



FIRST IMPRESSIONS

The Provider Pub: News, Trends and Insights
For You and About You

DENTIST SPOTLIGHT

Q&A with Dr. Aristidis Pontikas of Pontikas Implants & Periodontics in Phoenix

Q: What is your specialty/area of interest?

A: I am a full-time, private practice periodontist. The practice is broad in nature and we see everything from periodontal disease and implants to surgery and oral medicine.

Q: Electric or manual toothbrush?

A: I use a manual toothbrush for myself. I tell patients to use whatever works best in their own hand. I support my patient's preference. It's about them and what they will use regularly.

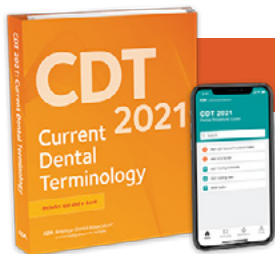
Q: What is your favorite dentist joke?

A: What's a dentist's favorite time? Tooth-thirty!

Q: What is the best thing about being a Delta Dental dentist?

A: Being able to work together to provide the best care for patients.

If you'd like to be featured in First Impressions or the Delta Dental of Arizona Blog, email marketing@deltadentalaz.com



2021 CDT Code Changes

The CDT 2021: Dental Procedure Codes (commonly known as CDT) is updated annually to reflect changes in dental procedures accepted by the dental community. The CDT 2021 incorporates a significant number of procedure code changes with 28 new codes, 7 revised codes and 4 deleted codes.

Accurate coding promotes faster claims processing and fewer errors, so Delta Dental recommends that each dental office have a current copy of the CDT. To order a copy, call 800.947.4746 or visit adacatalog.org. You can also purchase the CDT 2021 mobile app for iOS via the Apple Store and Android via Google Play.

With all the code changes, dental offices are encouraged to verify covered services for patients before providing treatment.

ARE YOU AND YOUR STAFF ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE THE COVID-19 VACCINE?

Dentists and oral healthcare providers (including staff) are part of Phase 1A and are now eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Phase 1B began Jan. 11, 2021. If you are eligible for Phase 1A and have not received your vaccine, you can continue to register along with Phase 1B individuals. Learn more by visiting <https://www.maricopa.gov/5647/Phase-1A>.





CEO's CORNER

Reflecting on 2020

It's difficult to know where to start and stop when reflecting on 2020. The challenges that all of us have faced are innumerable. This year it felt that almost every hour or day brought on a new set of obstacles and issues. We have dealt with things that just one year ago none of us could have even imagined. But before we get too far into 2021, it's worth taking a moment to reflect on how adversity has brought about some positives in our lives.

This year we did a lot of good for a lot of people. We supported our network dental offices with zero interest loans to help during office closures, and non-repayable financial assistance when they needed to obtain expensive and hard to acquire personal protective equipment. When our employer group clients continued to pay their monthly premiums while their employees (our subscribers) didn't have access to dental services and care, we did the right thing by refunding those unused premiums. And when health centers and dental clinics across the state were under economic pressure at the beginning of the pandemic, our Foundation stepped up with much needed financial support and assistance. In total, Delta Dental of Arizona offered \$9.5 million in financial support to our stakeholders to help them deal with their individual crisis moments.

And then there were our volunteers. Our company has a strong history of volunteerism and giving—and 2020 was no exception: 53 associates and 4 board members gave 388 hours of their valuable time to go help so many others in need. That too is remarkable.

While it's easy to be consumed with the difficulties of 2020, what we can take away is a huge sense of accomplishment and a vivid memory of how this organization pulled together as a team to do the right things under the hardest of circumstances.

Looking forward, that's a commitment we're continuing to deliver on in 2021. Already we've announced a \$525,000 donation to provide expert emergency dental treatment at Neighborhood Outreach Access to Health (NOAH) for uninsured patients who visit any HonorHealth emergency department with dental issues and nearly \$775,000 in oral health grants to 30 organizations across the state, which you can read about on pages 4-5. Plus, we'll have a new dental director joining the Delta Dental of Arizona team January 25 to bring a dentist's perspective to our management team.

As I close this letter, I'd like to take the opportunity to thank you, our network dentists, for your perseverance during challenging times and for the integral role you play in protecting Arizonans' smiles. I appreciate you all and look forward to an amazing 2021!

Warmest Regards,

R. Allan Allford
President & CEO



Reminder: Annual Members' Meeting

All DDAZ member dentists are invited to attend the Annual Meeting. The meeting is scheduled for April 16, 2021. You'll receive a packet with information closer to the scheduled meeting date.

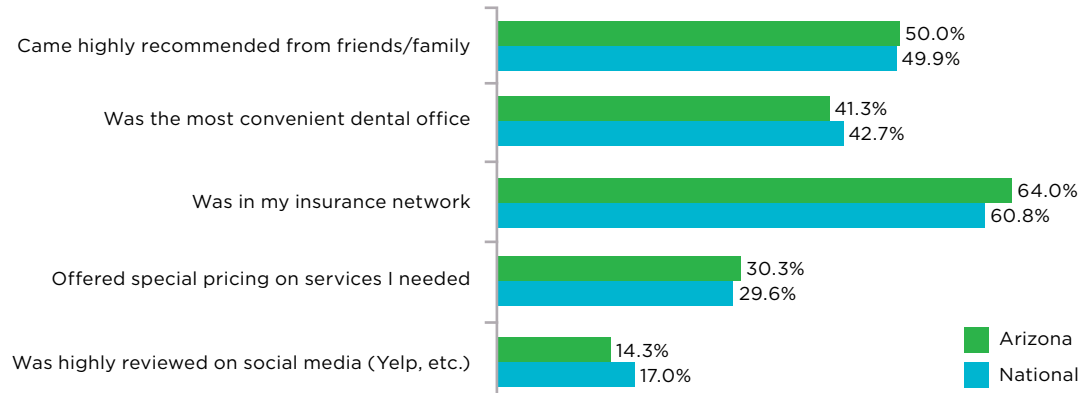
Patient Insights

How Do Patients Pick a Dentist?

In a recent national survey conducted by research firm Kelton Global for Delta Dental Plans Association, 15,308 consumers who currently have dental insurance or plan to buy dental insurance were asked to rank the factors that were most important to them in selecting their dentist.

Data reflects the percentage of population ranking the item as "most important" or "second most important."

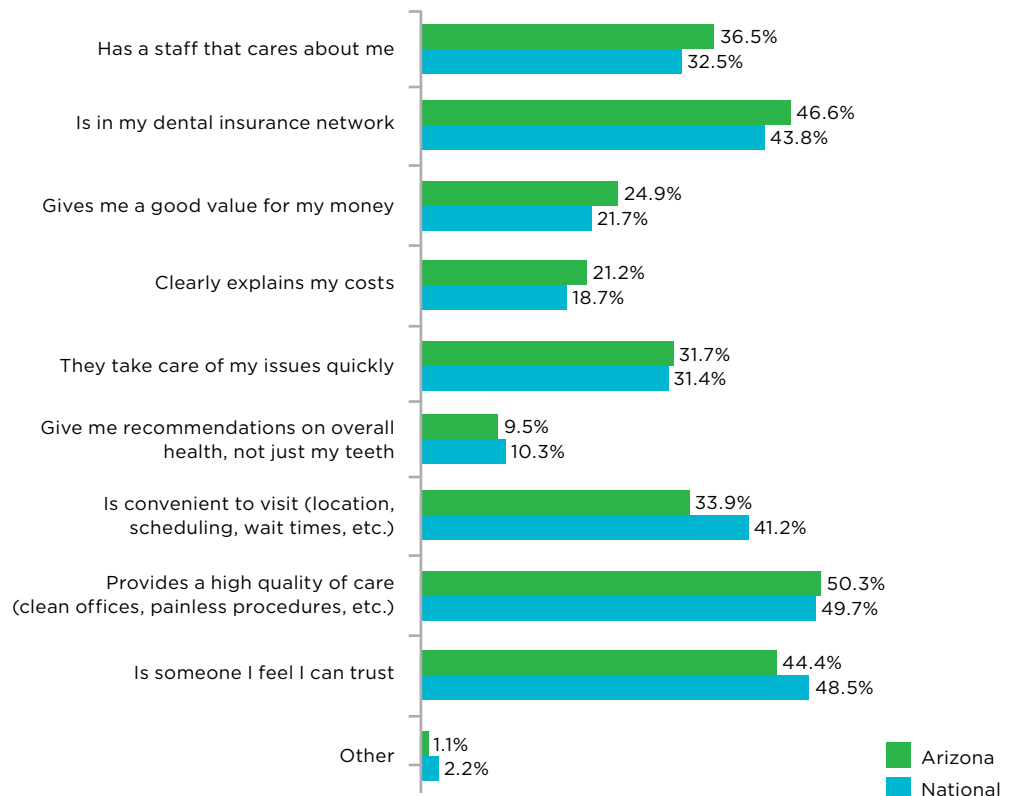
Most Important Factors in Selecting a Dentist



Why Do Patients Stick With Their Dentist?

In the same survey, most consumers said they have been seeing their current dentist for more than 5 years. Here's some insight into what keeps them going back.

Reason For Staying With Current Dentist





Nearly \$775,000 in Grants for Oral Health Services and Education

Delta Dental of Arizona, through its Foundation, selected 26 nonprofit organizations across the state to receive \$574,322 in grants and dental supplies to improve the oral health of underserved children, pregnant women and seniors in 2021.

In addition to the annual community grants program, the Delta Dental of Arizona IMPACT Grant program distributed an additional \$200,000 to 4 organizations meeting select criteria. The nonprofits selected for these grants provide oral health services and education for children, pregnant women or seniors and have a proven record of fiscal and reporting responsibility. These grants provide \$50,000 a year for 2 years, and 2021 is the second year of the program.

The IMPACT Grant awardees for 2020-2021 are:

- **Tooth BUDDS:** Dental hygienists and assistants travel throughout Graham and Greenlee counties to provide oral health services to children on school campuses.
- **Boys and Girls Club of Metro Phoenix Dental Clinic:** The clinic assists low-income children and others in the south Phoenix community with oral health services.
- **Neighborhood Outreach Access to Health (NOAH):** They provide dental screenings, fluoride varnish treatments and oral health education to children at local Phoenix-area schools and local community and health fair events.
- **El Rio Community Health Center:** The 5 El Rio medical clinics in Tucson embed a dental hygienist or dental student in medical well visits to provide dental screenings, fluoride varnish treatments and oral health education to children each year and tie oral health to overall health.

“The Delta Dental of Arizona Foundation works to promote good oral health practices, provide oral health education and increase access to dental care,” said Delta Dental of Arizona President and CEO Allan Allford. “We believe that everyone deserves a healthy smile, so we are committed to improving the oral health of uninsured and underserved communities across the state.”

You can find a complete list of 2021 grants recipients at deltadentalaz.com/foundation/grants.



IN THE NEWS: DDAZ FOUNDATION FIGHTS MORE THAN JUST CAVITIES

In the past 15 years, Delta Dental of Arizona Foundation has provided more than \$13 million in community benefit support to improve oral health across the state. North Valley Magazine highlights the Foundation's 2020 grant programs and outreach services. Read the full article at <http://bit.ly/GrantFundingNews>.

Delta Dental of Arizona Partners with Neighborhood Outreach Access to Health, HonorHealth Foundation to Launch Delta Dental of Arizona Dental Connect

Delta Dental of Arizona has partnered with Neighborhood Outreach Access to Health (NOAH) and HonorHealth Foundation to fund expert emergency dental treatment at NOAH for uninsured patients who visit HonorHealth emergency departments with dental issues. The new Delta Dental of Arizona Dental Connect program is made possible by a \$525,000 donation by Delta Dental of Arizona (DDAZ).

“Patients experiencing a dental crisis usually come to the emergency department as a last resort, and with at least one—and usually more—dental issues. These issues can be causing severe pain, impacting other areas of a patient’s health, and probably interfering with their day-to-day life,” said Wendy Armendariz, NOAH chief executive officer. “Through Dental Connect, when an uninsured patient checks into an HonorHealth emergency room and presents with a dental emergency, facial pain or other related oral health issue, he or she will be referred to the appropriate NOAH dental staff member for care.”

According to Armendariz, NOAH will then set a virtual triage appointment for the patient with a dentist, typically within 24 hours. After the triage appointment, NOAH will schedule the appointment at one of its four local dental clinics (Cholla Health Center, Desert Mission Health Center, Palomino Health Center and Heuser Pediatric Dental) to begin the emergency dental work. Because transportation can keep some people from receiving the care they need, DDAZ will also fund transportation costs for Dental Connect patients.



L-R: Allan Allford, CEO of Delta Dental of Arizona; Wendy Armendariz, CEO of NOAH; Jared Langkilde, CEO of HonorHealth Foundation



Goals of the Dental Connect program are to:

- lower dental-related visits and re-visits at five Maricopa County HonorHealth emergency departments (HonorHealth Shea, HonorHealth Osborn, John C. Lincoln Hospital, HonorHealth Deer Valley and HonorHealth Sonoran Crossing);
- proactively address the opioid crisis by managing dental issues early, thus decreasing patients’ need for opioids to manage pain of untreated dental issues;
- increase the number of patients with a regular dental home thanks to NOAH; and
- improve the overall health in the community through effective oral care.

“As a non-profit, community-based hospital system, HonorHealth depends upon donations from companies and individuals. This gift not only helps us provide exceptional care, it drives healthcare transformation by bringing services together to help people when they need it most,” said Jared Langkilde, president and CEO of the HonorHealth Foundation. “Delta Dental of Arizona has been a generous donor and partner to HonorHealth Foundation. The impact of their gift touches the very heart of our mission to advance health and wellbeing for all.”

“Delta Dental of Arizona, NOAH and HonorHealth are working together so that uninsured patients with dental emergencies are addressed quickly and with the highest level of care,” said Allan Allford, DDAZ president and chief executive officer. “Our driving force is to improve lives by promoting optimal oral health. By partnering with such likeminded healthcare leaders, we continue to make strides toward this vision, especially as it relates to what can be a vulnerable population in our community. We are all in this together.”

Arizona State Retirement System Joins DDAZ

With the addition of the Arizona State Retirement System (ASRS) and Public Safety Personnel Retirement System to our client list, **network dentists will have access to more than 53,000 new Delta Dental patients.**

ASRS enrollees switched to Delta Dental coverage on January 1, 2021, so you may get some calls from potential patients asking if you are on the ASRS plans. **If you are a participating Delta Dental dentist, you are in network for the ASRS plans.**

ASRS is offering 2 Delta Dental plans to their enrollees. Highlights include:

- **Preventive Care is 100% Covered** – Routine cleanings, exams and bitewing X-rays are fully covered for Delta Dental members.
- **Checkup Plus™** – Preventive and diagnostic services are not deducted from a patient's annual maximum, giving them more money to use when they need it most.
- **No Missing Tooth Limitations** – Most benefits are not limited due to any pre-existing conditions, like missing teeth, for patients that choose the high plan option.
- **Implant Coverage** – Implants are now covered under major services for patients that choose the high plan option!

For more information on the ASRS plans, visit deltadentalaz.com/asrs.

SIGN UP FOR DIRECT DEPOSIT AND AVOID CLAIMS PAYMENT DELAYS

The U.S. Postal Service is experiencing an increase in demand and staffing shortages due to COVID-19, causing delays in mailing times. This could affect the speed at which claims are received and paid. For the fastest way to get your claims paid, sign up for direct deposit at deltadentalaz.com/dentist. With direct deposit, you will receive your Delta Dental claims payments quicker and more securely.

Use Member ID for Faster Claims Processing

Did you know that by using a patient's employee member number (also known as "member ID") when you submit claims, you can speed up claims processing? Always ask the patient for their member ID and if they don't know it, follow these steps to find it:

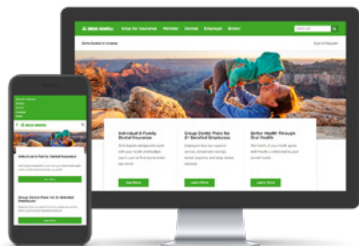
1. Visit deltadentalaz.com/dentist and sign in to the Dentist Connection.
2. Click **Patient Information** in the top navigation.
3. Click the **Submit a Claim** tab and fill out the patient's information.
4. The patient information will display, along with your office's details. If you have more than one office, select the location your patient is visiting and click **Continue**.
5. The next screen will display all of the patient's information, including their employee member number. Use the patient's *employee member number* when you submit claims for them in your practice management system. You can also submit claims for FREE directly from this form.

The screenshot shows the 'Patient Information' form in the Delta Dental Dentist Connection. The form has a purple header with the title 'Patient Information'. Below the header is a green navigation bar with tabs: 'Patient Benefits', 'Submit a Claim', and 'Procedure Code Search'. Below the navigation bar is a breadcrumb trail: 'Delta Dental Home >> Dentist >> Patient Information >> Submit a Claim >> Submit a Claim Form'. The main form area is white and contains several fields: 'Patient Name', 'Relationship to Employee', 'SUBSCRIBER', 'Patient Date-of-Birth', 'Employee/Subscriber Name', 'Mailing Address', 'Employee Member Number' (highlighted in yellow), and 'Employee Date of Birth'.

Introducing the New Delta Dental of Arizona Website

We redesigned our website and it's better than ever! Find everything you need to take care of your patients and your practice. Some new perks include:

- A new forms library to help you quickly access important forms and documents
- You can now securely upload multiple attachments through our supporting claims documentation form
- Quickly access current and past First Impressions newsletters to stay up to date on the latest news and tips
- Tons of new oral health resources to help you educate patients on the importance of oral health



This website update does not affect the Dentist Connection. This means that you'll only see the new layout on the public pages of the site. Once you sign in, your favorite Dentist Connection features like the benefits eligibility lookup and the claims submission tool will look like they always do.

Explore the brand new dentist experience at deltadentalaz.com/dentist!

Congratulations to the Winning Dentists!

Congratulations to the 3 dentists who each won a \$100 American Express gift card from Delta Dental of Arizona for attending Southern Arizona Oral Health Coalition's Oral Health Integration Interprofessional Education Event! The winners were:

- Dr. Celine Upton in Phoenix
- Dr. Christopher McFarland in Tucson
- Dr. Kathleen Green Naughton in Scottsdale

We're always looking for opportunities to help your practice be successful. When new educational opportunities or value-add programs arise, we'll announce it in this newsletter or send you an email with all the details. Don't forget to make sure we have your current email address on file so you don't miss the next opportunity!



SECURITY CHECK: YOUR DENTIST CONNECTION CREDENTIALS

Protecting your patients' personal health information is a priority for Delta Dental of Arizona and it should be a priority for your office too. Here are a few best practices to ensure you're doing everything you can to keep your patients' information safe:

- ✓ Always sign out of your Dentist Connection account when you are finished.
- ✓ Check that the email you are using to sign into the Dentist Connection is up to date. This is also the email Delta Dental uses to send you time sensitive information and new opportunities.
- ✓ Update your password regularly. The new year is a great time for a password reset!

Visit deltadentalaz.com/dentist to review your Dentist Connection account today.

DOWNLOAD THE 2021 DENTIST MANUAL

We've updated our Dentist Manual and Reference Guide with all the information your dental office staff need to know about Delta Dental of Arizona's standard claims processing guidelines and administrative policies.

Download a copy for your office today at deltadentalaz.com/dentist.



Now Accepting Attachments Through Change Healthcare

If your dental office uses Change Healthcare, you can now submit supporting documentation to DDAZ through the Change Healthcare system. Submitting supporting claims documentation electronically helps expedite claims payments and improves accuracy so you can get paid faster!



Dentist Direct Phone Numbers

Toll-free: 866.746.1834 | Local: 602.588.3982

- press **1** Faxback of eligibility & benefit information
- press **2** Automated claim information
- press **3** Customer Service - Benefits & eligibility
- press **4** Customer Service - Claims
- press **5** Professional Relations - DDS contracts/credentialing



Delta Dental of Arizona
5656 W. Talavi Blvd.
Glendale, AZ 85306

TOP OF THE LIST

Groups acquired since
August 2020 with 75+ employees

Company	Number of Employees	Location	Plan
ASRS	53,303 employees	Phoenix	PPO Plus Premier
Taylor Morrison, Inc.	2,317 employees	Scottsdale	PPO Plus Premier
UNS Energy Corporation	1,830 employees	Tucson	PPO Plus Premier
First Solar, Inc.	1,506 employees	Tempe	PPO Plus Premier
Hospice of the Valley	535 employees	Phoenix	PPO Plus Premier
Sunland Asphalt & Construction, Inc.	347 employees	Phoenix	PPO Plus Premier
Mount Graham Regional Medical Center	313 employees	Safford	PPO Plus Premier
Atlas Healthcare Partners, LLC	229 employees	Phoenix	PPO Plus Premier
Isola USA Corp	210 employees	Chandler	PPO Plus Premier
Arizona College of Nursing, LLC	162 employees	Phoenix	PPO Plus Premier
HomeSmart Services, LLC	141 employees	Scottsdale	PPO Plus Premier
Computer Guidance Corporation/JDM Technology	127 employees	Scottsdale	PPO
Scottsdale Bible Church	116 employees	Scottsdale	PPO
ArmorWorks, Inc.	115 employees	Chandler	PPO Plus Premier
Child Crisis Arizona	106 employees	Mesa	PPO Plus Premier
Tohono O'Odham Utility Authority	98 employees	Sells	PPO Plus Premier
Arizona Coyotes Hockey Club	92 employees	Glendale	PPO Plus Premier
Micro-Tronics Inc.	87 employees	Tempe	PPO
Exodyne, Inc.	84 employees	Phoenix	PPO Plus Premier



FOR YOUR PRACTICE

HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT DENTAL INSURANCE?

According to the American Dental Association, 59% of adults have private dental benefits. That's likely a majority of your patients. But do you fully understand how dental benefits support patients? There are some common misconceptions about how dental insurance works, so we're here to clear up any questions you may have.

HOW DOES DENTAL INSURANCE SUPPORT ORAL HEALTH?

Delta Dental's Adult Oral Health and Well-being Study found that 97% of Arizonans believe that having poor oral health can affect how healthy they are overall. However, only half of them visit the dentist each year. So, if Arizonans understand the importance of oral health, why aren't they visiting the dentist more often?

The top reason Arizonans don't visit the dentist is because they don't have insurance and can't afford the treatment. For the average Arizonan, cost plays a major role in their decision to visit the dentist. The good news is that those with dental insurance are 27% more likely than those without to visit the dentist each year!¹

According to the study, Arizonans agree that dental insurance provides invaluable benefits. Many say it gives them peace of mind (82%) and saves them money in the long run (78%).¹

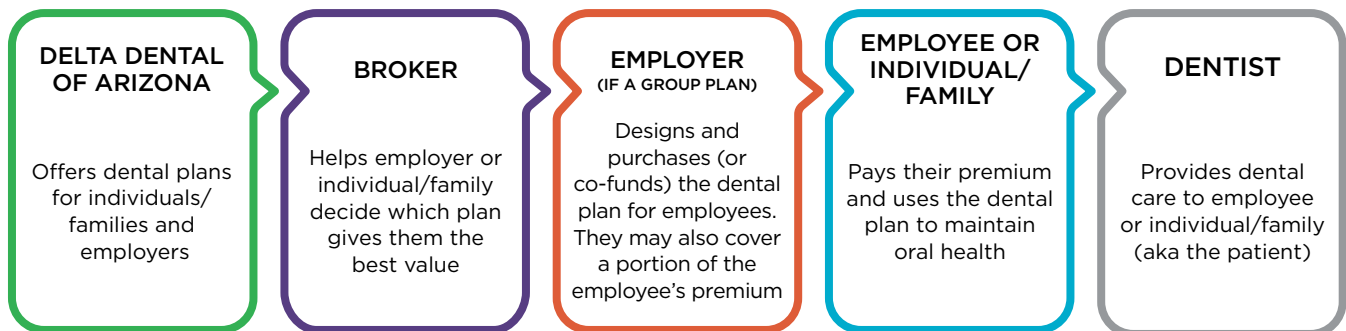
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR DENTISTS?

Delta Dental of Arizona's goal is to expand access to oral health care in Arizona. We work with individuals, families and employers across the state to offer rich benefits and financially support patients when they visit your office for dental care.

It's a win-win-win for patients, employers and dentists alike. When patients and their families have dental insurance, they are more likely to visit the dentist and maintain their oral health.¹ Employers benefit from a healthier workforce and dentists get to keep their chairs full and improve the oral health of more patients.

WHO ARE DELTA DENTAL OF ARIZONA'S STAKEHOLDERS?

While it may seem simple, Delta Dental of Arizona serves a variety of stakeholders. Each of these stakeholders rely on Delta Dental to provide exceptional benefits at an affordable cost.

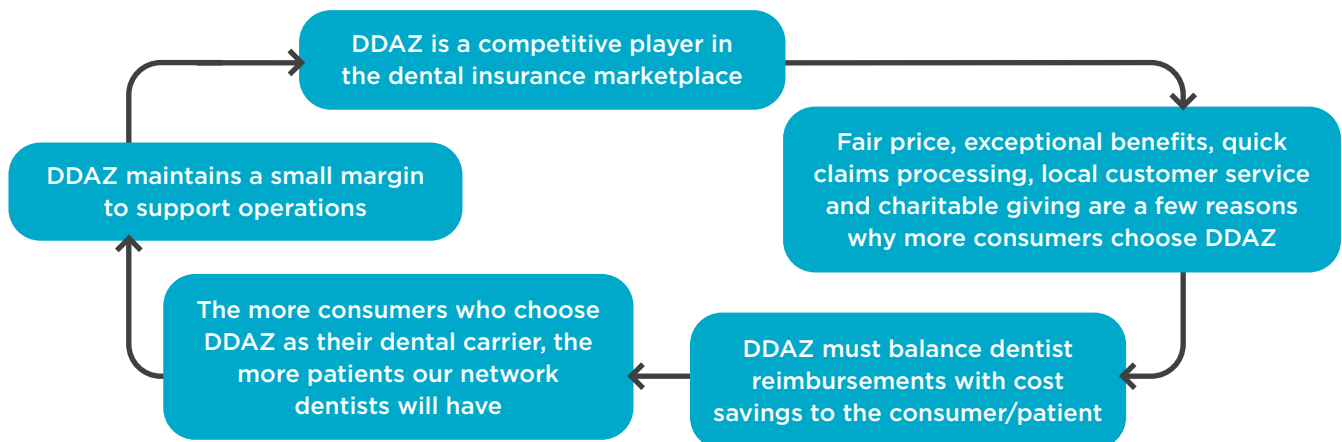


¹Delta Dental 2019 Adult Oral Health and Well-Being Study.



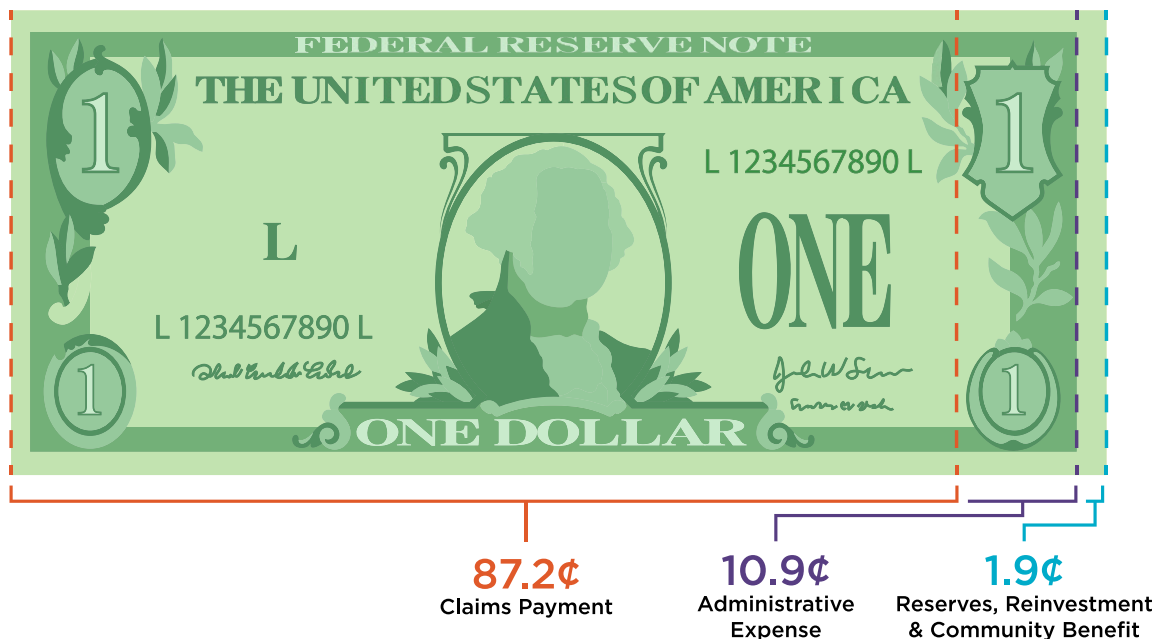
THE DELTA DENTAL INSURANCE MODEL

Delta Dental of Arizona is the No. 1 dental benefits carrier in Arizona.² This status helps us fill our network dentists' chairs and promote good oral health across the state. Here's how the process works:



WHERE DOES ALL THE MONEY GO?

Delta Dental of Arizona is a not-for-profit organization, which means we are a steward of the benefit dollars our customers pay. As you can see below, our model is simple—more than 87 cents of every dollar we earn is used to pay dental claims. The rest is used to cover administrative expenses, fulfill our reserves requirements and give back to the community. Here is where every dollar we collect goes:³



²Phoenix Business Journal, "Top Dental Insurers List", 2000-2020.

³Internal Delta Dental of Arizona data, 2020.