

SPECIAL EDITION



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ACT SOON!

Apply for your NPI so you're ready to use it on claims starting in May 2007. See the insert page for instructions and a fax-back form to notify us of your NPI.

2006 EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOP

Delta Dental of Minnesota (DDMN) hosted the annual DDMN Educational Workshop on Friday, October 6, 2006 at the Eagan Community Center.

The event was very well attended and included educational segments by Delta Dental executives including "The National Provider Identifier (NPI)" presented by business analyst, **Peter Rausch**; "Employee Benefits and the Dental Marketplace" presented by executive vice president of sales and marketing, **Mark Moksnes**; "The Correlation Between Oral and Physical Health" presented by **Dr. Sheila Riggs**, Delta Dental of Minnesota president and CEO; the keynote presentation was from guest speaker **Teresa Daly**.

Ms. Daly helps clients build high-performance organizations. Her presentation "High Performance Work Environment" concluded the day's events.

This year's theme was "Are You on the Cutting Edge?" This event is designed to update and inform dental office administrators and dentists regarding information needed to operate dental practices in an efficient manner.

We appreciate the opportunity to meet the many dental representatives, as well as provide information that we hope will assist dental practices.



Peter Rausch



Teresa Daly

"Are You On The Cutting Edge?"

Mark Moksnes



Dr. Sheila Riggs



MEET THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STAFF

Have you ever wondered who the person is who answers your phone calls or signs some of the letters you receive from Delta Dental of Minnesota? We would like you to meet the Network Staff who link your dental office with Delta Dental on issues ranging from network participation to education.

In many ways, the network staff helps unite the business and clinic sides of benefit delivery. They are a valuable resource to dentists and dental office staff. They can help with any issue related to network membership, contract terms, reimbursement, and contract compliance. In addition, they recruit, contract and administer the contracts for each network.

The network staff participates in many educational activities that help the dentist and their staff serve Delta Dental members. These activities include:

- Organizing and working at the MDA's Star of the North meeting,
- Assisting with educational seminars sponsored by Delta Dental.
- On site education with dental office administrative staff.
- Ensuring the Dental Office Administrative Manual is current.
- Notifying participating dentists when a revision is made to their contract.

Laura Burandt – Manager of Network Recruitment and Retention

Laura has been with Delta Dental for more than 30 years. Because of her experience she has been able to bring many perspectives to her job as the manager of Network Recruitment and Retention. Every year, Laura sets goals and standards for the Network Recruitment and Retention staff. Laura, along with her staff, is responsible for developing and maintaining all networks administered by Delta Dental of Minnesota/North Dakota. Laura works closely with many departments within Delta Dental, allowing her the opportunity to be the liaison between participating dentists and Delta Dental.

Julia Osthimer – Network Representative

Julia is the network representative serving southern Minnesota and all of North Dakota. She has been fulfilling this role since February 2005, and has been with Delta Dental for 10 years. Serving previous positions in Customer Service and Operations, her knowledge is abundant and expanding. In the last year and a half she has been to every major city in North Dakota. She has represented Delta Dental at the Star of the North (MDA) and the North Dakota Dental Association (NDDA) dental meetings for the last two years.

Bernie Johnson – Network Representative

Since joining Delta Dental in 2002, Bernie has been serving central Minnesota. Bernie has spent her entire career working in the health care industry, including nursing. Bernie's previous experience in working directly with doctors and office staff has provided her with the expertise needed to ensure that they understand the details of the dental plan, responsibilities, and their various networks. As of December 1, Bernie has visited over 114 dental offices in Minnesota.

Amanda Schollmeier – Associate Specialty Network Representative

Amanda has been a valuable member of the Professional Services Team for more than three years - most recently in the Credentialing area. We are excited to announce that on November 27, she became part of the Network Recruitment and Retention staff as the Associate Specialty Network Representative. Amanda brings with her a strong background in the Delta Dental Administered Networks.

We would like to announce that Melissa Pohl recently accepted a promotion in Operations as their Customer Service Business Analyst. This is a wonderful opportunity for Melissa and although she will be missed we wish her much success in her new position.

*Your Recruitment and Retention Staff.
Pictured L-R: Amanda Schollmeier,
Bernie Johnson, Julia Osthimer and
Laura Burandt.*



DDMN RECEIVES 2006 OUTSTANDING VENDOR AWARD FROM TARGET CORPORATION

Delta Dental of Minnesota was recently awarded Target Corporation's 2006 Outstanding Vendor Award, which recognizes outstanding performance and service levels to Target Corporation's team members. Delta Dental of Minnesota administers dental benefits for about 110,000 Target team members nationwide.

The Target vendor awards are meant to recognize vendors who demonstrate the values embraced by Target. During a recent survey of Target team members, 95 percent had a positive rating of Delta Dental of Minnesota's overall quality of service.

Earlier this year, Delta Dental of Minnesota was awarded Health Care Partner of the Year from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's (ELCA) Board of Pensions, a similar award recognizing Delta Dental's superior service and commitment to excellence. Delta Dental was the first repeat winner of this award.

NEW ID CARD SECURITY

With identity theft making the news nearly every day, we continue to be vigilant in protecting health and financial data of our members. One way in which patient data can be further protected is moving away from using Social Security Numbers in the claims transactions. We are currently re-assigning all member ID numbers to a system-generated identification number. All will start with the letter D, followed by an eight-digit number. You will soon start seeing our Delta Dental members with this number on their ID card.

Minnesota and many other states require this change, but it's also smart business. Compliance is expensive – nearly \$1 million– but it's a necessary investment in the enhanced security of our customers' information.

TEN-YEAR INSURANCE CLAIMS DATA STUDY REVEALS INCREASE IN UTILIZATION OF SURGICAL EXTRACTION CODES

A study, conducted by Peilei Jiang (PhD, MS, MS), director of Oral Health Analytics, and Karen Haarala (RDH), manager of Compliance Audit and Investigation at Delta Dental of Minnesota, tracked claims data from more than 1.3 million Minnesota commercially insured patients age 11 and above for permanent tooth extractions over a ten-year period from 1996 through 2005. This dental claim review has revealed a significant change in the overall utilization of surgical extraction codes (CDT codes used to identify surgical extractions are: D7210 –D7250 and simple extractions are: D7110 – D7140.)

The study found significant increases over the years in the use of surgical extraction codes for all extracted teeth. Overall, during the ten-year period, there was an increase from 44.3% to 54.1% in the extracted teeth that were removed using surgical extraction codes, with oral surgeons increasing from 64.7% to 72.8% and non-oral surgeons increasing from 18.6% to 23.0%. Specifically, when focusing on the tooth extractions on first and second molars, the utilization of the surgical extraction codes over the ten years increased from 26.2% to 39.3% (oral surgeons from 43.3% to 59.7% and non-oral surgeons from 17.0% to 25.3%). The study also found more of the tooth extractions were performed by oral surgeons (from 55.8% in 1996 to 62.5% in 2005.)

The changes in using surgical extraction codes resulted in significant increases in tooth extraction expenditures (expenditures were measured in terms of procedures' average

covered dollars in 2005, a constant number used for each extraction code through ten years, to adjust for inflation and fee differences among dentists). The extraction expenditure per tooth increased from \$177 in 1996 to \$188 in 2005, a 6.7 percent increase.

The study found no changes over the ten years for the percentage of patients having one or more teeth extracted each year (6.4%), the percentage of patients having one or more non-third molar tooth extracted each year (3.6%), and the average number of extracted teeth per patient who experienced an extraction (2.4). Patients, age 16 through 25 experienced the most tooth extractions (11.7% of the patients age 16 through 25 had one or more extractions and 3.3 extractions per patient, for patients who experienced an extraction). However, when disregarding the third molar extractions, this group received the least tooth extractions (only 1.3% of the patients and 1.7 extractions per patient, for patients who experienced an extraction.)

The study also found that increased extractions for patients age 11 through 15 were for third molars (of the total tooth extractions for this age group, from 15.6% in 1996 they increased to 22.1% in 2005), and decreased extractions were for premolars (from 75.9% in 1996 decreased to 71.8% in 2005). For patients age 16 through 25, third molars were the most commonly extracted teeth (about 94% of the total extractions were for the third molars). As the patient age increases, more of the tooth extractions occurred for first and second molars, and fewer for third molars.

PROCESSING OF NON-COVERED SERVICES

In early 2004, Delta Dental's Participating Dental Provider Policies and Procedures were amended to include the following statement under Section 1, U.:

"If a Pre-Estimate of Costs is submitted, proposed treatment costs estimated, and a claim subsequently submitted, the service is subject to audit for consistency with coverage under the Subscriber's Plan. Services not covered by the Subscriber's Plan are subject to monetary recovery. An example of such services is dental services performed for cosmetic purposes."

Similar language has also been added to Delta Dental's Estimate of Benefits forms issued to both the dental office and subscriber.

Services not covered by our group contracts should not be submitted to Delta Dental. The typical contract that Delta Dental administers on behalf of our employer groups provides a schedule of covered dental benefits. This schedule does not include every dental service that may be required by a patient, nor does it dictate the actual treatment a patient needs. Treatment plan options are strictly between the treating dentist and the patient.*

Some examples of restorative dental services generally covered include, but are not limited to, the following: *

- Amalgam, anterior resin or posterior resin restorations where lost tooth structure is a result of decay or fracture;
- Crowns and indirectly fabricated restorations when the amount of lost tooth structure does not enable the placement of an amalgam or composite restoration;

- Restorations for treatment of cracked tooth syndrome are a covered service with adequate clinical explanation.

Some examples of dental services generally NOT covered include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Dental procedures performed for purely cosmetic purposes;
- Dental procedures, appliances or restorations that are necessary to alter, restore or maintain occlusion, including, but not limited to: increasing vertical dimension, replacing or stabilizing tooth structure lost by attrition (wear), realignment of teeth, periodontal splinting and gnathologic recordings.

Should a patient require a denied Estimate of Benefits for either submission to a secondary carrier or for a personal flex dollar program, please send your pre-estimate forms directly to our Professional Review Department with a notation that a denial is required.

If your patients have questions regarding their coverage, please refer them to our Customer Service Department at (651) 406-5916 (local) or (800) 553-9536 (toll free). Members can also check benefits information online. At www.deltadentalmn.org members should click Subscriber Connection, then Subscriber Login. Should you or your staff have questions regarding your contractual obligations as a participating dentist, please contact our Professional Services Department at (651) 406-5900 ext. 4170 (local) or (800) 328-1188 ext. 4170 (toll free.)

*All coverages under all Delta Dental contracts are also subject to the contract exclusions, limitations, deductibles and co-payments.

DELTA DENTAL OF MINNESOTA FUNDS INTERACTIVE CD FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Fraser, a leading Minnesota nonprofit organization that serves children of all abilities and adults with special needs through comprehensive education, health care and housing services, has developed an interactive CD to teach children about good oral health and to ease anxiety of dental visits.

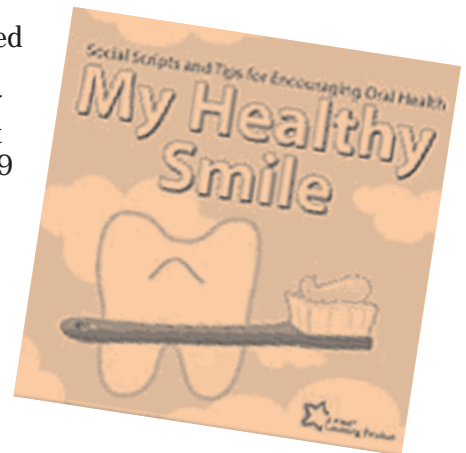
Funded by Delta Dental of Minnesota, *My Healthy Smile* uses computerized social stories to show children what to expect at dental visits. Some of the topics include having teeth cleaned, taking x-rays and getting fillings. The CD also includes stories about important oral health topics such as losing a tooth, brushing, getting braces and healthy eating. In addition to the social stories, the CD has printable tip sheets and storyboards for parents and dental professionals. Dental professionals may find this helpful for use with their special needs patients.

“Fraser is recognized nationally as a leader in addressing the issues of special needs children and we’ve been extraordinarily pleased to partner with them on this important project,” said **Ann Johnson**, director of Community Affairs, Delta Dental of Minnesota. “The step-by-step pictures and stories found in *My Healthy Smile* are a wonderful way to ease anxiety and instruct children on what to expect in a dental setting.”

My Healthy Smile is designed for children developmentally between the ages of 3 and 10. It is especially useful for children with autism or developmental disabilities, and it can be used by adults with developmental disabilities as well.

Information on My Healthy Smile:

- Contains beginner, intermediate and advanced levels
- Compatible for PC and Mac computers
- Special introductory price of \$34.95 (regular price is \$44.95 each)
- Online demo available at www.Fraser.org
- Orders accepted now; online at www.Fraser.org or by phone at (612) 798-8349



UNIFORM PAPER CLAIM FORM WITH NPI

Minnesota law requires that providers use the most current ADA dental claim form (Minn. Statutes §62J.51). It's also the only form with dedicated fields for submitting your National Provider Identifier (NPI). To be in compliance, we recommend that you convert to the new form. To order forms, call the ADA at **(800) 947-4746** or go to www.adacatalog.org.

