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Delta Dental of Colorado Fund a Powerful Weapon in State’s “Winnable Battles”

- *Free dental insurance program enrolls 6,000, pays nearly \$2 million in claims in first year*
- *Tooth extractions and other restorative treatments comprise largest care category*
- *State sees progress in Oral Health Winnable Battle, but challenges remain*

DENVER – Just over one year ago, Gov. John Hickenlooper joined Delta Dental of Colorado to launch the Delta Dental of Colorado Fund. In its first full year, the program provided more than 6,000 low-income Coloradans with two years of free dental insurance and paid nearly \$2 million in claims.

“Dental disease is nearly 100 percent preventable, yet it costs Colorado more than \$1 billion per year and disproportionately impacts low-income families,” Gov. John Hickenlooper said. “This is why oral health is one of Colorado’s winnable battles and Delta Dental of Colorado created this important fund.”

Progress is being made. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment reports approximately 48 percent fewer Colorado kindergarteners and 46 percent fewer third-graders have untreated decay than they did in 2003-04. In the same time period, the number of third-graders with dental sealants rose nearly 29 percent.

But challenges remain.

Those with dental insurance are twice as likely to regularly see a dentist. However, about 2.1 million Coloradans had no dental insurance in 2011, a 17 percent increase from just three years ago, according to the Colorado Trust.

By providing two years of free dental insurance, the Delta Dental of Colorado Fund helped fill this important and widening gap.

“The dentists who founded the nonprofit Delta Dental of Colorado more than a half century ago did so around a mission to improve the oral health of the communities we serve,” said Kate Paul, president and CEO of Delta Dental of Colorado. “We continue that same nonprofit mission today by working to increase education, improve access to care, build a strong public infrastructure and foster communities that create conditions to make the right choice the easy choice.”

Many enrolled in the Delta Dental of Colorado Fund were in desperate need of care. Restorative treatments, including fillings, root canals and extractions, totaled nearly \$550,000, representing the largest treatment category by expense.

“When dental disease reaches the point of needing major restorative treatment, it’s not only incredibly painful but can be life-threatening,” said Dr. Thomas Swain, a Denver-area dentist and member of the Delta Dental of Colorado Board of Trustees. “By providing two consecutive years of dental insurance through the fund, it is much more likely that participants will be able to move from restorative care to a sustainable level of preventative care.”

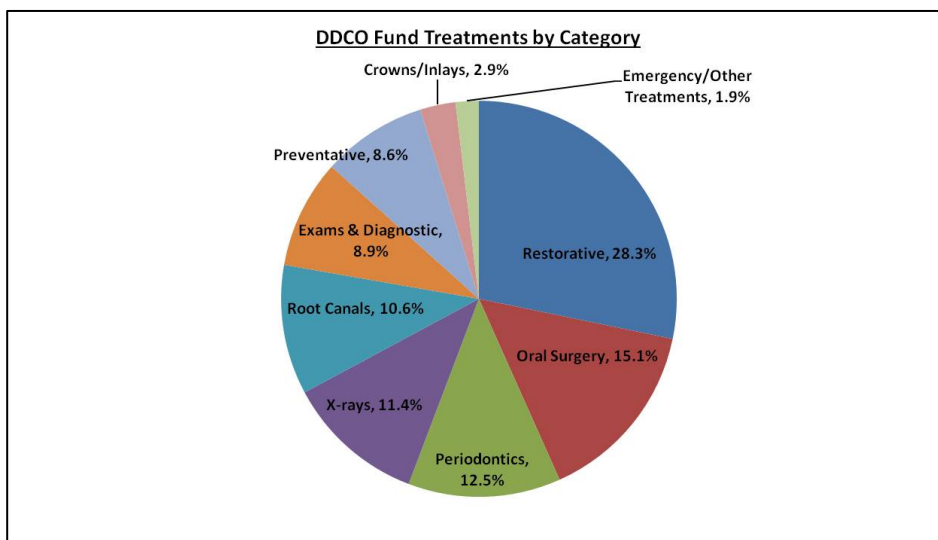
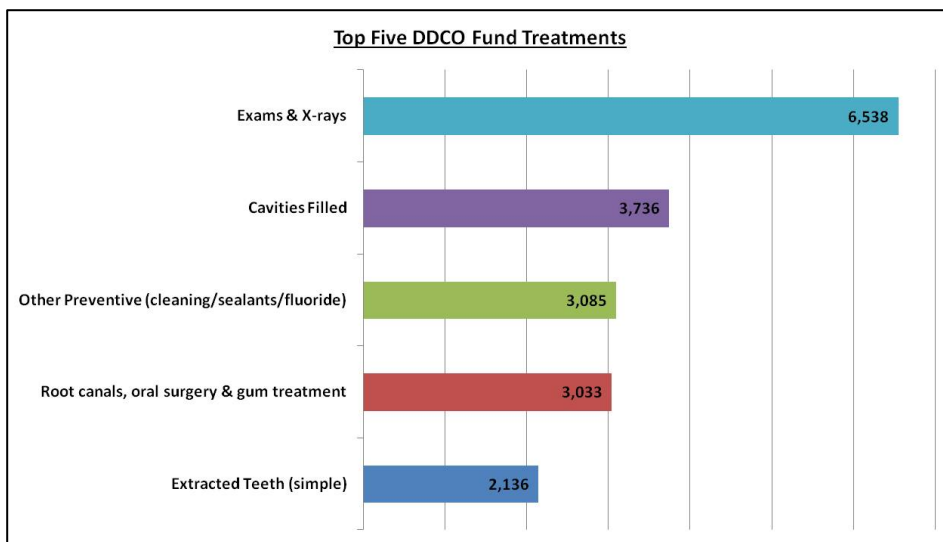
Delta Dental of Colorado Fund by the Numbers (Oct. 2011 - Oct. 2012)

- 6,000 patients enrolled
- Nearly \$2 million in dental treatments covered
- 24,340 paid procedures
- 10,838 paid claims
- Nearly 4,000 cavities filled
- \$525,000 in restorative treatments, the top category by expense

The response to the Delta Dental of Colorado Fund is a testament to the need. In Colorado, there currently is no safety net for adults and seniors who need dental care. The Delta Dental of Colorado Fund, which enrolled children and adults, reached capacity within months.

About Delta Dental of Colorado

Established in 1958, Delta Dental of Colorado is the largest, most experienced dental benefits company in the state. It is a nonprofit organization that serves nearly 1 million Coloradans with high-quality, cost-effective, evidence-based dental plans. Delta Dental of Colorado’s mission is to improve the oral health of the communities it serves. Delta Dental of Colorado is a member of the national Delta Dental Plans Association (DDPA). For more than 50 years, the DDPA has worked to improve oral health nationally. Delta Dental member companies serve more than 47 million people nationwide. For more about Delta Dental of Colorado visit www.DeltaDentalCO.com.



Distribution of Delta Dental of Colorado Fund Claims

