

HARRISBURG, Pa., March 26, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- Annual medical costs are lower by \$3,964 for individuals with rheumatoid arthritis and \$2,430 for pregnant women when treated for gum disease, according to [a fourth round of findings from an oral health study by United Concordia and Highmark Inc.](#)

"The latest findings from our landmark study continue to clearly demonstrate the importance of good oral health," said James Bramson, D.D.S., chief dental officer for United Concordia. "Plenty of research exists that shows good oral health can impact overall health; however, this study – and its four round of findings – reveals the financial repercussions that could be realized by failing to prevent or treat dental disease."

[According to a 2009 report](#) by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, 75 percent of health care spending is on people with chronic conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease and stroke. Additionally, [Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index](#) reports that American workers miss 450 million days of work a year – equal to \$153 billion in lost productivity – due to these conditions.

Since March 2012, United Concordia has released a number of findings that show annual health care costs are lower for individuals who are pregnant or who have chronic conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease, cerebrovascular disease (stroke) and rheumatoid arthritis, who are treated for gum disease. Those findings are:

- Annual medical costs are lower by \$2,956 and \$1,029 for individuals with heart disease or cerebrovascular disease (stroke), respectively, who are treated for gum disease.
- Annual reductions in medical costs (\$1,814), hospitalizations (33 percent) and physician visits (13 percent) are possible for individuals with diabetes who received treatment and ongoing maintenance for gum disease.
- Reduced pharmaceutical costs of \$1,477 can be realized when individuals with diabetes are treated at least seven times for gum disease.

Starting July 1, United Concordia will expand the medical conditions covered by its UCWellness dental program to include rheumatoid arthritis, pregnancy, heart disease and stroke. UCWellness is the first dental program to integrate an active member engagement and education component, as well as 100 percent coverage for periodontal scaling and root planning, as well as periodontal surgery benefits that members need to treat their gum disease.

The United Concordia/Highmark Inc. study, conducted by lead researcher Marjorie Jeffcoat, D.M.D., professor and Dean Emeritus of the University of Pennsylvania, School of Dental Medicine, is the largest of its kind showing a connection between oral health and medical costs.

Visit [the UCWellness Oral Health Study](#) on [United Concordia's website](#) to learn more.

SOURCE United Concordia Dental

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<https://news.unitedconcordia.com/2013-03-26-Gum-disease-treatment-can-lower-annual-medical-costs-for-individuals-with-rheumatoid-arthritis-and-women-who-are-pregnant>