



Making the most of integrated benefits

How understanding the connection between oral health and overall well-being can help reduce costs of care



The mouth-body connection

More than 1 in 4 adults have untreated cavities, and almost half of all adults over age 30 show signs of gum disease. As a result, there are over 2 million visits to the emergency room for dental issues every year and over \$45 billion in productivity loss in the United States annually because of untreated oral disease.*

The impact of dental and gum issues can go well beyond the mouth. Research connects them to several other serious chronic health conditions, including diabetes, coronary artery disease and cerebrovascular disease. There is even evidence that periodontitis is associated with adverse pregnancy outcomes.

It is not enough to simply acknowledge the connection between oral health and other

types of health outcomes. We need to actively employ strategies that have a measurable effect on individuals' overall health by encouraging preventive dental care at home and in the dentist's chair.

An important step is delivering the kind of health benefits that truly work together to encourage better health outcomes and lower the costs of care.

How? Linking medical and dental data is crucial to delivering:



Timely preventive care that treats small health concerns that may become serious



Targeted care for those members at highest risk



Convenient and **affordable** health and wellness services



Adults with diabetes are

40%

more likely to have untreated cavities than similar adults without diabetes.*



People with periodontal disease have up to

3x

greater risk of having a heart attack, stroke or other serious cardiovascular event.*



Approximately

42%

of pregnant women report dental or gum health issues.*

*FOR \$45 BILLION IN PRODUCTIVITY LOSS: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Cost-Effectiveness of Oral Diseases Interventions. <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/programs-impact/pop/oral-disease.htm>. Accessed December 7, 2023.

*FOR 40% MORE LIKELY TO HAVE UNTREATED CAVITIES: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Oral Health Fast Facts. <https://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/fast-facts/diabetes/index.html>. Accessed December 7, 2023.

*FOR 3x GREATER RISK: Harvard Health Publishing. Gum disease and heart disease: The common thread. [https://www.health.harvard.edu/heart-health/gum-disease-and-heart-disease-the-common-thread#:~:text=People%20with%20gum%20%20disease%20\(also,or%20other%20serious%20cardiovascular%20event](https://www.health.harvard.edu/heart-health/gum-disease-and-heart-disease-the-common-thread#:~:text=People%20with%20gum%20%20disease%20(also,or%20other%20serious%20cardiovascular%20event). Accessed January 10, 2024.

*FOR 42% OF PREGNANT WOMEN REPORTING DENTAL OR GUM HEALTH ISSUES: Radwan-Oczko, M., et al. How much do pregnant women know about the importance of oral health in pregnancy? Questionnaire-based survey. BMC Pregnancy Childbirth 23, 348 (2023). <https://bmcpregnancychildbirth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12884-023-05677-4>. Accessed January 10, 2024.

The potential of benefits integration

Aetna® was the first major carrier to use integrated dental and medical data to perform targeted outreach. We have over 15 years of experience working to maximize the effectiveness of this type of data integration.

During that time, efforts to make dental and medical coverage work together efficiently have continuously evolved. New clinical studies have shed further light on the connections between oral health and chronic conditions. This research has helped identify and deliver more effective screenings and treatments, which has improved early identification of at-risk members.

Proactive outreach reduces costs over three years:*

\$621K in total savings

\$5,694 in medical cost savings per engaged member

\$0.18 PMPM savings

*FOR PROACTIVE OUTREACH: Data is taken from internal Aetna sources and is associated with members who have Aetna One® Advocate.



Our extensive experience in medical and dental data integration

2005

Aetna and Columbia University begin research collaboration on medical and dental health

2011

Aetna data shows dental care during pregnancy is associated with better birth outcomes*

2013

Aetna publishes “Connections Matter,” a paper about the state of medical and dental integration

2021

Aetna identifies additional at-risk members based on medication side effects on oral health

2022

The Aetna Rush to Brush program proves that hospital-acquired pneumonia can be avoided for inpatients who practice preventive dental care

2023

Aetna advances its clinical analytics strategy to identify more gaps in preventive dental care

*FOR ASSOCIATION WITH BETTER HEALTH OUTCOMES: Albert DA, et al. An examination of periodontal treatment, dental care, and pregnancy outcomes in an insured population in the United States. Am J Public Health. 2011 Jan; 101(1): 151-6. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/21088265/>. Accessed February 20, 2024.



By using an integrated care model, we can help improve overall health outcomes for these members. In addition, applying this model continues to result in lower costs of care for both our plan sponsors and members.

Our combination of experience, data and broad provider networks allows Aetna to build on these results, using integration to deliver a simple, seamless experience that helps members get healthier while also delivering more value to plan sponsors.

“ At Aetna, we evolve and adapt to support our members’ paths to better health through well-coordinated, accessible care. ”

— Mary Lee Conicella, Chief Dental Officer at Aetna, a CVS Health® company



Integration powers engagement, personalization and cost savings

No two members or organizations have the same needs or use their benefits in the same way. That’s why Aetna brings together what matters most for both our clients and members. We create a personalized path that improves health and reduces overall costs.

How do we do it? We start with data, including health histories, insurance claims, lab results, pharmacy records and more. The Aetna MedQuery® program, powered by CareEngine® technology, has algorithms and models that sort through data and compare it to the latest evidence-based recommendations. Then the information is communicated to the health care provider and member.

Aetna identifies members with medical conditions that may be linked to oral health, such as diabetes, Sjögren’s syndrome, cardiovascular disease and/

or pregnancy. Pharmacy data also helps identify members who are taking medications that have oral health side effects.

Once identified, individuals receive timely alerts through a variety of communication channels, including provider notifications, while others are further screened via dental claims data to determine if they have recently received any dental services.

Members are then provided with relevant and actionable support that encourages them to schedule an appointment with a dentist. And members continue to receive regular check-ins to help ensure that they keep their dental appointment. The outreach from Aetna is essential to delivering the most integrated value and creating a personal path to well-being. But the process does not end once Aetna initially identifies and contacts a member. We continuously review member data for health updates for which access to dental care could be beneficial.

Reviewing member data also allows us to create a more personalized experience for members, tailoring our subsequent messaging to both their needs and how they responded to our outreach. When we know important details about an individual member, we can more effectively identify and remove barriers to care.

Advantages of the Aetna approach

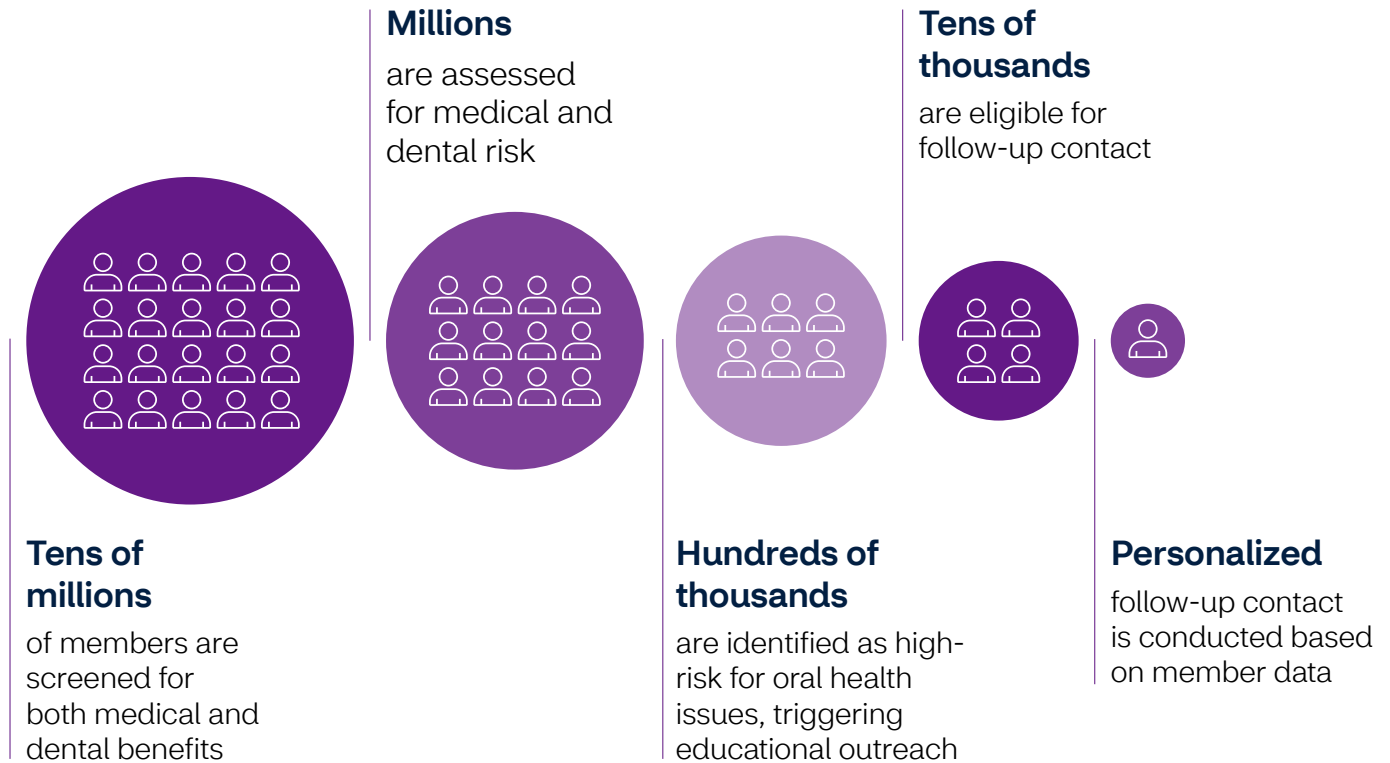
Our focus on reducing barriers to care is a key part of our member-oriented, data driven approach. For example, we make sure members will not have to fill out unnecessary paperwork or incur additional costs. This is a crucial part of encouraging members to receive the care they need, when they need it.

By breaking down barriers and making benefits integration meaningful to members, we also unlock important value for our clients. Timely care helps reduce overall care costs, cuts down on absenteeism, and increases productivity among employees.

When we bring benefits together and focus on what matters most for our clients and members, it helps make health care more affordable for every organization we serve.

Together, we're making healthier happen.

Integration meets personalization*



*Internal Aetna data

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I would make a dental appointment every year, but I wouldn't go because I was afraid of the dentist. All that changed when I was contacted by Aetna and the representative helped me understand the importance of going to the dentist and the impact my hypertension and diabetes could be having on my oral health.

— An Aetna member

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Aetna is the brand name used for products and services provided by one or more of the Aetna group of companies, including Aetna Life Insurance Company and its affiliates (Aetna). Aetna is part of the CVS Health® family of companies.