



## DENTAL BENEFITS IMPROVE ACCESS TO DENTAL CARE



- **Congress should support the role of dental benefits in expanding access to dental care.**

### LACK OF DENTAL BENEFITS IS A PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE

- 130 million Americans lack dental coverage.
- For every American without medical insurance, there are 2.7 people without dental insurance.<sup>i</sup>
- In 2007, NADP's consumer survey found that people without dental coverage are
  - 2.5 times less likely to visit a dentist than those with insurance.<sup>ii</sup>
  - More likely to have extensive dental treatment such as tooth extractions and dentures than people with dental insurance; and
  - Less likely to have basic dental care such as restorative care (fillings, crowns & bridges) and periodontal treatment.<sup>iii</sup>

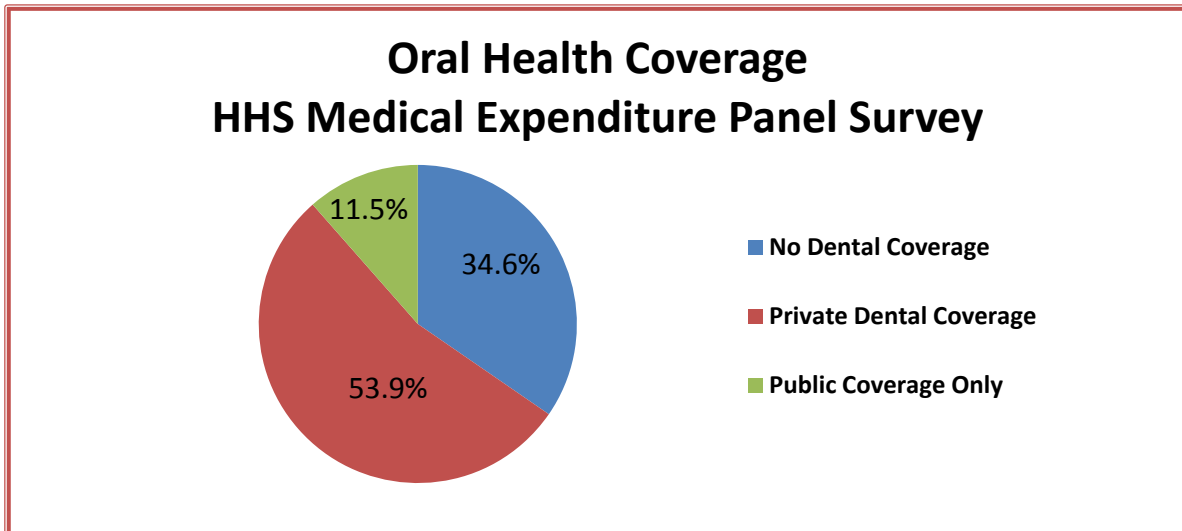
### DENTAL BENEFITS INCREASE DENTAL PREVENTION AND TREATMENT

- NADP's 2007 consumer survey found that Americans with dental coverage are:
  - 49% more likely to have visited the dentist for a check-up or cleaning in the last 6 months;
  - 42% more likely to take their children to visit a dentist twice per year; and
  - 33% more likely to get periodontal maintenance treatment.
- Tooth decay is the leading childhood disease. Dental plans are helping to lead the fight against it by covering dental sealants -- the major tool to combat cavities.
  - Untreated cavities can lead to severe pain, root canals and tooth extraction.
  - Sealants have been shown to reduce tooth decay by more than 70%.<sup>iv</sup>
- Gum disease is common dental problem for adults.
  - Almost 30% of Americans show signs of chronic periodontitis.<sup>v</sup>
  - Dental plans often include expanded periodontal coverage for patients whose severe gum infections could complicate other health conditions, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and high-risk pregnancies.

**CONTINUED**

## DENTAL PLANS PROMOTE GOOD ORAL HEALTH IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR PROGRAMS

- Dental plans play a vital role in providing coverage and access to dental care.
  - Private dental plans deliver oral health benefits to over the 150 million Americans who receive dental coverage through their employers and other groups.<sup>vi</sup>
  - Private dental plans administer more than half of state Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance programs, covering more than over 18 million children.<sup>vii</sup>
- Federal health reform should support dental plans’ efforts to:
  - provide coverage that assures access to affordable care
  - build accessible provider networks, and
  - administer claims in a timely and efficient manner.



<sup>i</sup> National Association of Dental Plans, Delta Dental Plans Association. Joint Dental Benefits Report: Enrollment. August 2008.

<sup>ii</sup> National Association of Dental Plans. The Haves and the Have-nots: Consumers With and Without Dental Benefits. February 2009.

<sup>iii</sup> National Association of Dental Plans. The Haves and the Have-nots: Consumers With and Without Dental Benefits. February 2009.

<sup>iv</sup> National Institute of Health. Consensus Development Conference on Diagnosis and Management of Dental Caries Throughout Life. Bethesda MD, March 26-28, 2001. Conference papers: Journal of Dental Education 65 (2001). Pgs. 935-1179.

<sup>v</sup> Dental, Oral and Craniofacial Data Resource Center. Oral Health U.S. 2002.

<sup>vi</sup> National Association of Dental Plans, Delta Dental Plans Association. Joint Dental Benefits Report – Enrollment. August 2008.

<sup>vii</sup> National Association of Dental Plans, Delta Dental Plans Association. Joint Dental Benefits Report – Enrollment. August 2008.