

HARRISBURG, Pa. (Feb. 1, 2012) – During American Heart Month in February, United Concordia Dental, one of the nation's largest dental insurers, reminds adults that good oral health plays an important role in promoting heart health.

"A lot of research exists linking periodontal disease, commonly known as gum disease, to a number of medical conditions, such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and premature or low birth weight infants," said James Bramson, D.D.S., chief dental officer for United Concordia Dental.

"Periodontal disease has the ability to seed bacteria into your blood stream and to lower your ability to fight chronic disease. If your body is always fighting this type of low-grade infection, it's harder for it to fight the rest of the diseases that it may be faced with."

In response to the oral-overall health connection, United Concordia is incorporating scientific findings into developing new products and enhancing existing ones.

"Periodontal disease can potentially exacerbate certain medical conditions such as diabetes and heart disease. Because this link accounts for an inordinate amount of medical expenditures, we are looking at how United Concordia can help make a difference," Bramson said.

In March, the first round of findings from a study conducted by the University of Pennsylvania and sponsored by United Concordia and Highmark will demonstrate the effect of dental treatment on medical costs.

"The goal of the study is to determine if dental cleanings and/or treatment of gum disease can decrease the cost of medical care in patients who have certain medical conditions," said Dr. Bramson. "We are confident the findings will provide some fairly accurate quantification of the kinds of economic benefits one could see by focusing attention on promoting good oral health."

United Concordia's dental health learning center features a variety of topics on oral health, including the connection between oral and overall health and what expectant moms need to know about prenatal dental care. For more information, visit our [Dental Health Center](#).

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