

Dentistry Ranked Number Four Profession By US News and World Report

In its annual ranking of the “100 Best Jobs,” US News and World Report has named dentistry the fourth-best profession in America for 2019.

Analysts for the publication cited a number of factors leading to the ranking, including pay, low unemployment and high job growth in the dentistry sector, as well as flexibility, work-life balance, and prospects for improvement. A career in dentistry offers a unique combination of providing healthcare, entrepreneurship, and promoting public health for those who want it. According to endodontist Adam Harwood, the profession has the right set of attributes to appeal to Millennials and the rising Generation Z. “The pay is good, and the job offers that degree of scheduling flexibility that young professionals look for these days,” he offered.

According to the report, the dentists earning the highest compensation are those working at residential facilities dealing with intellectual and developmental disabilities, mental health, and substance abuse. Residential care dentists earn over \$185,000 annually, on average, while their counterparts in dental offices earn around \$176,000. State government dentists bring in about \$160,000.

The states where dentists have the highest earning potential, up to an average of \$257,000 annually, are Delaware, North Dakota, Alaska, North Carolina, and New Hampshire. The best-paid 25 percent of dentists earn \$208,000 on average, while the bottom 25 percent earn around \$108,000.

The educational barrier for entry is still quite high, with dentistry requiring a four-year degree, followed by four years of dental school, typically. Many students leave school with \$200,000 or more of student loan debt. While this dynamic would have been prohibitive to many young dentists buying a practice from a retiring professional or buying a stake in a group practice, other avenues have opened.

Now, dentists can leave school and earn a competitive salary without the expense and rigors of business ownership by taking positions at large group practices, multi-location chains, dental support organizations. Industry consolidation and outside investment from private equity, for example, give dentists the chance to earn a good living with a flexible schedule while paying off student loans before buying into a practice.

Future prospects couldn't be better for those interested in careers in dentistry. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects 19.4 percent employment growth for dentists between 2016 and 2026, opening up nearly 26,000 new jobs in the industry during that time frame. Now that young dentists have employment options--to own or become an employee--they have even greater career flexibility in a profession noted for its relatively low stress and high quality of life.

While dentists ranked number four overall in the 100 Best Jobs ranking, the profession also

ranked number two in best healthcare jobs, second-best among STEM jobs, and number ten in best-paying professions overall.

For more information on the US News and World Report annual ranking of the 100 Best Jobs, visit <https://money.usnews.com/careers/best-jobs/rankings>.