

News Release

For Immediate Release

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Choosing A Dentist: Beyond Word-of-Mouth

Systematic Strategies, Dental Benefit Programs Expand Selection Options

When people start the process of choosing a dentist, they traditionally ask friends, neighbors and coworkers for recommendations.

But today there are strategies and information sources that help ensure the process, and the dentist selected, are more likely to meet the overall oral health needs of consumers.

“While a recommendation from a friend or neighbor can be quite valuable in choosing a dentist, it shouldn’t be the only source of information. With a little more effort, people can ensure the oral health care provider they choose is the best choice for their oral health, lifestyle and finances,” said Max Anderson, DDS, a national oral health advisor for Delta Dental Plans Association.

The first step in choosing a dentist involves assessing your situation.

Are you looking for a dentist who can treat you as well as every member of your family? This will probably lead you to look for a dentist with a general or family practice. Do you or your loved one have any special needs, such as a disability or strong fear of the dentist? You will want to note whether the dentists you are considering have the

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facilities, expertise and interest in treating patients with your special needs. How important is convenience and lifestyle in your decision? For many people, it's important that dental appointments can be scheduled around work and personal schedules. Payment options and a dentist's participation in a dental benefits network are also key considerations.

People with dental benefits through their employers have a head start in finding a dentist, especially if they're covered by a dental carrier with a network of dentists. Dental carriers provide directories, available in booklets or online, arranged by location and fields of dental specialties to provide consumers with easy access to information.

For more information, you can also check with local and state dental societies, often listed in telephone directories under "Dentists" or "Associations," to learn more about a specific dentist.

Many university dental schools or dental hygiene schools have outreach programs for people who may have problems gaining access to dental care, such as the uninsured or underinsured. Information on dental health care programs and providers can be obtained at www.healthfinder.gov, a service of the National Health Information Center, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.

"People should not let lack of a familiar dentist keep them from getting regular care. There are many ways to match your needs and circumstances with the good, qualified dentists in your community," Dr. Anderson said.

Delta Dental Plans Association, based in Oak Brook, IL, is a national network of independent not-for-profit dental service corporations specializing in providing dental benefits programs to 46 million Americans in more than 80,000 employee groups throughout the country.

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