Benesch

October 2025

Dental/DSO Industry Newsletter

Dental/DSO Industry Market Intelligence

In This Issue

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Greater New York Dental Meeting

NOVEMBER 28 – DECEMBER 3, 2025
New York

The 101st Annual Greater New York Dental Meeting invites attendees to participate in one of the largest Dental Congresses in the world. At the 2024 Meeting, the conference hosted over 37,631 dental professionals, including:

Dentists – 13,470
Dental Assistants – 2,200
Dental Hygienists – 2,226
International Countries – 148

For more information, please click here.

Becker's Healthcare's 13th Annual CEO + CFO Roundtable

NOVEMBER 3-6, 2025
Hilton Chicago

This event brings together C-level executives for dynamic discussions and debates on critical topics, including rural healthcare, digital transformation, health equity, C-suite diversity and more.

For more information, please click here.

Please contact us if you would like to post information regarding our upcoming events or if you'd like to guest author an article for this newsletter.

kdelaet@beneschlaw.com

KEY FINDINGS

Private Equity trends show continued interest in DSOs and specialty dental practices

Private equity investment in dental practices and DSOs remains robust, with deal volume notably high in recent years despite broader economic uncertainty.

There are several key takeaways from recent PitchBook outlooks and private equity (PE) industry updates that directly apply to dental organizations—particularly DSOs (Dental Service Organizations) and specialty dental practices. These VC trends highlight the accelerated shift toward data-driven, tech-enabled practice management and care delivery that are central to DSO growth and sustained profitability.

Healthtech VC investment reached $7.9 billion in H1 2025, on track for a multiyear high despite fewer deals overall. Median deal size has climbed to $33.8 million, indicating greater capital concentration in later-stage, high-potential companies—often those leveraging AI and digital tools that can scale across provider networks, like DSOs. Mega-rounds for companies such as Transcarent and Abridge, plus high-profile IPOs by digital health platform leaders Hinge Health and Omada Health, highlight a renewed confidence in digital infrastructure and tools that enable scalable care delivery and operational efficiency.

Implications for DSOs

AI Scribes and Documentation Automation: VC enthusiasm around AI scribes, including (Ambience, Abridge), signals a rapid growth in the adoption of AI-powered clinical documentation, which is directly applicable for DSOs looking to cut administrative time, standardize records and reduce burnout. These tools can enhance provider productivity, improve revenue cycle accuracy and elevate compliance in multi-location DSO environments.

Revenue Cycle Innovation: Abridge's expansion into revenue cycle capabilities exemplifies the wave of AI innovation transforming claims processing and payment posting—two pain points for growing DSOs. Automated RCM (Revenue Cycle Management) translates to faster collections and more reliable cash flow.

Focus on Scalable Enterprise Solutions: The Hinge and Omada IPOs demonstrate investor preference for digital health platforms with proven, enterprise-class B2B2C models, mirroring how larger DSOs now evaluate healthtech partners. Solutions must deliver measurable clinical outcomes, integrate across sites and improve operational margins.

Competitive Landscape in Digital Health: As companies enter the market with free and increasingly sophisticated offerings, DSOs must regularly **appraise** tech vendors for innovation, integration and ongoing adaptability. AI and digital solutions will quickly evolve and organizations must avoid technology lock-in or stagnation.

Operational Excellence, Not Just Growth: The trend of later-stage funding and successful exits for mature, operationally excellent companies (rather than early-stage speculative ventures) favors DSOs that have invested in advanced tech infrastructure and standardized workflows.

Sources: Pitchbook, MedCity News, Canada Health Infoway, Trulark, BOLA AI, Overjet

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KEY FINDINGS (cont'd)

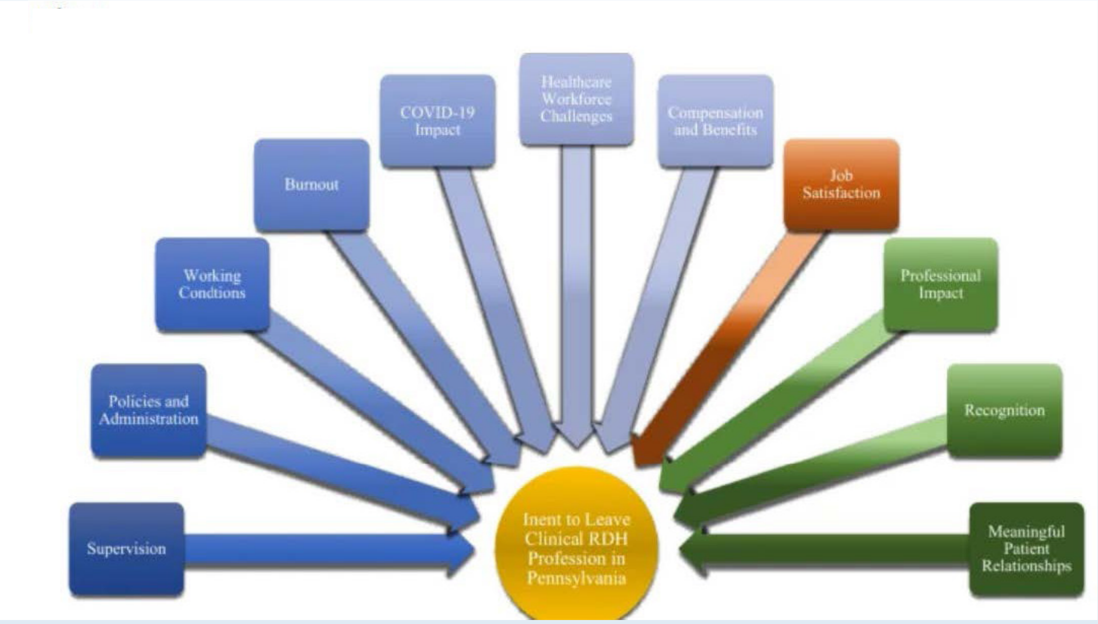
Study highlights rising dissatisfaction among U.S. dental hygienists

Experts say systemic change is required for a sustainable workforce model, which includes equitable pay and benefits, defining advancement pathways, supportive management structures, and streamlining office processes.

A recent study published in BMC Health Services Research highlights rising dissatisfaction among U.S. dental hygienists, a group already strained by long-standing workforce shortages exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic. While hygienists expressed pride in their work and reported having strong coworker relationships, many also reported feeling undervalued, underpaid and lacking in career advancement opportunities. The findings raise concerns that systemic dissatisfaction could exacerbate workforce instability, with ripple effects that extend to patients, communities and healthcare delivery.

The study distributed a 36-question survey in 2024 to 328 licensed hygienists in Pennsylvania, most of whom were women (98%), older in age (53% were 55+) and employed in private practice (72%). Results revealed that hygienists rated pride in their work and teamwork highly (mean scores of 5.31 and 5.06, respectively) but expressed significant frustration with extrinsic factors. Nearly 61% disagreed that they were fairly paid and 87% reported few opportunities for advancement. Many also noted that practice rules and administrative barriers hindered their ability to work effectively. These findings suggest that salary dissatisfaction alone does not fully explain turnover and that meaningful career ladders and organizational support are also necessary.

The workforce shortage in dentistry predates the pandemic but has not shown meaningful recovery since. Its impact extends beyond job dissatisfaction, creating strained practice operations and compromising access to oral healthcare services. The study highlights that structural challenges, including limited pay equity, a lack of supervisory support and administrative inefficiencies, must be addressed in conjunction with recognizing the motivating factors that keep hygienists engaged. Without intervention, turnover risks may intensify, deepening the shortage and weakening patient care delivery.



The authors concluded that a sustainable workforce model requires systemic change. Solutions include adopting equitable pay and benefits, defining advancement pathways, building supportive management structures, and streamlining office processes to minimize workplace frustrations. Although limited by self-reported survey data and potential bias, the study highlights that enhancing professional satisfaction through both financial and non-financial factors is crucial for stabilizing the profession and ensuring access to dental care.

Sources: BMC Health Service Research, Dr. BiCuspid

GENERAL DENTISTRY NEWS

AUGUST 28, 2025

Rep. Jennifer McClellan visits Virginia nonprofit dental clinic to address concerns over Medicaid cuts

Representative Jennifer McCLellan discussed the potential impact of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, signed by President Trump, which could reduce Medicaid spending by nearly $1 trillion. McClellan is co-sponsoring legislation to reverse the cuts and plans to share patient stories with lawmakers. Her visit to the Appalachian Highlands Community Dental Center, where over 80% of patients rely on Medicaid and the clinic has a waitlist of 2,800 people, highlights concerns over impending cuts.

Source: WCYB

SEPTEMBER 4, 2025

Only seven states currently meet Medicaid network adequacy standards

According to a new report from the American Dental Association's Council on Advocacy for Access and Prevention, most states fall short on Medicaid network adequacy, primarily due to insufficient CMS enforcement of existing legal provisions.

Variations in how the law is interpreted between presidential administrations and among managed care organizations have contributed to these gaps. The ADA council urges improvements, such as raising Medicaid reimbursements and reducing administrative burdens, to encourage more providers to join Medicaid networks. The council also recommends establishing and enforcing clearer network adequacy standards and urges the CMS to adopt these new standards formally. The ADA has criticized states and federal authorities for not using available remedies to fix network inadequacy issues and highlights the absence of strict federal enforcement.

Source: ADA News

SEPTEMBER 8, 2025

Dental school enrollment hits record high as female and diverse graduates lead growth

Dental school applicants and enrollment in the U.S. are at record highs, with 75 dental schools operating in 2025 and two more set to open this year. In 2024, there were 12,491 applicants (up 11.5% from 2023) and over 7,000 first-year enrollees—both marking historic highs. The number of graduates has also risen to 6,872, with notable advances in gender and racial diversity: women made up 55.6% of graduates and 16.9% came from historically underrepresented groups.

These trends signal strong interest in dental careers and a growing, more diverse workforce but the profession still faces ongoing challenges in balancing supply with demand across regions and adjusting to changing economic and patient care conditions.

Source: Becker's Dental & DSO Review

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GENERAL DENTISTRY NEWS (cont'd)

SEPTEMBER 4, 2025

ADA council urges Medicaid to improve network adequacy standards

For Dental Support Organizations (DSOs), the ADA Council on Advocacy for Access and Prevention highlights a critical issue: only seven states are in compliance with Medicaid's dental network adequacy requirements. The ADA report, approved by the ADA Board of Trustees, found that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has not enforced compliance with the Medicaid Act requirements to ensure sufficient provider networks. The report advocates for the ADA to lead the establishment of clear, enforceable network adequacy standards, including metrics like patient travel time, appointment wait times and beneficiary exam rates, to prevent inadequate or "ghost" networks.

The ADA recommends advocating for CMS to adopt these standards legislatively and continuing a Medicaid Pilot Project to increase compliant states from seven to fifteen by 2030.

Source: ADA News

DSO EXPANSION & CONSOLIDATION

OCTOBER 15, 2025

Benesch advises Cleveland Dental Management in acquisition of Aurora Dental, expanding regional network

Benesch advised Cleveland Dental Management (CDM) on its acquisition of Aurora Dental, expanding CDM's network to 11 practices across the Cleveland, Akron and Pittsburgh communities. The transaction marks CDM's first expansion since 2021 and underscores its commitment to delivering high-quality, patient-centered care throughout the region. Aurora Dental, owned by Dr. Russ Caputo, will now operate as Dental Group of Aurora and plans to relocate to a new, state-of-the-art 20-chair facility next year.

Source: Benesch

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DSO EXPANSION & CONSOLIDATION (cont'd)

SEPTEMBER 15, 2025

Report shows continued growth, acquisitions and geographic expansion in the DSO sector

The report illustrates continued growth, acquisitions and geographic expansion in the DSO sector across the US, UK and Australia, including the following U.S. deals:

- **AX Surgical Specialty Management** expanded in Pennsylvania with two new partnerships: Greater Philadelphia Oral Surgery and Lebanon & Lancaster Oral Surgery Group.
- **PDS Health** opened six new de novo dental practices across California, Florida, Louisiana, Washington and Idaho, and is now supporting over 1,000 offices in 24 states.
- **Empower Dental Group** opened a new practice in Upland, California and now operates six locations.
- **Phase 1 Equity** added a multi-site orthodontic practice in Ohio, marking their sixth practice and 16th doctor in 2025.
- **MB2 Dental** acquired three new practices in Pennsylvania and California, totaling 37 new practices for 2025 so far.
- **Heartland Dental** opened several de novo offices and welcomed three affiliated offices.
- **Dental365** entered Ohio with six locations and a new endodontic practice, while also expanding in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania.
- **Sage Dental** acquired three locations in Florida and Tennessee.
- **Chord Specialty Dental Partners** partnered with Dr. J Pediatric Dentistry in Indianapolis, supporting 60+ partner practices.
- **Rodeo Dental & Orthodontics** opened a new location in Lakewood, Colorado.
- **Park Dental Partners** added a new general dentistry practice in Minnesota.
- **Imagen Dental Partners** entered its 17th state with a collaboration in Kentucky.
- **beBright** added Brink & White Pediatric Dental Associates with three Tennessee locations.

Source: Group Dentistry Now

SEPTEMBER 3, 2025

Minnesota-based DSO Park Dental Partners files for IPO with SEC

The Minnesota-based dental support organization has over 85 affiliated practices across Minnesota and Wisconsin. It employs more than 200 dentists and 900 clinical team members, offering comprehensive business and clinical support services. The company has operated for over 50 years and emphasizes long-term oral health and patient-centered care. Its scale, longevity and integrated support model make it one of Minnesota's largest private companies by revenue.

Source: Park Dental Partners

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DSO EXPANSION & CONSOLIDATION (cont'd)

AUGUST 12, 2025

Fastest-growing dental companies in 2025

39 dental companies were ranked among the fastest-growing companies by Inc., based on revenue growth from 2021 to 2024. The leading companies in terms of growth rate were VideaHealth, with a 7,252% three-year growth rate, UptimeHealth with a 3,201% growth rate, and Aligned Dental with a 1,336% three-year growth rate. Top leaders include Ashish Bagai and Amir Fardshi of Vitana Pediatric & Orthodontic Partners, Danny Kawas of Guardian Dentistry Partners, and Drs. Jeffrey and Leann Burch of Burch Dental Partners. Their backgrounds span finance, real estate, consulting and clinical dentistry. These leaders are driving innovation and expansion in pediatric, general and specialty dental services—and these DSOs reflect a blend of business acumen and clinical leadership.

Source: Becker's Dental & DSO Review

AUGUST 25, 202

Aspen Group reports strong growth across brand portfolio

Chicago-based Aspen Group reported $4.2 billion in annualized net revenue for the first half of 2025, an 8% increase year over year. Its brands, Aspen Dental and ClearChoice, now support more than 1,000 practices nationally, with 14 new openings in H1 2025. The company partnered with the National Foundation of Ectodermal Dysplasias to provide free care to affected patients. TAG University marked its second anniversary, offering expanded training in practice management, patient care and leadership.

Source: The Aspen Group

Related: Aspen Dental opens practices in Texas, New York
—Becker's Dental & DSO Review, Dental News

OTHER DSO NEWS

SEPTEMBER 9, 2025

New dental platform launches in California, reportedly the largest dental transaction of the year

The landmark transaction, advised by Viper Partners for SF Dental Group, marks the largest dental deal of 2025, creating a new platform in California. This platform aims to expand access to high-quality dental care, improve patient experience and support dental professionals with advanced tools and infrastructure. The partnership combines SF Dental Group's clinical excellence with the strategic buyer's resources for rapid growth. It reflects a broader industry trend of consolidation to scale and enhance comprehensive dental services in California's dynamic market.

Source: Viper Partners

AUGUST 18, 2025

Some DSOs fail to recapitalize amid economic uncertainty

Some large DSOs have failed to recapitalize due to economic uncertainties and operational shortcomings, compounded by slowing private equity recapitalizations and rising debt costs. Interest rate shifts and broader economic anxieties, including potential recessions and tariffs, have also pressured the market. Additionally, a labor shortage, especially of hygienists, is impacting practice performance and success. Advances in AI offer promising efficiency boosts both clinically and administratively, but market evolution remains uncertain.

Source: Becker’s Dental & DSO Review

AUGUST 18, 2025

Emerging DSOs are approaching growth by focusing on healthcare over retail

This report argues that emerging DSOs differentiate by offering dentists autonomy and equity while focusing on patient-centered care and demographic adaptability. They are leveraging technology flexibly in order to pilot innovations and improve patient and clinician experience. New DSOs are prioritizing long-term patient relationships over short-term patient acquisition and are recognizing healthcare's distinct nature from retail. Their success has been shown to depend on scalable platforms, strong health-oriented culture and integrated systems focused on retention and clinician support.

Source: Becker’s Dental & DSO Review

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PRIVATE EQUITY

SEPTEMBER 8, 2025

CrownPoint Partners sells dental sale-leaseback portfolio in Ohio

CrownPoint Partners, a real estate brokerage and advisory firm, recently sold a dental sale-leaseback portfolio in Ohio for $5.47 million. The portfolio comprises five properties located in Mansfield, Warren, Sidney, Akron and Eaton. This transaction reflects ongoing investor interest in dental and medical real estate. CrownPoint noted that Ohio presents attractive opportunities for investment in this sector.

Source: Becker's Dental & DSO Review

PARTNERSHIPS AND INNOVATION

AUGUST 22, 2025

CEOs see dental AI evolving into more integrated, value-adding technologies

Paul Reda, CEO of North American Dental Group, and Dr. Wardah Inam, CEO of Overjet, discussed how AI in dentistry has evolved into native imaging software that enhances diagnosis and patient communication. It has evolved to support dental teams by automating tasks and allowing more focused, face-to-face patient care. Key AI advancements they look forward to including 3D imaging on cone beam CT scans (CBCTs), AI-powered note dictation for efficient clinical documentation, and automation in revenue cycle management to reduce costs and improve collection efficiency.

Source: Becker's Dental & DSO Review,

SEPTEMBER 5, 2025

Dental 3D printing company SprintRay acquires EnvisionTEC portfolio

SprintRay has acquired EnvisionTEC's dental portfolio, including patents, trademarks, inventory and related IP tied to dental 3D printing technologies. The deal gives SprintRay access to over 200 patents EnvisionTEC developed in 3D printing hardware and materials over the past two decades.

Source: Becker's Dental & DSO Review,

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PARTNERSHIPS AND INNOVATION (cont'd)

AUGUST 19, 2025

Sage Dental partnership offers non-invasive periodontal therapy

Sage Dental partnered with biotech company Forward Science to launch PerioStõm®, an FDA-cleared, non-drug periodontal therapy designed to improve recovery after scaling and root planing (SRP) procedures. Clinical assessments demonstrated significant improvements in patient recovery and oral health metrics over a 30-day follow-up period. This innovative therapy offers a non-invasive alternative that enhances standard periodontal treatment and supports faster healing without antibiotics.

Source: Sage Dental

SEPTEMBER 4, 2025

Dentulu offers oral cancer saliva test nationwide

Dentulu now offers Viome's CancerDetect saliva test for early oral and throat cancer detection nationwide. The test analyzes RNA biomarkers in saliva using AI-driven insights to identify cancers, including squamous cell carcinomas. Patients can collect samples at home and mail them for laboratory analysis by Viome. Dentulu's dental network provides clinical follow-up and recommended next steps based on test results.

Source: Becker's Dental & DSO Review

SEPTEMBER 8, 2025

Specialty1 Partners launches analytics platform

Specialty1 Partners, which focuses on specialty care groups including endodontists, oral surgeons and periodontists, launched the Acumen Intelligence Engine, a proprietary analytics platform. It integrates practice management, HR, finance, procurement and revenue cycle data into a single system. The platform supports over 220 practices and 350 dental specialists nationwide.

Source: Specialty1 Partners

SEPTEMBER 5, 2025

ClearChoice using AI to innovate implant dentistry

ClearChoice leverages AI to streamline implant dentistry by integrating generative AI for enhanced patient scheduling and communication before visits. AI-driven solutions are helping to personalize treatment planning during consults, improving clinical decision-making without replacing human judgment. ClearChoice is also using AI technologies to optimize practice operations by reducing scheduling bottlenecks, enhancing efficiency and automating administrative tasks.

Source: Becker's Dental & DSO Review

LITIGATION

AUGUST 21, 2025

DSO acquisition draws scrutiny as groups push for federal probe

Delta Dental of Wisconsin's acquisition of Cherry Tree Dental has drawn scrutiny from national and state dental groups over potential antitrust violations. Critics argue the insurer's ownership of a DSO raises conflicts of interest and may reduce competition across Wisconsin and neighboring states. The ADA and Wisconsin Dental Association are monitoring the deal, while advocacy groups have formally urged federal and state regulators to investigate. Delta Dental maintains that the organizations will operate separately and says the move supports oral health access while complying with all laws.

Source: American Economic Liberties Project

AUGUST 15, 2025

Welcome Dentistry experiences hacking-related data breach

Welcome Dentistry Group, a California dental practice with four locations, experienced a data breach affecting over 1,000 individuals, reported to the HHS Department's Office for Civil Rights Breach Portal on August 13, 2025. The incident is classified as a hacking event compromising patient information. Individuals affected by the breach may be entitled to compensation as part of the investigation.

Source: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

AUGUST 18, 2025

Align Technology files patent infringement lawsuit against Chinese manufacturer

Align Technology, the maker of Invisalign, has filed patent infringement lawsuits against Chinese clear aligner manufacturer Angelalign in the U.S., Europe and China, alleging violations of multiple patents related to aligner materials, treatment planning and features. Align is seeking injunctive relief and monetary damages to protect its extensive R&D investments exceeding $2 billion since 2001. Angelalign denies the claims as frivolous and vows a strong legal defense, stating the lawsuits will not materially affect its business growth. The dispute highlights ongoing competition and intellectual property enforcement in the global clear aligner market.

Source: Align Technology

SEPTEMBER 3, 2025

Las Vegas-based dental practice experiences data breach

Absolute Dental disclosed a data breach affecting systems accessed between February 19 and March 5, 2025, through a third-party provider. Compromised data may have included names, contact details, IDs, health records, and in some cases, financial information. The company worked with law enforcement, enhanced its security measures and is offering two years of free identity monitoring via Kroll. Impacted individuals were advised to stay alert for fraud and can **call (866) 559-3472** for more information.

Source: Absolute Dental

STAFFING

SEPTEMBER 3, 2025

Federal loan caps could deepen dental workforce shortages by discouraging new entrants

Becker's Dental Review highlights a looming threat to dental workforce stability: incoming federal caps on student loans set for July 2026. The elimination of Grad PLUS loans and new borrowing limits ($50,000 per year, $200,000 lifetime) will make it much harder for prospective dental students to finance the high costs of dental school, which often exceed $400,000. This policy change is expected to have a particularly significant impact on students from low- and middle-income backgrounds. DSOs may soon face even greater recruiting and retention challenges, and will need to respond by enhancing support, incentives and career pathways to keep their clinical workforces strong.

Source: Becker's Dental & DSO Review

AUGUST 25, 2025

ADA, other dental organizations urge Congress to reauthorize federal dental workforce programs

A coalition of 67 organizations, including the ADA, is urging Congress to reauthorize federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) workforce programs before they expire in 2025. These Title VII and VIII programs fund and train a broad range of health professionals, expanding access for diverse students and serving underserved communities. The coalition specifically supports the EMPOWER for Health Act (H.R. 4262) and the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Reauthorization Act (H.R. 3593/S. 1874), both extending funding through 2030. Other dental groups who are part of the coalition include the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry; the American Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research; and the American Dental Education Association.

Source: ADA News

AUGUST 19, 2025

Seventeen states see decreases in average annual salary for dentists this year

According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, seventeen states saw decreases in the average annual salary for dentists from 2024 to 2025. States that have seen the most significant drop include Arizona, Connecticut, Georgia, Hawaii and Kansas. Some states have seen a pay increase, and Becker's Dental & DSO Review has reported that 27 states saw increases in the average annual salary for dentists between this and last year.

Source: Becker's Dental & DSO Review

For more information regarding our Dental Industry/DSO Practice, or if you would like to contribute to the newsletter, please contact:

Vince Nardone
Partner and Co-Chair, Dental/DSO Industry Team
vnardone@beneschlaw.com
T: 614.223.9326

Robert A. Marchant
Partner and Co-Chair, Dental/DSO Industry Team
rmarchant@beneschlaw.com
T: 216.363.4489

Frank Carsonie
Partner and Chair, Benesch Healthcare+ Practice Group
fcarsonie@beneschlaw.com
T: 614.223.9361

Ira C. Kaplan
Partner, Corporate & Securities Practice Group
ikaplan@beneschlaw.com
T: 216.363.4567

W. Clifford Mull
Partner, Benesch Healthcare+ Practice Group
cmull@beneschlaw.com
T: 216.363.4198