

The Future of Dental Plans

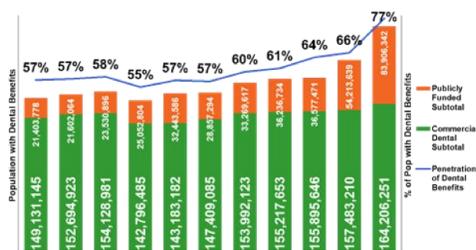
How in-office plans are changing the game

By Landon Lemoine, VP of Growth at Bento

Whether you're just starting a practice or have been established for years, providing in-office plans can help solve some of the biggest challenges your practice will face financially today. In-office plans are a relatively new subscription-based membership model that can generate additional revenue, create life-long patients, and provide better financial and care solutions for your uninsured patients and small businesses around your office.

There are more uninsured patients now than ever

It's a known fact – Americans with access to dental benefits are more likely to go to the dentist, take their children to the dentist, receive restorative care and experience greater overall health according to *The Haves and the Have-Nots: Consumers with and without Dental Benefits* by the National Association of Dental Plans (NADP).



As of 2016 according to the NADP it is estimated around 23% of the population does not have Dental Benefits

It's clear that when provided a dental benefit, patients are motivated to go to the dentist and take a proactive role with their oral health. Fortunately, nearly 77% of Americans have access to a dental benefit through an employer, association, group or by other means.

However, 23% of Americans are left without dental benefits. In 2017, the ADA estimated that over 100 million American adults fell into this category. A large amount of the US population and your patient pool are not taking the same proactive approach to their oral health as those with benefits.

Uninsured individuals are more likely to need extractions or dentures and less likely to have received previous restorative care or treatments for gum disease. Studies have shown that they have reported higher incidences of other illnesses. For example, these individuals are 67% more likely to be diagnosed with heart disease, 50% more likely to have osteoporosis, and 29% more likely to have diabetes.

Not only is their oral and overall health affected, but these individuals are missing valuable opportunities for prevention and early treatment. Many dental treatments are bypassing the dental office completely, accounting for over 2 million emergency room visits annually¹. Yikes!

COVID-19 has expanded demand

The COVID crisis has exacerbated this problem. As a result, millions of Americans have filed for unemployment, drastically increasing the quantity of individuals without access to a benefit. Since many of these individuals previously had access to a dental benefit, they understand the value of receiving regular, preventative treatment.

While the number of uninsured patients continues to grow, patient visits have also decreased drastically. Practices that closed now have patients who missed regular cleanings and preventative visits. As patients begin to resume regular visits, the time missed will lead to more patients needing restorative procedures. A combination of lack of access to benefits and increasing demand for expensive procedures will create even more need for an effective, value-based alternative for your patients.

A better option for dental practices and patients

	IN-OFFICE PLAN*	DISCOUNT CARD	PPO**
NET REVENUE TO DENTIST	\$750+	\$230	\$260
GUARANTEED REVENUE	\$350	No	No
% OF PATIENT PAYMENTS TO DENTIST	100%	70%	30%
CONTROL OF PLAN DESIGN	Yes	No	No
CONTROL OF FEE SCHEDULE	Yes	No	No
DENIAL OF CLAIMS	No	No	Yes
ANNUAL MAXIMUMS	No	No	Yes
WAITING PERIODS	No	No	6-12 Mo.
EXCLUSIONS FOR PRE-EXISTING CONDITIONS	No	No	Yes

*Based on a \$350 annual membership plan created using Bento, plus non-covered services delivered to patient

**Aetna Dental Direct Plan, \$445 Premium + \$50 Deductible

While solutions for uninsured patients exist, buying a traditional dental insurance plan without employer sponsorship can be confusing and expensive. Traditional dental insurance **PPO plans** have high annual premiums, long waiting periods and often lack the coverage patients need most. For most individuals and families, particularly seniors and lower income families, traditional PPO plans are not an effective option.

Discount cards are a cost-effective option to a traditional insurance plan but present another set of problems. When patients purchase discount cards, dentists have little to no control of the pricing and fee schedules. Not only that, revenue is not guaranteed as the sale of the discount card goes to the middleman. While discount cards provide an increased value to patients, they rarely cover many of the procedures and services that patients really need and the patient/dentist relationship and continuity of care suffers.

Enter the **in-office plan!** Reduce dependency on traditional insurance companies by cutting them out of the picture and provide customized dental plans directly to patients. The

dentist is in complete control of the services covered and the pricing. Thus, enabling practices to offer plans that focus on value and/or expanded service offerings to patients. Plans can even be targeted towards specific patient groups. For example, your practice can create an in-office plan dedicated to seniors that provides routine procedures as well as enhanced offerings for dentures or implants. Instead of premiums being wasted on procedures that patients may or may not use, dentists design plans that make most sense for their patients. Financially, any revenue derived from a plan goes directly to those doing the work, the dental office. It's a win-win situation for everyone.

Bento has revolutionized in-office plans for practices

Bento was created with a mission to provide access to affordable oral care for every American. Bento is a modern alternative to traditional dental insurance. We enable employers, groups, and individuals' access to comprehensive dental coverage through an advanced AI-based digital platform. Unlike traditional insurance companies, Bento works directly with dentists and provides better solutions for practices, patients and employers. Bento is proud to be endorsed by the American Dental Association and the Texas Dental Association.

In July 2020, Bento introduced in-office plans into our tech-enabled platform. When creating plans powered by Bento, dentists have complete control from plan design, pricing, and Bento even provides the tools needed to start selling plans to patients. Creating a plan powered by Bento is completely free, and only takes minutes. Only pay a small fee when members actually join your plan. Let us help you change the world for the better by making a better solution today. No matter what your target audience is, we can help you achieve positive outcomes through treatment planning improving the health and well-being of your patients.

Want to learn more about creating an in-office plan for your practice? Visit bento.net or speak to one of our dedicated plan consultants by calling [800-734-8484](tel:800-734-8484) or by sending an email network@bento.net. Start offering your own in-office plans today!