New Research Continues to Show Medical Cost Savings and Reduced Hospitalizations Possible with Gum Disease Treatment

HARRISBURG, Pa., March 21, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- New research from United Concordia Dental continues to show that significant medical costs savings and reduced hospitalizations are possible when individuals with certain medical diseases or conditions, such as heart disease, stroke, or pregnancy, treat their gum disease.

United Concordia's new study involved more than 338,891 individuals over a five-year period (2005-2009) with both Highmark medical insurance and United Concordia dental coverage. All individuals had gum disease and one or more of following conditions: type 2 diabetes, cerebral vascular disease, coronary artery disease and/ or pregnancy.

"We are pleased to report, significant savings in medical costs when patients with gum disease received treatment," said lead researcher Marjorie Jeffcoat, D.M.D., professor, dean emeritus at the University Of Pennsylvania School Of Dental Medicine. "This round of findings is the result of looking at our data in a more refined statistical manner. Specifically we accounted for the impact of diabetes on our stroke, heart disease and pregnancy data. The goal was to make sure that when we looked at individuals with multiple diseases, we accounted for the affect that diabetes may have on our findings."

Periodontal treatment was associated with statistically significant decreases in annual medical costs of 40.2 percent, or $2,840 per year in patients with diabetes; 40.9 percent, or $5,681 for those with cerebral vascular disease; 10.7 percent, or $1,090 for those with and coronary artery disease; and 73.7 percent, or $2,433 for those with became pregnant. Additionally, hospital admissions decreased by 39.4 percent, 21.2 percent, and 28.6 percent in patients with type 2 diabetes, cerebral vascular (stroke), and coronary artery (heart) disease, respectively.

"These new findings were presented today to the American Association for Dental Research by renowned researcher Dr. Marjorie Jeffcoat of the University of Pennsylvania on our behalf," said James Bramson, D.D.S., chief dental officer for United Concordia Dental. "This study builds on the results of an earlier study we did with our parent company Highmark and Dr. Jeffcoat that was presented at the AADR in March 2012. All findings show the importance of treating and managing a person's periodontal health and how that affects one's overall health."

In 2012, United Concordia released the findings of its Oral Health Study, which showed that treatment for gum disease is associated with significant decreases in the cost of medical care and hospitalizations for people with type 2 diabetes.

"The numbers demonstrated the importance of treating gum disease for people with chronic conditions or who are pregnant," said Dr. Bramson. "These findings continue to show that when individuals with gum disease are treated and maintained, significant medical savings are possible even when you look at individuals with multiple chronic diseases at the same time."

Dr. Jeffcoat presented the new study's findings today to more than 2,500 attendees at the American Association for Dental Research annual meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina. Studies are ongoing and several other chronic conditions are being evaluated.

To learn more about the studies and the connection between oral and overall health, visitwww.UnitedConcordia.com.

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For further information: Beth Rutherford, United Concordia Dental, 717-260-7659, beth.rutherford@ucci.com; or Leilyn Perri, Highmark Inc., 717-302-4243, leilyn.perri@highmark.com

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