

PCPs: KEEP PATIENTS SMILING FOR LIFE!



As a Primary Care Provider were you aware that:

▶ **According to the Surgeon General the perception that oral health is separate from general health is deeply ingrained in the American consciousness.**

▶ **Oral Health Plan for NYS Reports have linked poor oral health to adverse general health outcomes.**

▶ **In New York State, approximately 50% of children experience tooth decay by the third grade.**

▶ **By age 35-44, 45% have lost one or more teeth to tooth decay or gum disease.**

▶ **Life threatening cancers of the mouth and throat are detected in five New Yorkers every day.**

Anxiety and fear of pain are some of the reasons our members delay getting dental care until a dental emergency exists.

We need your help in educating our members on the importance of good dental care. It is recommended that adults see the dentist at least once or twice a year, and the recommendation from the American Dental Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics is that dental exams start at two years of age for children. Dental visits present an opportunity for providing preventative services as well as early detection of any oral or dental problems. Without proper dental care, our members face possible tooth decay and disease that can lead to a lifetime of pain and complications



Although annual dental visits are one of the measures that are used for quality comparisons between health plans, at NHP we are also very concerned with the overall health of our members. The linkage between poor dental health and poor general

medical health is staggering. So please help us to get every member to see their dentist, especially our children where we believe you can help us make the most significant impact and ultimately help NHP demonstrate our commitment to good dental health and show improvement in this measure.

SO PLEASE:

▶ ***Use any opportunity to integrate oral health into primary health care visits.***

▶ ***Encourage your member to make an appointment with their dentist. If they need any assistance, have them call Healthplex at 1-800-468-9868.***

▶ ***If you practice in a health center where both medical and dental care is available ALWAYS try to schedule a medical visit and a dental visit together when possible.***

▶ ***Encourage yearly dental visits as part of your routine exam starting at age 2.***

KEEP YOUR PATIENTS SMILING FOR LIFE!

