# Labor Market Analysis of Skills Related to Dental Assisting in Massachusetts

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## Overview

This analysis uses labor market data from the Massachusetts Department of Economic Research to provide perspectives on two theaters related to these programs of study: the health care industry and the occupations in related career pathways.

The industry should be understood as the employers in the Commonwealth whose primary line of business is health care. Those companies employ a spectrum of occupations, ranging from doctors and nurses to lawyers and accountants. While trends in the health care industry do not necessarily directly relate to the specific occupations that are the subjects of these programs, the large majority of dental assistants, as well as health and medical assistants, work within the health care companies, making its realities and trends a valuable backdrop against which to evaluate these careers in Massachusetts.

In public data systems, occupations are a set of tasks regularly performed by one individual on an employer’s payroll. In this analysis, occupations related to the target programs of study are profiled in a career pathway framework as we seek to provide strategic value in the development and administration of curriculum and the construction of a compelling and instructive narrative that will introduce students to these exciting health care careers.

## The Health Care Industry

### The Health Care Industry in Labor Market Data Systems

Health Care and Social Assistance (NAICS code 62) comprises all employers whose primary line of business is health services. The industry category is divided into four sub-industries:

* 621 Ambulatory Health Care
* 622 Hospitals
* 623 Nursing and Residential Care Facilities
* 624 Social Assistance

Each of these categories is further parsed into four-, five-, and ultimately six-digit-level categories, and the Massachusetts Department of Economic Research produces employment and wage estimates for each.

#### Health Care Industry Categories

* 621 Ambulatory Health Care Services
  + 62111 Offices of Physicians
  + 62121 Offices of Dentists
  + 62131 Offices of Chiropractors
  + 62133 Offices of Mental Health Practitioners
  + 62134 Offices of Physical, Occupational and Speech Therapists, and Audiologists
  + 62139 Offices of All Other Health Practitioners
  + 62141 Family Planning Centers
  + 62142 Outpatient Mental Health and Substance Abuse Centers
  + 62149 Other Outpatient Care Centers
  + 62151 Medical and Diagnostic Laboratories
  + 62161 Home Health Care Services
  + 62191 Ambulance Services
  + 62199 All Other Ambulatory Health Care Services
* 622 Hospitals
  + 62211 General Medical and Surgical Hospitals
  + 62221 Psychiatric and Substance Abuse Hospitals
    - 622231 Specialty Hospitals (excluding Psychiatric and Substance Abuse Hospitals)
* 623 Nursing and Residential Care Facilities
  + 62311 Nursing Care Facilities
  + 62321 Residential Intellectual and Developmental Disability Facilities
  + 62322 Residential Mental Health and Substance Abuse Facilities
  + 62331 Continuing Care Retirement Communities and Assisted Living Facilities for the Elderly
  + 62399 Other Residential Care Facilities
* 624 Social Assistance
  + 62411 Child and Youth Services
  + 62412 Services for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities
  + 62419 Other Individual and Family Services
  + 62421 Community Food Services
  + 62422 Community Housing Services
  + 62423 Emergency and Other Relief Services
  + 62431 Vocational Rehabilitation Services
  + 62441 Child Day Care Services

### Employment by Industry for Target Occupations

It is not surprising that in Massachusetts, the type of business that most often employs Dental Assistants is the Offices of Dentists (NAICS 62121). More than 90% work in that industry, while another 2% are employed at in Offices of Physicians (NAICS 62121). It is interesting to note that the third most common type of employer for these occupations is the federal government, which employs approximately 1 of every 100 Dental Assistants.

#### Table 1: Percentage Share of Occupation Jobs

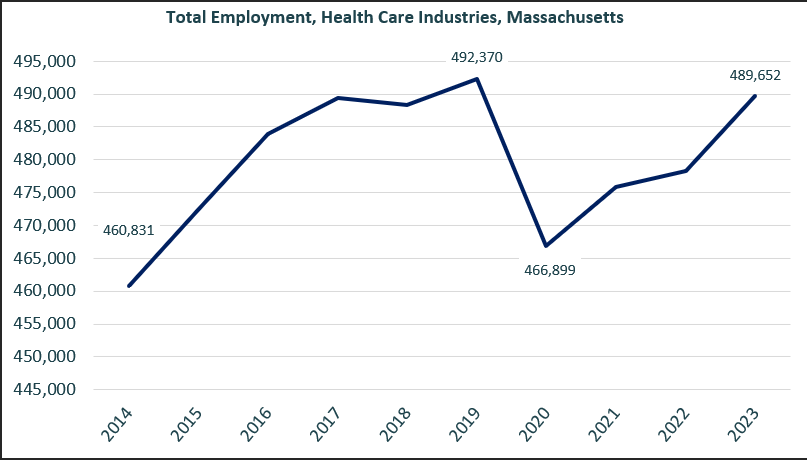
|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Industry** | **Share of Occupation Jobs** |
| Offices of Dentists | 91.2% |
| Offices of Physicians | 1.7% |
| Federal Government | 1.0% |

### Employment Trends

The number of people employed in the Ambulatory Health Services, Hospitals and Residential and Nursing Care Facilities industries in Massachusetts has been steadily increasing over the last decade, except for a significant COVID-19-related decline in 2020. The net change has been an increase of 6.3% in jobs over the last decade; however, employment levels have yet to return to their pre-pandemic highs.

#### Table 2: Average Annual Employment, Health Care Industry, Massachusetts, 2014-2023

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Jobs** |
| 2014 | 460,831 |
| 2015 | 472,309 |
| 2016 | 483,974 |
| 2017 | 489,457 |
| 2018 | 488,287 |
| 2019 | 492,370 |
| 2020 | 466,899 |
| 2021 | 475,882 |
| 2022 | 478,313 |
| 2023 | 489,652 |

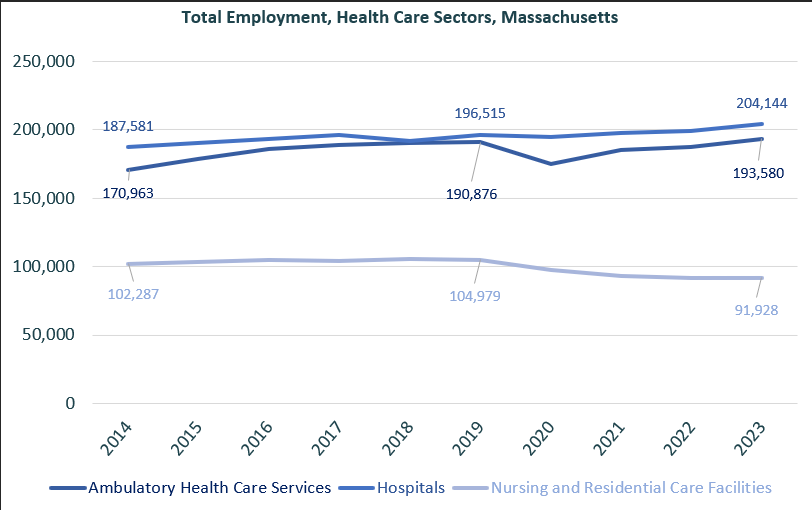


When we break down the growth of the Health Care industries, we see that while a net-positive change has been seen in two of the three Health Care sectors, the Nursing and Residential Care Facilities sector has experienced a net decline after shedding a large share of jobs during the COVID-19 pandemic and not recovering those jobs in the ensuing years.

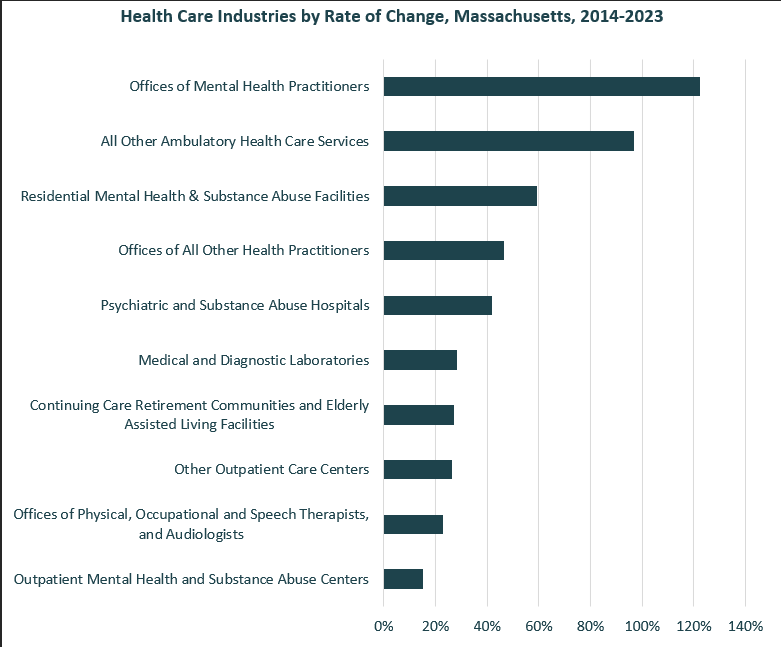
#### Tables 3 and 4: Employment Change, Construction Industries, Massachusetts, 2014-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Industry | 2014 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
| Ambulatory Health Care | 170,963 | 190,698 | 190,876 | 174,701 | 185,003 | 187,634 | 193,580 |
| Hospitals | 187,581 | 191,711 | 196,515 | 194,601 | 197,610 | 198,802 | 204,144 |
| Nursing & Residential Care Facilities | 102,287 | 105,877 | 104,979 | 97,596 | 93,268 | 91,877 | 91,928 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Industry | Change | % Change |
| Ambulatory Health Care | 22,617 | 13.2% |
| Hospitals | 16,564 | 8.8% |
| Nursing & Residential Care Facilities | (10,359) | -10.1% |

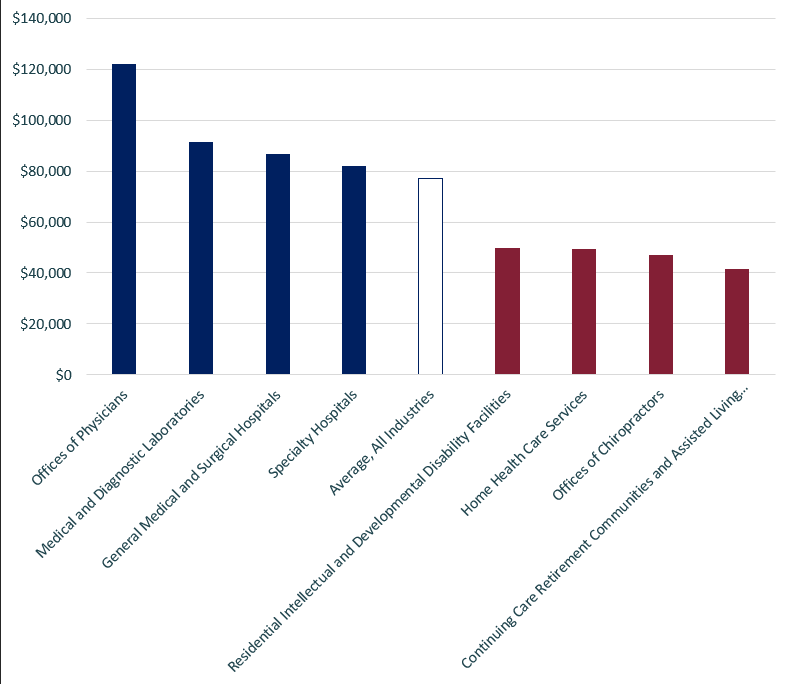


At the most detailed level available, we see that as a percentage of total employment, growth was led over the decade by Offices of Mental Health Practitioners (NAICS 62133) and Other Ambulatory Health Services (NAICS 62199).Residential Mental Health and Substance Abuse Facilities ranked third.



### Wages, Salaries and Proprietor Earnings

Among the detailed industry categories, the highest wages are found in employers from the Offices of Physicians (NAICS 62111) category. The lowest are in Continuing Care Retirement Communities and Elderly Assisted Living Facilities (62331).



## The Pathways

### Target Occupations and Pathways

This section looks at the entry-level information associated with the dental assistant program of study.

#### Table 5: Target Occupations, Massachusetts

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Occupation** | **2023 Jobs** | **Turnover Rate** | **2014 - 2023 Change** | **2014 - 2023 % Change** | **Median Annual Earnings** |
| Dental Assistants | 9,977 | 71% | 2,556 | 34.4% | $48,131 |

### Occupation Profile

The United States Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration created and regularly updates more than 800 occupational profiles with characteristics like skills, educational requirements and daily tasks, based on the inputs of industry experts and people who are employed in the occupations.

#### Dental Assistant

##### Top Skills

* Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
* Talking to others to convey information effectively.
* Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work-related documents.
* Understanding the implications of new information for both current and future problem-solving and decision-making.
* Monitoring/Assessing performance of yourself, other individuals, or organizations to make improvements or take corrective action.
* Being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react as they do.
* Teaching others how to do something.
* Actively looking for ways to help people.
* Communicating effectively in writing as appropriate for the needs of the audience.
* Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions, or approaches to problems.
* Identifying complex problems and reviewing related information to develop and evaluate options and implement solutions.
* Adjusting actions in relation to others' actions.
* Considering the relative costs and benefits of potential actions to choose the most appropriate one.
* Managing one's own time and the time of others.
* Watching gauges, dials, or other indicators to make sure a machine is working properly.

##### Top Daily Activities

|  |
| --- |
| * Assist practitioners to perform medical procedures. |
| * Clean medical equipment. |
| * Prepare medical instruments or equipment for use. |
| * Maintain medical records. |
| * Explain technical medical information to patients. |
| * Inventory medical supplies or equipment. |
| * Operate medical equipment. |
| * Teach medical procedures or medical equipment use to patients. |
| * Interview patients to gather medical information. |
| * Record vital statistics or other health information. |
| * Administer basic health care or medical treatments. |
| * Process medical billing information. |
| * Schedule patient procedures or appointments. |
| * Make patient-assistive devices or device models. |
| * Fit patients for assistive devices. |

##### Additional Information

* [American Dental Assistants Association](https://www.adaausa.org/)
* [American Dental Association](https://www.ada.org/)
* [Dental Assisting National Board](https://www.danb.org/)
* [National Dental Association](http://www.ndaonline.org/)
* [Occupational Outlook Handbook: Dental assistants](https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dental-assistants.htm)

##### Job Postings

P2C uses a third-party system that aggregates data from job postings to provide perspective on the skills and qualifications employers are prioritizing in their advertisements for these occupations.

* After controlling for multiple postings that likely referenced the same single opening, over the last year, we identified 18,987 unique job postings for dental assistants in Massachusetts.
* We identified 1,069 unique employers who posted openings online.

###### Top Employers Advertising:

* Aspen Dental
* 42 North Dental
* Tufts University
* Boston University
* Benevis
* Children & Family Dentistry
* Arrow Dentistry & Braces
* Kool Smiles
* Dental Dreams
* Pacific Dental Services

###### Top Job Titles:

* Dental Assistants
* Orthodontic Assistants
* Orthodontic Dental Assistants
* Oral Surgery Assistants
* Licensed Dental Assistants
* Registered Dental Assistants
* Pediatric Dental Assistants
* Dental Assistants/Receptionist
* Training Assistants
* Lead Dental Assistants
* Dental Office Assistants
* Administrative Assistants

###### Top Qualifications:

* Certified Dental Assistant
* Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification
* Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification
* Registered Dental Assistant
* Expanded Functions Dental Assistant
* Certified Infection Control (CIC)
* OSHA Certification
* Valid Driver's License

###### Top Skills:

* Communications
* Customer Service
* Detail Oriented
* Multitasking
* Professionalism
* Computer Literacy