

July 7, 2020

Ron Bolden
President
National Association of Dental Plans
12700 Park Central Drive, Ste. 400, Dallas, TX 75251

Dear Mr. Bolden:

I am writing on behalf of the Academy of General Dentistry (AGD) and its 39,000 members. AGD members are general dentists who provide comprehensive oral care to the public.

The AGD applauds and agrees with the NADP website statement: “*Americans need regular oral health care to maintain and improve their oral and overall health, and dental coverage is an important gateway to oral health care.*” Without question, pursuit of our common goal of achieving optimum oral health for the nation has been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. As dentistry resumes delivery of preventive and comprehensive care, the AGD asks NADP to encourage its member organizations to apply forward-thinking measures that will benefit their customers and communities in the quest for better oral health.

Dental patients’ access to the professional care they expect and rely upon has been severely impacted by COVID-19. In the best of times, the subjects of dental benefits, yearly maximums and calendar restrictions is perplexing to many patients. The AGD respectfully requests that NADP encourage its member organizations to temporarily alter the prophylaxis and periodic exam payment protocol, where possible, from once every six months (or 181 days) to twice in the current contract calendar year.

The global shutdown extinguished access to comprehensive oral care for two months. For some it was longer. As a result, patient utilization of annual benefits was restricted during that time. Many dental procedures require protracted delivery protocols with chronology predicated on factors such as healing, integration, and stabilization as well as time allocation for laboratory fabrication. Moreover, as America returns to work, paid leave is limited and may provide short-term barriers to resumption of necessary medical and dental care.

Patients deserve access to benefits included in their coverage. The AGD asks that NADP encourage its member organizations to permit a 2021 residual benefit rollover for those patients who received at least one service during the 2020 benefit period.

We believe these interim changes would be member-friendly, restore continuity of care, reduce confusion and assist dental providers in returning their practices to a more prevention-focused and cost-effective orientation.

As dental practices reopen across the country, compliance with CDC and OSHA infection control guidelines, including PPE requirements, is having a major impact on office productivity and overhead costs. The mechanics of dental care delivery have changed dramatically, and future adjustments are likely as the science surrounding COVID-19 evolves. The AGD

recognizes and appreciates the efforts of those NADP member organizations who have already acted by expanding coverage to provide patient benefits in response to the escalating costs of PPE.

Many sectors of the insurance industry have responded to the pandemic with creative ways to help and support their customers. In the spirit of our common goals, the AGD respectfully requests that NADP calls upon its member organizations to support their patient-customers by temporarily adjusting the prophylaxis/periodic exam payment protocol, adding a 2021 residual benefit rollover and by expanding benefits to address the rising costs of PPE.

The AGD is an organization with a rich tradition of collaboration. We thank you for your consideration and invite continued dialogue with NADP as we navigate the future of oral healthcare delivery together.

Sincerely-

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Connie L. White, DDS, FAGD". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Connie L. White, DDS, FAGD
President

CC:
Ms. Eme Augustini
Executive Director, National Association of Dental Plans