

DELTA DENTAL OF MINNESOTA

SPECIAL EDITION



AND THE WINNER IS...

On January 3, Nancy McMorran, senior vice president of Professional Services, drew Dr. Christina Robin's name from the over 1,500 dentists who entered Delta Dental of Minnesota's contest to submit their National Provider Identifier (NPI) before December 18, 2006.

Dr. Robin is from Park Rapids, Minnesota and will receive six, monthly fruit baskets from Harry and David and six "Sweets of the Month" baskets from Mrs. Fields during the course of the year.

If you have received your NPI but have not provided it to Delta Dental of Minnesota, please do so at your earliest convenience. Remember, you will be required to submit both paper and electronic claims using your NPI starting May 23, 2007.



INSIDE

Medical
Emergencies: Is Your
Office Prepared?

Almost \$700,000
Invested in
Community
Programs in 2006

ACT NOW!

If you submit claims electronically, NOW is the time to apply for your NPI. See the insert page for instructions and a fax-back form to notify us of your NPI. **The deadline is May 23, 2007.**

NPI NATIONAL PORTAL

To all participating dentists—be aware that for national business, Delta Dental Plans may ask for your National Provider Identifier (NPI) number when you request patient claims or eligibility information.

OFFICE VISITS

The Network Recruitment and Retention staff's goal is to visit every Delta Dental participating as well as non-participating dental office in Minnesota as well as North Dakota. This is a goal we hope to attain over the next few years. To date, staff have visited over 1,000 dental offices in Minnesota and North Dakota.

The office visits help answer questions and address any issues the dentist or their staff may have.

We want to assure you that if your office has not received a visit to date, we do plan to visit with you in the near future. In the meantime, we are

available to assist you should you have questions or concerns regarding:

- Participation Agreements you have with Delta Dental of Minnesota
- Claim issues you have not been able to resolve with Customer Service
- Adding or changing a location
- Adding or losing a dentist
- Reimbursement
- New office staff with questions about Delta Dental of Minnesota

Should you need a representative to visit your office in the near term, please don't hesitate to contact the Network Recruitment and Retention staff at 1-800-328-1188 ext. 4170.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS UPDATE

Delta Dental is pleased to recognize the important role played by Minnesota dentists in serving the needs of public program patients. While a number of generalizations are made about public programs, Delta Dental would like to share some details related to public programs under its administration.

As you may know, Delta Dental acts as the administrator of dental benefits for 60 percent of Minnesota's managed care public program enrollees, covering almost 250,000 individuals. In 2006, 52 percent—or one out of every two people—in this group received services through the Delta Community Dental Care (Delta CDC) network, administered by Delta Dental.

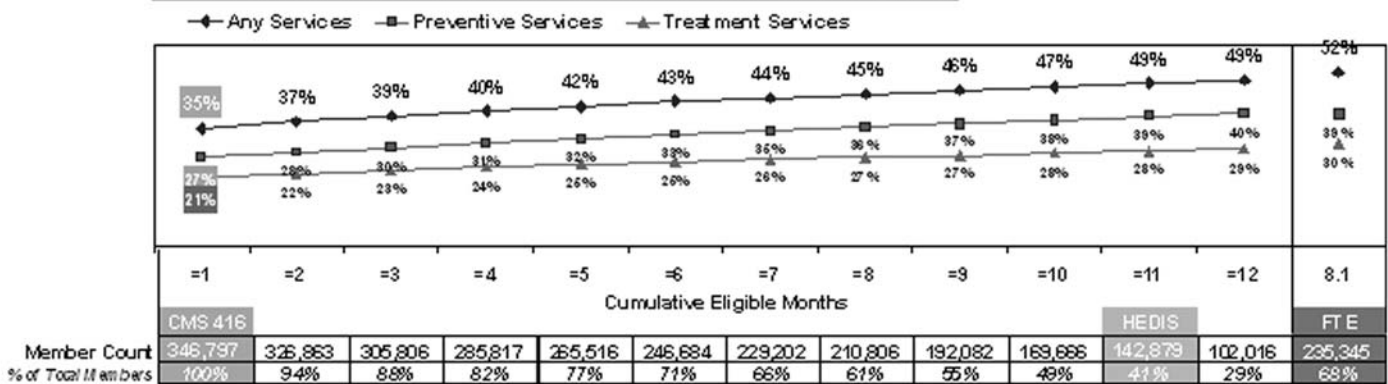
The high percent of service utilization was helped by the broad access to care provided by the 1,505 Delta CDC participating dentists and dentists who are not in the network. The network, which continues to expand, is the second largest dentist network (commercial or non-commercial) in Minnesota, comprising almost half of all licensed and practicing dentists in the state.

In addition to dentists within the Delta CDC network, others dentists volunteer to see public program patients, which further helps address access to care issues in these programs.

Access to care was also helped by Delta Dental's dedicated public program service team that helps enrollees find openings with local area Delta CDC dentists. On average, the staff receives more than 300 such requests a month for appointments. In 2006, Delta Dental staff successfully fulfilled 100 percent of these requests—all within the contractual guidelines of the programs.

If you or other dentists in your practice are interested in learning more about serving public program patients or joining the Delta CDC network, we encourage you to call a network representative at 1-800-328-1188 ext. 4170.

Figure 1. % of Members with Services by Length of Cumulative Eligible Months



CMS 416 - Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Form 416: The rates are calculated using all members eligible in a period of the year regardless of length. It can be compared to other national rates since all states are required to submit service (including dental service) utilization data, annually to CMS.

HEDIS - Health plan Employer Data and Information Set, developed by the National Committee on Quality Assurance (NCQA) for evaluating quality in health plans: The rates are calculated using only those who have been eligible for 11-12 months in the year. It provides a comparison of utilization for members with a similar eligible time period or "opportunity" to schedule and receive services.

FTE - Full Time Equivalent: The rates are calculated using all members eligible in a period of the year, but adjusts for partial year eligibility by summing the total number of months for all members and dividing by 12 months for the denominator.

Explanation of Figure 1:

For members who were eligible for varying length of cumulative eligible months (at least 1 month - CMS 416, at least 2 months, ... at least 11 months - HEDIS, and at least 12 months), Figure 1 shows the percentage of members receiving (a) any dental services (D110 - D9999); (b) any preventive services (D110 - D1999); and (c) any treatment Services (D2110 - D9999). Generally, the percentage of members receiving dental services increases with the length of cumulative eligible months.

The table below Figure 1 presents the member count for varying length of cumulative eligible months and the percentage of the total members with that length of cumulative eligible months (for example, member count for at least 1 month eligibility is always 100% of the total member for the year).

REVITALIZED WEB SITE DESIGN

You may have noticed the new look of our Web site at www.deltadentalmn.org. Delta Dental Plans Association has revitalized the brand to develop a stronger, more consistent national brand identity.

As always, you may sign in to use our Claims Inquiry and Coverage Summary Web tools. These secure online tools make it easy for you to review patient claims, benefits and eligibility information. You may also check national patient benefits, eligibility and claims information on the national Web site at www.deltadental.com.

DELTA DENTAL OF MINNESOTA COVERS IMPLANTS

Delta Dental of Minnesota's pooled dental plans now include coverage for implants, beginning Jan. 1, 2007. Implant coverage is being added to all employer-paid pooled plans that offer major coverage—it will not be included in DeltaCare, voluntary or preventive and basic-only plans.

"We're adding this benefit to our new business plans and also to our in force pooled groups," said Chris Earl, chief sales officer. "For individually rated plans, we will continue to design benefits and pricing based on the customer's specific requests."

To ensure the implant is covered based on the individual's oral health condition and our policy provisions, we strongly recommend that dentists submit a pre-estimate request before performing an implant.



DELTA DENTAL PARTNERS WITH TWO NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED NON-PROFITS

Delta Dental of Minnesota is pleased to have collaborated with Hazelden and Fraser, two nationally acclaimed non-profits, to fund two unique projects in oral health education.

Meth Mouth: A Guide to Oral Health Professionals

Hazelden, one of the nation's most highly respected drug rehabilitation centers and publisher of related educational materials, will be publishing *Meth and Oral Health: A Guide for Dental Professionals*.

Funded by Delta Dental, the booklet offers the facts about meth and its users and describes what dental professionals can do to help. It will feature the most current dental research and be the first comprehensive guide published in the country on the topic.

This guide will be published in late Spring, and all providers who participate with Delta Dental of Minnesota will receive a free copy of this booklet.

My Healthy Smile

My Healthy Smile, a tool to help reduce dental anxiety among children with special needs, was created in collaboration with Fraser, an award-winning Minnesota non-profit that serves children with special and typical needs.

Children with special needs often have unique challenges (i.e., touch, smell, light and sounds can be uncomfortable to intolerable) that make dental visits and good oral health habits challenging. My Healthy Smile is an interactive CD Rom (PC and MAC compatible) that uses computerized social stories to show children with special needs what to expect at dental visits and ways to help ease their anxiety.

If you wish to purchase a copy of My Healthy Smile or know of a parent or caregiver that may find this tool useful, please visit www.fraser.org or call (612) 798-8349.

VISIT US AT STAR OF THE NORTH

Attending the 2007 Star of the North Meeting? Stop by and say Hello! Delta Dental of Minnesota will again have representatives available throughout the three-day event, Saturday, April 28 thru Monday, April 30. Our booth is located in the Exhibit Hall, number 534. Take this opportunity to ask questions, pick up some updated and informative materials, and put a face with the people you have worked with over the years. We look forward to seeing you!



MEDICAL EMERGENCIES: IS YOUR OFFICE PREPARED?

Although rare, life-threatening medical emergencies can occur in any healthcare setting, including dental offices. Medical emergencies can cause confusion and distress for both the patient and the dental staff.

As recommended by the American Dental Association (ADA), dental office staff must be prepared to recognize and properly manage medical emergencies in the dental office. Each member of the dental staff must be aware of the protocol and their individual responsibilities during an emergency.

Steps To Avoid Emergencies

It is estimated with proper prevention techniques, such as being familiar with a patient's medical history and implementing effective stress-reduction procedures, many life-threatening medical emergencies can be avoided. Medical emergency preparation begins by taking the patient's detailed medical history at the time of the initial appointment and regularly thereafter. The dentist as well as the patient should sign and date the initial medical history form as well as any notations made during future (follow up) appointments.

Medical alerts such as allergies, hypertension, diabetes, etc. should be indicated in the chart to alert dental staff each time chart notes are reviewed, while maintaining the patient's privacy. It may be necessary to consult the patient's physician for additional information concerning major health risks, such as cardiac conditions or history of stroke.

Basic Emergency Kit

Each office should have a medical emergency kit that should be appropriate for the patient population and the nature of your practice. The ADA emphasizes the importance that the dentist be knowledgeable about the indications, contraindications, dosages and methods of delivery for all items included in the emergency kit.

The ADA indicates that emergency kit drugs should include only what the dentist and staff are familiar with and able to employ. The ADA suggests that the following drugs be included as a minimum in an emergency kit:

- Epinephrine 1:1000 (injectable)
- Histamine blocker (injectable)
- Nitroglycerin (sublingual tablet or aerosol spray)
- Bronchodilator (asthma inhaler)

- Sugar
- Aspirin (chewable)
- Oxygen with positive pressure administration capability

Other drugs may be included in the emergency kits if the doctor's training and needs mandate them.

The ADA recommends that dentists should perform continual medical emergency kit maintenance by replacing soon-to-be outdated drugs before the expiration date.

Equipment must be stored in a readily accessible location. It is important for a member of the dental staff to be assigned to check and maintain the equipment on a routine basis. In addition, it is important for the dental team to maintain current knowledge of the medications in the emergency kit located in each office, as well as how to handle emergencies by conducting regular refresher courses to maintain a high state of readiness.

When an Emergency Occurs

Medical situations are not always preventable and the dental clinic staff needs to be prepared to act quickly during an emergency. Emergency numbers should be posted on all telephones. It is also important to determine who will be called to assist in an emergency situation (usually EMS – 911) and how long it will take for help to arrive.

Dentist and staff should all have current provider certificates in Basic Life Support. It is also recommended that they take didactic and hands-on training in the prevention, recognition and management of common medical emergencies.

For offices where emergency medical system personnel with defibrillator skills and equipment are not available within a reasonable time, the ADA recommends that the dentist may want to consider an automated external defibrillator (AED) consistent with AED training acquired in the Basic Life Support section of health care provider courses. The ADA also recommends that for certain individuals, additional training in advanced cardiac life support, pediatric advanced life support or both may be warranted.

References:
Office emergencies and emergency kits: ADA council on scientific affairs. JADA, Vol. 133, March 2002 Malamed, SF. Medical emergencies in the dental office. 5th ed. St. Louis: Mosby; 2000.

ALMOST \$700,000 INVESTED IN COMMUNITY PROGRAMS IN 2006

Delta Dental of Minnesota contributed nearly \$700,000 in grants and donations in 2006 to support a range of programs addressing oral health and community needs.

The programs touched the lives of hundreds of thousands of individuals—especially children in need—across Minnesota.

The 2006 beneficiaries included the Boys & Girls Club of Rochester & St Cloud, Children's Defense Fund, Children's Dental Services, Greater Twin Cities United Way, Normandale Community College, Open Door Health Center, Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota, Mesabi YMCA, Serve A Smile: a partnership with the Minnesota Alliance with Youth and the Family, Career & Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), Special Olympics Special Smiles (Minnesota), Toddler Tuesdays at the Mall of America and more.

SMILES ACROSS MINNESOTA COALITION

Delta Dental of Minnesota and Children's Dental Services recently helped to launch the Smiles Across Minnesota coalition, in conjunction with Oral Health America's Smiles Across America program. The coalition, made up of key community leaders in oral health, will work toward the following primary objectives:

- Expanding care and preventing decay, though the promotion of good prevention activities such as sealant application, and
- Increasing public awareness, providing information and advice to individuals, community and government leaders, health professionals, parents, teachers, and the media.

ADVISORY COUNCIL ADDRESSES THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORAL AND MEDICAL HEALTH

Delta Dental recently launched the nation's first National Advisory Council on Oral and Medical Health to help identify and promote research findings into practice, identify scientific gaps for future research and policy, and increase public awareness of the importance of oral health and its connection to overall health.

The 11-member Council includes representatives from the dental, medical, public policy, and employer communities. Members include: Chair Robert Genco, DDS, PhD, State University of New York at Buffalo; Wade M. Aubry, MD, HealthTech; Kim A. Boggess, MD, University of North Carolina School of Medicine; Larry Boress, Midwest Business Group on Health; Jon B. Christianson, PhD, University of Minnesota School of Public Health; Richard E. Dixon, MD, FACP, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Chester Douglass, DMD, PhD, Harvard School of Dental Medicine; Katherine Erwin, DDS, MPA, Morehouse School of Medicine; Irene Fraser, PhD, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality; David B. Pryor, MD, Ascension Health; and Sheila Riggs, DDS, DMSc, Delta Dental of Minnesota.

QUESTION ON PROCESSING POLICIES?

The following question comes from a provider in our network regarding dental coverage for bitewing and panoramic radiographs.

Q. Do I practice based on the standards set forth by Delta Dental Plans Association or by the ADA and FDA?

A. The processing policy established by Delta Dental Plans Association (DDPA) regarding bitewings and panoramic x-rays is not intended to set any standards for the utilization of radiographs. Rather, DDPA recognizes and agrees that there may be clinical reasons for multiple types of radiographs at any one patient visit. However, for benefit purposes, a panoramic film with or without other films is considered to be the equivalent to a full mouth series.



Special Edition is published for participating dentists. Article ideas and questions from readers are welcome. **Publisher:** Delta Dental of Minnesota. **Send questions or comments to:** Heather Hofmeister, Editor, Public Affairs, Delta Dental of Minnesota, 3560 Delta Dental Drive, Eagan, MN 55122, E-mail: hhofmeister@deltadentalmn.org.

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