

**CompBenefits Texas  
Quality/Preventive Health Study Final Report  
Oral Cancer Screening, 2003-2004**

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**Project Goal:**

- ◆ To increase the number of CompBenefits participating general dentists performing Oral Cancer screenings on CompBenefits members as part of a periodic oral evaluation.
- ◆ To analyze the impact of provider and member education regarding the early detection and prevention of oral cancer.

**Baseline Data:**

Two Hundred and three (203) participating general dentist offices were shown to have received office site visits, including patient record audits during the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2001. A sample of 61(30%) offices was taken from the total offices visited during that time period. Out of 61 offices visited and (5) patient records reviewed in each office, 12 (20% of the sample) providers were found to be performing/documenting oral cancer screening examinations during routine periodic evaluation visits on all 5 of the patient records reviewed. Four (6% of the sample) providers were found not to be performing/documenting oral cancer screenings on any of the 5 patient records that were review.

The aim of the initiative is to increase the number of participating CompBenefits general dentists, who perform/document oral cancer screenings during routine periodic evaluation visits, thereby increasing patient awareness regarding the importance of early detection and treatment of oral cancer.

**Performance Goal:**

To increase the frequency of general dentists performing Oral Cancer Screenings during periodic oral evaluation visits, as an aid in the early detection of oral cancer.

**Improvement Intervention:**

Participating general dentists' offices were advised of the initiative and supplied with literature produced by the American Dental Association to assist them with educating their patients about the early warning signs of oral cancer. The providers were asked to perform and document when screenings are performed during periodic oral examination visits with their patients.

**Project Outcome:**

Post improvement intervention data acquired via a survey revealed that the number of practitioners performing oral cancer screenings during periodic oral examination visits increased significantly. Out of the 45 offices that responded to the survey (25% of the

sample), 96% responded that they always perform oral cancer screenings during periodic examination visits. Out of that same group of respondents, 74% indicated that they always document the screening in the patient's dental record, while 11% indicated that they always document the screening only if there are oral lesions present. This is an increase of 46% from the results of the patient record audits in 2001. Twenty-four percent (24%) of the respondents indicated that they never provide their patients with literature regarding the importance of oral cancer screenings. Twenty-two percent (22%) indicated that they provide their patients with literature only if the patient requests the information, and 13% indicated that they provide the educational literature only if the patient uses tobacco. Forty-two percent (42%) of the respondents indicated that the ADA brochure that CompBenefits provided, *Important News About the Early Detection of Oral Cancer*, was helpful, while 51% of the survey respondents indicated that they never received the brochures.

All of the survey respondents indicated that they perform and document oral cancer screenings under certain circumstances. It can therefore be concluded from the survey data that documentation of oral cancer screenings, or the lack thereof, is not necessarily an indication that the screenings are not being performed during periodic examination visits. Based on the post intervention outcome, it can be concluded that the intervention achieved its intended goal of increasing the number of participating general dentists performing and documenting oral cancer screenings on their patients during periodic oral examination visits.

**Conclusion/Recommendation:**

Limitations of the study included confounding variables, such as post intervention data collection. Survey, rather than actual patient record data, was used for the post intervention analysis due to limited resources. The ADA Oral Cancer campaign and public service announcements may have also contributed to the successful outcome of the study. Although the study initiated by CompBenefits may have concluded it is the recommendation of the QI staff that CompBenefits continue to assist providers with educating their patients on the importance of early detection of oral cancerous lesions to improve the changes of successful treatment of this very serious disease.