

The evolving dental health experience: the consumer preferences driving change



Thanks to the technological enhancements that color nearly every facet of Americans' daily lives, consumer behavior is evolving every day. It should not come as a surprise then that the same conveniences driving comfort and efficiency in day-to-day tasks are now extending to how healthcare consumers prefer to engage with providers, particularly dentists.

of appointments and being in network, and price transparency. In combination with increasing ease using technology, such as artificial intelligence (AI) to support in-person visits, today's dentists must not only seize opportunities that make them open and available to current and potential patients, but also use modern tools as part of their daily practice.

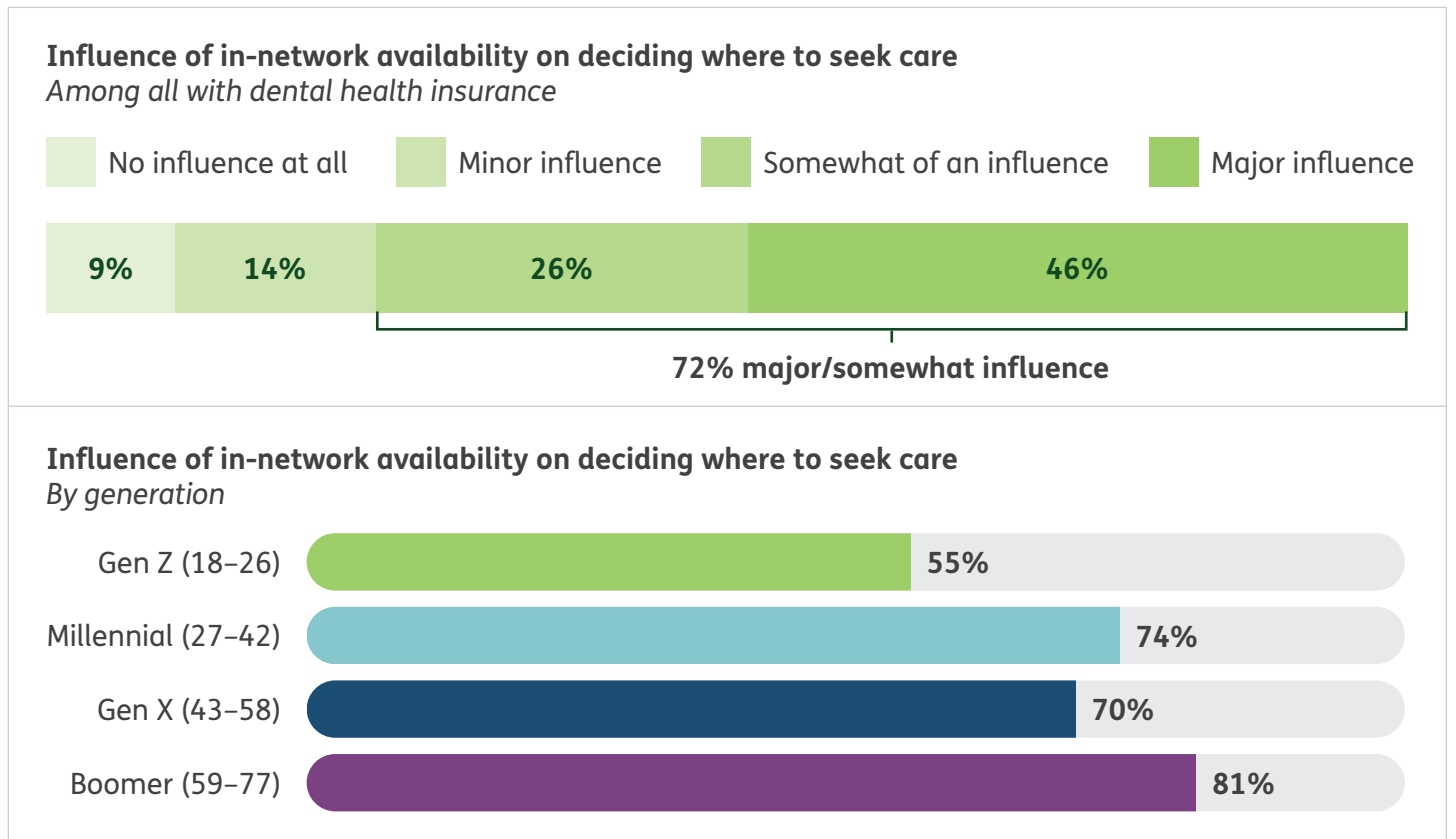
In a recent study of 2,000 adults in the United States, Humana found key factors of dental patients' experiences are availability, both in terms

The more providers, especially emerging practitioners, embrace these changes, the more they can attract patients from across the care spectrum.



Availability above all

Research found nearly 3 out of 4 respondents (72%) with dental insurance are at least somewhat influenced by in-network availability when choosing a dental provider, and nearly half (46%) report this to be a major influence. On both sides of the care spectrum, Boomers (81%) and Millennials (74%) alike report that an in-network provider is either a major influence or somewhat of an influence on the first decision a consumer needs to make when seeking care: choosing a provider.



In addition to these findings, appointment availability ranks high in decision making, with 85% considering it an extremely or very important factor in choosing a dentist.

For providers, this means it's important to be strategic about joining plans that will help grow your practice and provide network access to potential patients in your area. It also means diversifying your participation by including plans that support patients ranging from younger generations on private insurance to seniors on Medicare.

Cost transparency plus preventive management equals patient trust

In a world where costs are rising and patients have become accustomed to double-checking for hidden fees, it makes sense that price transparency ranks high among consumers as a driving factor for choosing and staying with a provider. A majority of respondents (84%) consider price transparency to be extremely or very important, with half (50%) considering it extremely important when selecting dental care.

In addition, younger generations are more likely to seek preventive services and are starting to request that more of these visits be allowed by insurance providers. Getting ahead of issues and knowing the cost to fix them is a key part of building a strong practice with patients who will stay for years.



These findings are underscored by the increasing comfort that consumers feel with AI as AI use in medical decision-making becomes more prevalent. The majority of dental patients are comfortable with AI being used to enhance their dental health experience. 7 out of 10 respondents (70%) report being at least somewhat comfortable with AI's use to confirm a clinical diagnosis, and 8 out of 10 respondents (79%) are at least somewhat comfortable with AI estimating costs for an upcoming procedure.

Great care is always rewarded

In summary, while the landscape of care is changing, the tenets of great care remain the same: **provide great service, use the latest innovations, and provide care when and where patients need it.** While the dental industry is evolving quickly, these standards are as old as the profession itself and a proven means to have longevity in the field. Partners like Humana stand ready to support dentists in all stages of their careers with the resources they need to grow their practice.



Visit [Humana.com/JoinDentalNetwork](https://www.humana.com/JoinDentalNetwork) to learn more about how to become part of our network and attract more patients to your business.