

# SURVEY RESULTS

Independent Survey  
About the ADHA

Conducted by Kara Vavrosky, RDH

*September 8, 2015*

*Results from an independent survey about the ADHA conducted by Kara Vavrosky, RDH on her Facebook page, Dental Hygiene with Kara RDH, from August 28, 2015 – September 5, 2015.*

# Disclaimer

This survey was conducted independently of the American Dental Hygienists' Association and is not sponsored, endorsed, or otherwise affiliated with the ADHA. The survey was conducted independently by Kara Vavrosky, RDH in preparation for a meeting with ADHA leadership. The goal was to gain a pulse of the hygiene community before this meeting. The summarized results are contained in this document and full results can be found online at <https://goo.gl/ExoP5D>.

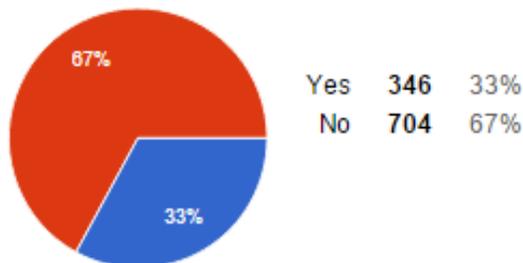
## Executive Summary

In preparation for the Governance of Tomorrow Project Workgroup meeting on September 8, 2015 Kara Vavrosky, RDH conducted an informal survey utilizing her audience on her Facebook page, Dental Hygiene with Kara RDH. The survey was run over the period of just over a week, from August 28, 2015 – September 5, 2015. While the results aren't meant to be a scientific study of hygienists, they do provide a good pulse of the hygiene community and some common themes emerged.

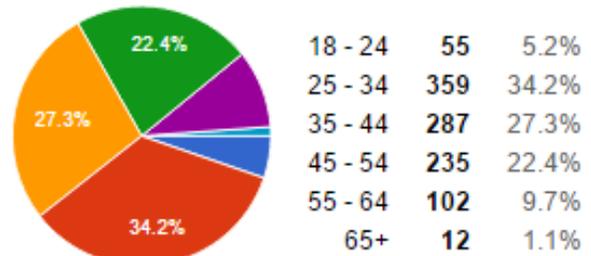
The survey had a total of 1,050 responses, with 704 of those responses coming from hygienists who are not currently members of the ADHA. Although responses came in from a variety of age ranges, the respondents tended to skew younger and fell in line with the age distribution of Kara's audience.

In order to get the perspective of both ADHA members and non-members, the survey was split into two tracks. Depending on the answer to the first question of "Are you currently a member of the ADHA?" the survey taker was taken to a specific set of questions based on their current membership status. A summary of the results of this survey, as well as recommendations for moving forward, are contained in this document. The full results of this survey can be found online at <https://goo.gl/ExoP5D>

**Are you currently a member of the ADHA?**



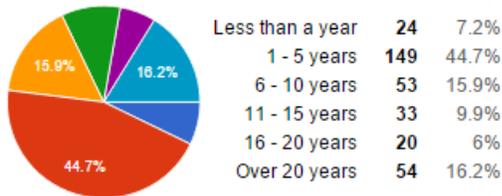
**How old are you?**



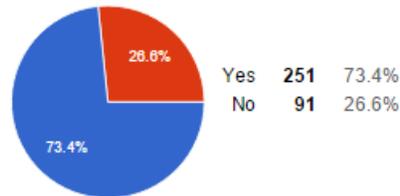
# ADHA Member Survey Results

The first section of the survey was for respondents who are currently members of the ADHA. A series of questions with prefilled answers were asked and the results are below. The freeform answers to questions are contained in the following pages.

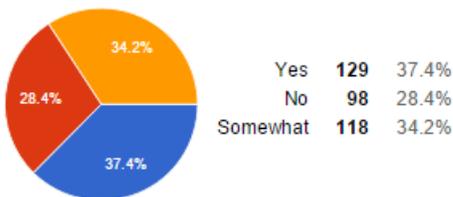
How long have you been a member of the ADHA?



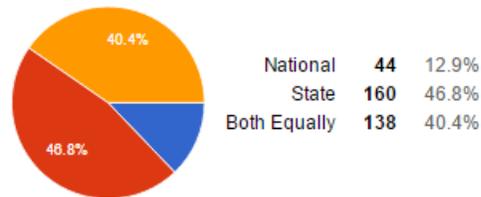
Have you ever been to a meeting for your local component?



Do you consider yourself to be an "active" member?



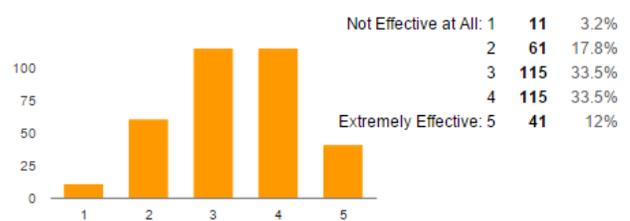
Who do you feel does more for you and/or your profession, the state level component or the national level component?



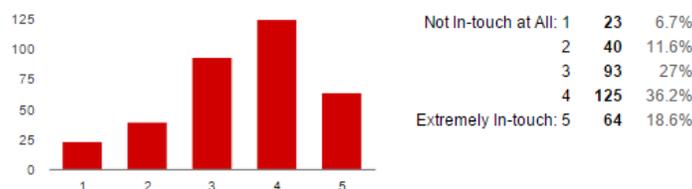
On a scale of one to five, how satisfied are you with the ADHA as a whole?



On a scale of one to five, how effective do you see the ADHA as being?



On a scale of one to five, how in-touch is the ADHA with the issues you currently face?



## ADHA Members: Why is it important for you to be a member of the ADHA?

This question was asked to current ADHA members to get an idea of why they feel it's important to be a part of the ADHA. The answers were given in freeform, allowing hygienists to share their thoughts and not just select from a predetermined set of options.

### Summary of Responses

Although there were a variety of responses, the most common theme that emerged was around supporting the professional organization of hygienists. Many hygienists also equate supporting the ADHA with not just supporting the professional organization, but also supporting the profession of hygiene as a whole. Many hygienists appreciate the ADHA as being their voice on legislative issues, as well as keeping them up-to-date on what is going on with the profession.

### Takeaways

There seemed to be a general theme of “because I should be a part of the ADHA” without a lot of additional specifics. Current ADHA members appear willing to participate in legislative issues if they are given clear and concise instructions on what they should be doing. An opportunity exists to harness the pride of being a dental hygienist to move the profession forward.

## **ADHA Members: What do you feel ADHA membership does for you and/or the hygiene profession as a whole?**

This question was asked to current ADHA members to get an idea of what they see the ADHA doing for them and the benefits they receive. The answers were given in freeform, allowing hygienists to share their thoughts and not just select from a predetermined set of options.

### **Summary of Responses**

There were a variety of responses around the themes of giving hygienists a voice, moving the hygiene profession forward, and providing good networking opportunities. There were also quite a few responses that bluntly stated the ADHA does nothing for them. While not the majority of the responses, there are more than a few hygienists who appear to feel this way.

### **Takeaways**

Hygienists see what the ADHA can do for them, but there's an opportunity for the ADHA to really make known what is being done. Hygienists also like the networking opportunities ADHA provides, so more networking opportunities and better publicity of those opportunities are something to look into.

## ADHA Members: What changes would you like to see with the ADHA?

This question was asked to current ADHA members to get their feedback on areas the ADHA can improve upon. The answers were given in freeform, allowing hygienists to share their thoughts and not just select from a predetermined set of options.

### Summary of Responses

There were a wide variety of responses given to this question and it is highly recommended to read through them in the online survey results. Of the responses given there were a few themes that developed. First, hygienists seem to be hungry for better communication about the initiatives the ADHA is working on. Along those lines, better coordination between the national and state levels could go a long way. Beyond better communication, there were quite a few hygienists who brought up specific campaigns they would like to see the ADHA work on. One of them is portability of licenses so being licensed in one state will allow licensure in other states. There were also multiple responses around having the ADHA be a union for hygienists who would fight for employment rights both within individual dental offices, but also on a larger level where hygienists can be self-regulated and not under the control of dentists.

### Takeaways

There was a lot of “meat” to this question and it is recommended to read the individual answers online. The big takeaway here is improved communication with hygienists about what the ADHA does, what the ADHA is working on, and how it will all benefit the average hygienist. There are some larger ideas for campaigns the ADHA can work on, including looking at expanding the scope of practice for hygienists and providing resources for labor disputes that sometimes arise between hygienists and their employers.

## **ADHA Members: What issue(s) would you like the ADHA address?**

This question was asked to current ADHA members to get an idea of the specific issues they would like the ADHA to focus on. The answers were given in freeform, allowing hygienists to share their thoughts and not just select from a predetermined set of options.

### **Summary of Responses**

There were many responses similar to the answers of previous questions, but again some main themes emerged. Beyond focusing on increasing ADHA membership and increased communication, many of the answers to this question were focused on self-regulation, portability of licenses from state to state, and limiting the number of new schools who are putting out graduates.

### **Takeaways**

There is a vocal group of hygienists who want to expand the scope of what hygienists can work on, and specifically making change so hygienists don't have to be under the supervision of a dentist to practice. This would be an excellent campaign for the ADHA to take on and provide resources for local state components to pursue. If hygienists could open up their own clinics and not need to work under a dentist, the profession would be greatly expanded and ambitious hygienists would have the opportunity to expand their career into business ownership.

## **ADHA Members: What issues/projects do you feel the ADHA is wasting time, money, and energy on?**

The purpose of this question is to get feedback from current ADHA members on current campaigns, initiatives, and other projects they feel are not the best use of time and resources. The answers were given in freeform, allowing hygienists to share their thoughts and not just select from a predetermined set of options.

### **Summary of Responses**

While this question was meant to elicit responses of projects to not focus on, there were quite a few respondents who didn't answer the question, or stated they didn't feel the ADHA was wasting time, money, or energy. This seems to show that hygienists are happy with the projects ADHA is working on when they are informed of what they are. There were some specific mentions to the new logo, Unleash Your Potential, and wanting to know more about what exactly the ADHA is working on. There were also some mentions of wasting money on travel and not allowing for remote meetings through the use of Skype or other similar technologies. Additionally, reducing the cost of membership was brought up to help increase the overall size of membership.

### **Takeaways**

As with previous answers, there is a desire among hygienists to be better informed on what the ADHA is doing. When hygienists are aware of what the ADHA is working on it provides better transparency to know if their money is being spent on things they want. An initiative to have virtual meetings through Skype, or something similar, would most likely increase attendance, as well as show hygienists that the ADHA is embracing modern technology to help save costs.

## **ADHA Members: If you could set the direction of the ADHA, what would your main goals be?**

The purpose of this question is to get feedback from current ADHA members on the direction they would like to see the ADHA take. The answers were given in freeform, allowing hygienists to share their thoughts and not just select from a predetermined set of options.

### **Summary of Responses**

There were a lot of very good responses with specific initiatives hygienists would like to see the ADHA working on. Like previous answers to questions, there were some main themes that developed. Once again, self-regulation and autonomy of hygienists was brought up multiple times. A focus on increasing membership among hygienists was also brought up. Having the ADHA help out with labor issues that hygienists face in the office, as well as help in job placement were also mentioned multiple times. There were also multiple hygienists who expressed an interest in the ADHA helping raise public awareness around what hygienists do and how they help improve oral and overall health.

### **Takeaways**

A legislative campaign to make dental hygiene a self-regulated profession would be very popular among hygienists. Transparency and communication on this campaign would not only help hygienists feel engaged with this campaign, but would inform hygienists as to what the ADHA is working on. Additionally, a membership campaign to increase membership of the ADHA would be seen as a positive among ADHA members. If the ADHA could provide some type of labor resource for issues hygienists face in their day-to-day jobs would also go a long way in showing the value of an ADHA membership.

## Non-Member Survey Results

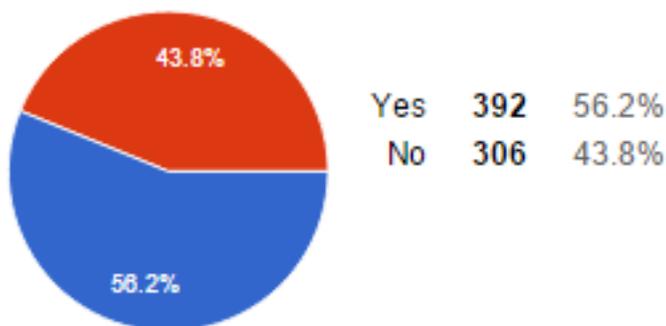
In order to get the perspective of all hygienists, and not just current members of the ADHA, a separate survey track was created based on people who answered the first question of whether they are a current member or not. While some of the questions were the same, or similar, to questions asked of ADHA members, there were some slight differences.

Overall, over 2/3 of the respondents of the survey were from hygienists who are not currently members. Since one of the biggest overall themes among current ADHA members is to improve membership numbers, particular attention should be paid to the results of non-members.

One thing to make note of is that of the respondents who are not currently ADHA members, over half were at one time members. The attrition of membership is something the ADHA should pay particular attention to because it is very difficult to increase membership when current members are not continuing their membership.

The following pages contain summaries and takeaways to the answers of the survey. It is strongly recommended to view all the answers to the survey online at <https://goo.gl/ExoP5D>

### Have you ever been a member of the ADHA (Not including SADHA)?



## **Non-Members: Why aren't you currently a member of the ADHA?**

The purpose of this question is to get feedback from non-members as to why they aren't a member of the ADHA. The answers were given in freeform, allowing hygienists to share their thoughts and not just select from a predetermined set of options.

### **Summary of Responses**

Of all the questions in the survey, this one had the greatest consensus. Almost every single answer as to why hygienists aren't currently a member of ADHA had to do with cost. Whether it was just too outright too expensive for a hygienist to afford, or not seeing any benefits for paying dues, the cost of an ADHA membership is keeping a lot of hygienists away.

### **Takeaways**

There are two main takeaways when it comes to cost. First, implementing a tiered membership program for new hygienists (similar to the ADA) would go a long way. Many hygienists are having a difficult time finding jobs out of school, so they just don't have the money to put towards dues. If the ADHA implemented a recent graduate tier where membership dues were free for the first year, and slowly increased to paying full dues over the first five years, membership rates would increase. Additionally, once a hygienist is a member, communication about the benefits they receive will go a long way towards membership retention.

## **Non-Members: If something was different about the ADHA that would make you consider membership, what would it be?**

The purpose of this question is to get feedback from non-members as to what would make them consider becoming a member. The answers were given in freeform, allowing hygienists to share their thoughts and not just select from a predetermined set of options.

### **Summary of Responses**

The overwhelming majority of responses to this question had to do with the cost of membership. From outright lowering the cost, to offering monthly payment plans, to free continuing education to help offset the cost of dues, hygienists who are not members have a hard time justifying paying dues. Additionally, there were multiple responses around wanting to see the benefits the ADHA provides for them.

### **Takeaways**

Cost of membership is clearly an issue for non-members. Implementing a tiered membership program for new hygienists would certainly help. However, once a member these hygienists will still need to see how the ADHA is benefitting them. Increased communication of ADHA initiatives and successes, to both members and non-members, will go a long way in growing and retaining membership. Additionally, offering some benefits that have a monetary value to hygienists would help with membership. This could be free CE courses, free training, and truly discounted health insurance.

## **Non-Members: What changes would you like to see in the ADHA leadership?**

The purpose of this question is to get the perspective of non-members as to what they would like to see the leadership of the ADHA doing differently. The answers were given in freeform, allowing hygienists to share their thoughts and not just select from a predetermined set of options.

### **Summary of Responses**

This question had a wide variety of responses, but a few themes emerged along the lines of increased communication, having a more active voice to the general public about what hygienists do, and increasing accessibility so the average hygienist feels they can have a voice with leadership. Additionally, there seems to be a desire to have the leadership focus on clinical related problems that hygienists face at work.

### **Takeaways**

Increased transparency and communication will go a long way in helping the average hygienist know what the ADHA leadership does and how it benefits the hygienist. This ties in with many of the other answers to questions in the survey.

## **Non-Members: What issue(s) would you like the ADHA to address?**

The purpose of this question is to get the perspective of non-members as to what issues they would like to see the ADHA address. The answers were given in freeform, allowing hygienists to share their thoughts and not just select from a predetermined set of options.

### **Summary of Responses**

Many of the answers to this question fall along the common themes in previous questions. License portability or reciprocity among states, union like protection (including protecting wages and help with enforcing labor laws), and self-supervision were common themes. Additionally, hygienists brought up the oversaturation of hygienists and would like to see the ADHA address this problem since many graduates are having a difficult time finding jobs.

### **Takeaways**

This question gets to the core of what hygienists would like to see the ADHA work on. If the ADHA can focus on the themes listed above, and better publicize work being done on those themes, non-members will begin to see the benefits of being a member of ADHA. Many of these themes are the same issues that ADHA members would like to see.

## **Non-Members: What issues/projects do you feel the ADHA is wasting time, money, and energy on?**

The purpose of this question is to get feedback from non-members on current campaigns, initiatives, and other projects they feel are not the best use of time and resources. The answers were given in freeform, allowing hygienists to share their thoughts and not just select from a predetermined set of options.

### **Summary of Responses**

Quite a few respondents had a tough time answering this question because they don't know what issues or projects the ADHA is working on. There were multiple comments about the focus on mid-level providers and dental therapists. While a lot of hygienists would like to see expanded duties and less supervision, they want to see their current role as a hygienist expanded, not the creation of a whole new profession.

### **Takeaways**

The biggest takeaway from this question was that non-members are not aware of what the ADHA is working on. Increased communication to non-members would go a long way in showing how the ADHA is relevant to all hygienists and not just members. Along those same lines, increased communication could really help with increasing membership.

## **Non-Members: If you could set the direction of the ADHA, what would your main goals be?**

The purpose of this question is to get feedback from non-members on the direction they would like to see the ADHA take. The answers were given in freeform, allowing hygienists to share their thoughts and not just select from a predetermined set of options.

### **Summary of Responses**

The responses to this question followed the same themes that were given in other questions: Educate the public about what hygienists do, work on self-regulation and not being under the supervision of a dentist, union like activities (projecting wages, enforcing labor laws), stop the oversaturation of new hygienists, and license portability/state reciprocity.

### **Takeaways**

The answers to this question basically sum up what hygienists (both ADHA members and non-members) are feeling. By addressing the themes listed above the ADHA will be seen as being relevant and in-touch with what hygienists are looking for. Along with focusing on the above themes, communicating the work being done will also go a long way with hygienists.