



# ISSUE BRIEF

## Keep Dental Benefits Affordable

Current tax treatment of employer-provided health and dental benefits strongly incentivizes employers to offer, and employees to maintain, efficient and affordable coverage.

**Federal policy should preserve the tax exclusion for employer-sponsored dental benefits.**

**Dental benefits are the most requested health benefit after medical and pharmacy coverage.**

More than 90% of large employers (101 or more employees), 80% of medium sized employers (51-100 employees) and half of small employers (50 and fewer employees) offer dental benefits.

**Dental benefits deliver access to the specific care needed by children and adults to lower their overall dental treatment costs as well as lower costs for emergency room treatment and the treatment for high cost and chronic medical conditions.**

There are only two dental diseases, i.e. cavities and gum disease. Both are preventable with early and regular check-ups and preventive care. Dental plans ordinarily cover sealants for permanent teeth, and often for primary teeth as well, as a preventive service at 100%. Sealants are proven to reduce cavities by 93 percent.

Studies have shown that reductions in emergency room visits for dental conditions when adult dental services are included in Medicaid. In the privately insured population, simple, noninvasive periodontal therapy has been shown to improve health outcomes for pregnancy and other systemic conditions by 40% to 70%.

**Consumers with dental benefits are more likely to go to the dentist and take their children to the dentist as well.**

Consumers with dental benefits coverage are twice as likely to visit the dentist as well as take their children to the dentist. Without dental benefits, which fund half the cost of dental treatment nationwide, dental visits would drop precipitously.

**Over 90% of employees with dental benefits pay some or all of the premium for their dental benefits.**

About 22% of employees with coverage, pay for all the premium out of their own pocket, and for them, the ability to pay the premium with pre-tax dollars is incredibly important.

**Dental benefits deliver value at low and stable premiums.**

Nationwide dental premiums are roughly 1/12th of medical premiums. So, an annual dental benefits policy costs what a medical policy does for a month.

## FAST FACTS



92% of Americans with private dental coverage have it through their employers.



Just over 70% of employers share the cost of dental premiums with their employees, 7% fully fund their employees' dental premium and 22% don't contribute to the purchase of dental benefits.



Nationwide, dental premiums are roughly 1/12th of medical premiums.



Dental premiums have remained stable over the last 5 years with changes ranging from -0.9% to 1.5%.



Consumers are extremely price sensitive to the cost of dental benefit premiums.



An NADP survey found that if consumers were taxed on the dental benefit premiums they pay for themselves and their families, 54% or 85 million Americans, indicated they would likely drop their existing dental benefits.



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