

NADP Introduces Dental Intelligence, an Article Series for Brokers

Questions abound about the implementation of federal health care reform. While most stakeholders involved in the process focus primarily on medical coverage, the National Association of Dental Plans (NADP) is shining the light on dental benefits with its launch of a new article series, "Dental Intelligence." Articles will highlight the value of dental benefits and/explain the impact of health care reform provisions. To kick-off the series, NADP provides up-to-date information regarding the connection between oral and overall health with the first article, "**Explaining the Oral-Overall Health Connection to Your Clients.**"

Explaining the Oral-Overall Health Connection to Your Clients

As more employers consider voluntary benefits to deliver dental coverage, the need to demonstrate how good oral health habits prevent more serious and costly conditions – both dental and medical – is becoming more important. Focusing on the value of dental benefits as a method to defray costs for oral and medical care is a strong selling point, regardless of the funding model.

Recent published research by reputable organizations confirms the mounting evidence suggesting there is an important connection between oral health and overall health. Following is a brief list of conditions linked to oral health, with the studies and articles that provide scientific evidence of these connections. Share this list with your prospects and clients to demonstrate why dental benefits are a wise investment.

Conditions Linked to Oral Health

- **Acute Myocardial Infarction (AMI or Heart Disease)**
 - **Key Finding:** Controlling periodontal disease has a significant impact on reducing AMI (17.8 – 24%) among individuals with this or similar conditions.
2010 Study by Feira de Santana State University, Brazil, Dr. Isaac Suzart Gomes-Filho, Ph. D. Presented at International Association for Dental Research (IADR) Conference, San Diego, CA, March 15-19, 2011

- **Respiratory Conditions (COPD)**
 - **Key Finding:** There is a link between gum disease and chronic respiratory conditions such as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), which includes emphysema, chronic bronchitis, and in some cases asthma.
*Study by, American Academy of Periodontology
Published in Journal of Periodontology, January 20, 2011*

- **Dementia**
 - **Key Finding:** The new study tested more than 4,200 individuals and found that those who had fewer of their own teeth were at increased risk of experiencing memory loss or early-stage Alzheimer's disease
*British Dental Health Foundation, Dr Nigel Carter
Published in Medical News Today, January 10, 2011*

- **Diabetes**
 - **Key Finding:** Emerging that periodontal (gum) disease is associated with increased risk for diabetes complications and may be associated with the development of Type 2 diabetes
Published in Journal of Periodontology, January 20, 2011

- **Breast Cancer**
 - **Key Finding:** A new prospective study found a higher incidence of breast cancer among people with periodontal disease and missing mandible molars compared with those with periodontal disease who had not lost molars in the mandible.
*Karolinska Institute Study, Dr. Birgitta Söder
October 2010*

- **Retinal Bleeding**
 - **Key Finding:** People with bleeding at 1 in 5 gingival sites and a 57% higher likelihood of retinal hemorrhaging. Chronic hyperglycemia was the dominant marker, explaining more than 50% of the association between gingival and retinal hemorrhaging.
*Study by University of Washington, Drs. Hujoel and Marni Stott-Millers
Published in Reuters Health, October 28, 2010*

In addition, the 2011 website, womenshealth.gov, cites these connections between oral health and various medical conditions and treatments:

- **Cancer treatments**, which can cause mouth sores and mouth pain
- **Diabetes** which can affect the gums
- **HIV**, which can cause pain in the mouth and loss of taste
- **Nutritional deficiencies**, as difficulty eating can lead to malnutrition
- **Heart disease** patients may require special precautions, such as taking an antibiotic to prevent infection before a dental procedure

For more about the article series or NADP, visit nadp.org or contact Director of Membership and Communications Rene Chapin at 972-458-6998, etc. 110.

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