Additional incentive opportunities may be found on the [Bowen Portal](#).

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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