

HARRISBURG, Pa. (Nov. 14, 2012) /PRNewswire/ — New findings from an oral health study conducted earlier this year by United Concordia Dental and Highmark Inc. show pharmacy costs can average \$1,477 lower per year for diabetics who have gum disease and receive at least seven treatments or visits to treat the disease.

“We previously reported that periodontal treatment for individuals with diabetes was associated with a significant decrease in hospitalizations and doctor visits, delivering annual savings of \$1,814 in medical care per patient per year, independent of age and sex,” said lead researcher Marjorie Jeffcoat, D.M.D., professor and dean emeritus of the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine. “We are excited to now know that continued periodontal therapy decreases outpatient drug costs.”

Earlier this year, the nation’s sixth largest dental insurer unveiled significant findings related to annual medical savings, hospitalizations and doctor visits from its landmark study of 1.7 million patients. Dr. Jeffcoat used the same group of patients, who have both United Concordia dental and Highmark medical coverage, to conduct the pharmacy cost savings analysis.

“United Concordia’s oral health study – the largest of its kind – delivers a strong message: annual health care savings of more than \$3,200 are possible, when you combine the medical and pharmacy savings for individuals with diabetes who are treated for gum disease and have at least seven visits as part of their therapy,” said James Bramson, D.D.S., chief dental officer, United Concordia Dental. “Clearly, these findings help broaden the argument for why it makes sense for employers to invest in robust chronic-disease specific oral health programs. We are currently working with medical carriers and wellness companies to integrate the oral health component into employers’ benefit and wellness programs.”

The diabetes findings represent the first in a series of conclusions suggesting how appropriate dental treatment and maintenance can help predict lower medical expenses for various chronic medical conditions. Similar methodologies will be employed to examine cost impact of treating periodontal disease in individuals who experienced pre-term births, heart disease and stroke.

“This study and its findings are consistent with an emerging body of evidence associating gingivitis, type 2 diabetes and vascular disease,” said Dr. Anthony J. Cannon, endocrinologist; regional board president of the Greater Philadelphia, Central Pennsylvania and Southern New Jersey regions of the American Diabetes Association (ADA); and member of the National African American Initiative Committee of the ADA. “This research clearly shows individuals with diabetes can benefit in the form of reduced medical and drug costs and fewer hospitalizations and doctor visits by managing their oral health.”

To learn more about the UCWellness program and the connection between diabetes and oral health, visit [www.UnitedConcordia.com](http://www.UnitedConcordia.com).

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