

Dental Benefits are a Reason to Smile



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AS HEALTHCARE CONTINUES TO BE debated and business owners look to contain expenses, it's a good time to review how benefits are valued by employees and why dental benefits are an important part of a complete benefits package, even during an economic downturn.

Lower health insurance costs: More than most medical benefits, dental benefits provide strong preventive coverage. Health studies are increasingly showing that oral health is an early indicator of other serious medical conditions from heart disease to viral lung infections. Through regular checkups, significant medical conditions can be detected before they become more serious, thereby decreasing employee downtime or higher future health bills on medical insurance premiums.

Improved productivity: The U.S. Surgeon General reports that more than 164 million work hours are lost each year because of dental problems. Employees also

risk missing additional work hours when their children suffer from poor oral health. Having dental benefits available promotes preventive care, better overall health, less time away from work and greater productivity.

Finding, keeping people: Benefits continue to be a strong employee recruiting and retention tool with dental benefits being a key in offering employees value. An independent survey by Taylor Nelson/Sofres Intersearch found that 80 percent of consumers felt it was important for prospective employers to provide dental benefits. Respondents also noted they did not view the rising cost of healthcare as a credible reason for reducing dental coverage.

Dental benefits help remove barriers to prevention and treatment for employees and that's something employers can smile about. ■

Steven Fleischer is vice president of sales and marketing at Delta Dental of New Jersey, the state's leading dental benefits provider.



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