

## *Big Business Sees Benefits of Good Dental Care*

*I came across an article in The Wall Street Journal I found extremely interesting and felt compelled to discuss it in forum. The article is entitled "Health Plans Expand Dental Benefits". It goes on to explain how large corporations are expanding their dental insurance benefits due to the fact that there is a proven link between poor dental health and a range of expensive medical problems. The reason for the expansion of dental benefits according to insurers is that paying for services such as cleanings, gum treatments, prescription mouthwashes, and regular preventative visits reduces the incidence of other expensive health problems down the road.*

*Studies have suggested that gum disease during pregnancy can lead to low birth rates in infants and prolong stays in the hospital after birth. Also, gum disease has been linked to heart disease and diabetes. One insurance company implemented an "Oral Health Integration Program" that covers deep scaling and cleanings during pregnancy at no extra cost and added an additional cleaning, for pregnant women, patients with cardiac disease and diabetes.*

*Some insurance companies have also included coverage of antimicrobial rinses in pregnant women and have included incentives to get people to the dentist to improve their overall health. "We can save medical costs by getting people to have their dental care at the right time in their lives", said Glenn Melenyk, dental consultant at Blue Cross Blues Shield of Michigan in Detroit. Many large corporations have gotten on the bandwagon and increased their dental benefit, reducing their overall medical cost. Costco Wholesalers of Issaquah, Washington hired nurses to call over 2,000 of their 153,000 employees to encourage them to visit their dentist regularly. Donna Sexton, Costco's director of employee benefits*

*said, "The bottom line is, if it helps the health of the baby or the employee or the dependent improves, there will be an overall reduction in cost."*

*The article goes on to explain six major insurance companies have gotten on the band wagon advocating better dental health. This is important because it points out that the research we have been referring to and basing our treatment on over the years, has now has been accepted by business and they have actually put their money where there mouths are and are promoting good oral health and prevention measures; which in turn is reducing their overall medical cost. This is great news, it is a win-win for all; the corporations the employees and even the insurance companies. Let's hope it catches on here in Acadiana.*

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