



THE BRIDGE

News from Delta Dental of Tennessee

Covered bridge near
the Smoky Mountains

WINTER 2022

A *disconnect* in overprescribing opioids

It's an epidemic that started long before COVID-19 infected the United States. The opioid overdose crisis continues to claim the lives of tens of thousands of Americans every year.

The misuse of and addiction to opioids, including prescription pain relievers, heroin, and synthetic opioids such as fentanyl, is a national crisis that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates has caused an "economic burden" of \$78.5 billion a year in the U.S. That includes the costs of healthcare, lost productivity, addiction treatment, and criminal justice involvement.

It's believed that the reassurances by pharmaceutical companies in the late 1990s that patients would not become addicted to prescription opioid pain relievers triggered healthcare providers, including dentists, to prescribe them at greater rates. This led to widespread distribution and misuse of these medications before it became clear that they could indeed be highly addictive.

Even so, dentists nationally continue to overprescribe opioids to their patients despite being aware of the effectiveness of nonopioid analgesics for managing dental pain, according to the results of a Georgetown University survey published in the Journal of the American Dental Association.

In an article on DrBicuspid.com, it is reported that of 269 survey responses from dentists in the U.S., 84% of respondents reported believing that nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID)-ac-

etaminophen combinations are equally as effective or more effective than opioids. That's nearly double the 43% of those surveyed who reported regularly prescribing opioid medications.

"These results suggest that dentists are familiar with the evidence about the effectiveness of NSAID-acetaminophen medications, but their self-reported prescribing patterns demonstrate a disconnect," said first author Matthew Heron in a statement from Georgetown University Medical Center.

Heron conducted the research as an undergraduate student at Georgetown's School of Nursing and Health Studies.

In Tennessee, however, the number of opioid prescriptions for pain has actually been decreasing in recent years. According to Tennessee's 2021 Annual Overdose Report, 1.96 million prescriptions of opioids for pain were filled in 2016. That number has fallen to 1.26 million filled in 2020, representing a decrease of 35.7 percent.

That same report shows a decrease in indicators of "risky" opioid prescribing practices continuing in 2020, including high dosage and overlapping with other medications.

While the CDC reports that dentists have historically represented the largest prescribers of opioids to adolescents and young adults, data suggests dentists in Tennessee are increasingly working to be part of the solution.

A Quick Reminder:



State of Tennessee dental benefits took effect January 1, 2022

More than 200,000 eligible for voluntary dental benefits plan with Delta Dental of Tennessee

Delta Dental of Tennessee, the state's largest independent dental benefits carrier, has been awarded the contract by the Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration, Division of Benefits Administration for the State's fully-insured voluntary dental preferred provider organization program.

"State employees are some of the hardest working members of our communities, and we look forward to providing a comprehensive, value-based dental benefit plan that promotes good oral and overall health," said Dr. Phil Wenk, President and CEO of Delta Dental of Tennessee. "Participants will have access to one of the largest provider networks in the state, ensuring they can access the care they need in their community, from routine preventive checkups and cleanings to a cavity filling or other procedures."

The plan is offered to State employees and retirees, as well as employees of agencies affiliated with the State benefits program. It is developed for the Delta Dental PPOSM network, which includes 74 percent of dentists in Tennessee. It is a four-year contract that makes more than 200,000 people eligible for a voluntary dental benefits plan.

The plan took effect on January 1, 2022, and dentists can log into the Dental Office Toolkit for eligibility now.

**PARTNERS
FOR HEALTH**

Below is a brief summary of the State of Tennessee's dental benefits plan.
For more details, visit Tennessee.DeltaDental.com/Dentists.

	Delta Dental PPO™ Dentist	Delta Dental Premier® Dentist	Non-Participating Dentist
Diagnostic and Preventive	Plan Pays 100%	Plan Pays 80%	Plan Pays 80%
Basic Services	Plan Pays 80%	Plan Pays 60%	Plan Pays 60%
Major Services	Plan Pays 50%	Plan Pays 50%	Plan Pays 50%
Orthodontic Services	Plan Pays 50%	Plan Pays 50%	Plan Pays 50%

New Delta Dental Groups

Delta Dental of Tennessee welcomes the following new groups. If you have any questions regarding coverage, you may check eligibility online at www.DentalOfficeToolkit.com or call Customer Service at 800-223-3104.

Chick-Fil-A Hunter's Crossing	Alcoa	Washington County Johnson City	
IRM-C & C Company	Baneberry	Animal Shelter	Johnson City
Celero Services Corporation	Brentwood	Precision Electrical Company, Inc.	Kingsport
Trilliant Health, Inc.	Brentwood	Belleza Salon & Spa, Inc.	Knoxville
Vextec Corporation	Brentwood	Christmas Lumber Company, Inc.	Knoxville
Belisle Machine & Tool, Inc.	Camden	Crossland Title	Knoxville
Branch Technology, Inc.	Chattanooga	Crown Financial	Knoxville
Lee-Smith, Inc.	Chattanooga	Girl Scout Council of the	
Sese Industrial Services		Southern Appalachians	Knoxville
US Corporation	Chattanooga	Meta Enterprises LLC dba ScanStore	Knoxville
Siskin Hospital for		Pilot Corporation	Knoxville
Physical Rehabilitation	Chattanooga	Pilot Travel Centers, LLC	Knoxville
Taimen Transport	Chattanooga	Ritchie Woodwork Company, LLC	Knoxville
Taimen Trucklines, LLC	Chattanooga	Super Bee Holdings, LLC	Knoxville
Blue Ridge Development		University Health System, Inc.	Knoxville
Partners, LLC	Clarksville	Weed Man of Knoxville	Knoxville
BW James Jewelers	Cleveland	Remar Technologies Group, LLC	Lebanon
Power & Pryse Orthodontics	Clinton	City of Lobelville	Lobelville
McGinnis Oil Company, LLC	Collierville	ACE Transit	Madison
Harness, LLC	Columbia	Peoples Bank of East TN	Madisonville
Delta Human Resource Agency	Covington	Graves Family Pharmacy, LLC	Mcminnville
Rose Fabricating and		Absolute Comfort Heating	
Industrial Solutions	Covington	and Air Conditioning, LLC	Memphis
Branch Insurance Partners, LLC	Franklin	ARCHd	Memphis
Dream Big Pediatric Therapies	Franklin	Crosstown Brewing Company	Memphis
Halifax Hospitality, LLC	Franklin	Enfinity Supply, LLC	Memphis
Summit Behavioral Healthcare	Franklin	Envoy Source, LLC	Memphis
Marie Nicole Clothing	Gallatin	Fleming Associates Architects	Memphis
The Soft Shirt Place	Gatlinburg	Great River Carnival	Memphis
Glass Insurance Group, LLC	Germantown	Green Mountain Technology	Memphis
Pediatric Dental Group		Larry E. Crum & Associates, LLC	Memphis
& Orthodontics	Germantown	Memphis Consumer Credit Association	
Cornerstone Wealth, LLC	Greeneville	dba Confluent Strategies	Memphis
Claiborne Health & Wellness, Inc.	Harrogate	Midsouth Independent Group, PLLC	Memphis
BRS Foods	Hendersonville	Provident Practice Management	
MGM Industries, Inc.	Hendersonville	Services, LLC & VRF Eye Specialty	
Thompson Appalachian		Group, PLC	Memphis
Hardwoods, Inc.	Huntland	Middle Tennessee Christian School	Murfreesboro
Scott County Schools	Huntsville	DesignWorks Investments, LLC	Nashville
Coffman's	Jackson	Gary Allan Tours	Nashville
Urban Strategies, LLC	Johnson City	H&S Music City Holdings, Inc.	Nashville

New Delta Dental Groups Cont.

Delta Dental of Tennessee welcomes the following new groups. If you have any questions regarding coverage, you may check eligibility online at www.DentalOfficeToolkit.com or call Customer Service at 800-223-3104.

Loftis Steel & Aluminum, Inc.	Nashville
Matter Health	Nashville
Novatech, Inc.	Nashville
Phase2 Labs	Nashville
Preston Taylor Ministries	Nashville
SaVida Health	Nashville
Southwestern Great American dba	
Southwestern Family of Companies	Nashville
State of Tennessee	Nashville
Wills Company	Nashville

KF Group	Nolensville
Chapman Cattle	Nunnely
Eckert Chiropractic Clinic	Oak Ridge
Pyramex Safety Products, LLC	Piperton
Airtech Service Company	Powell
Building Service Concepts, Inc.	Powell
The University of the South	Sewanee
Ivy Academy	Soddy Daisy
Lake County Courthouse Employees	Tiptonville
Drisdell Consulting Services, Inc.	Walland

New Delta Dental Providers

Delta Dental of Tennessee also welcomes our new and returning contracted providers.

Myungho Kim	Alcoa
Michelle Clinton Munoz	Bartlett
Geoffrey Kerns	Bartlett
Justine Bursian	Brentwood
Robina Habib	Chattanooga
Victoria Hall	Chattanooga
Branimir Lackovic	Clarksville
Alicia Gordon	Clarksville
John Harris	Clarksville
Michael McNaught	Clarksville
Kayla Jones	Cleveland
Kayla Khan	Cleveland
Christopher Stonecipher	Collierville
Amelia Lindsey	Columbia
Kathleen Schessler	Columbia
Tasneem Sandhu	Copperhill
Laura Vo	Cordova
Kirulus Wifky	Crossville
Aisha Farooq	Dickson
Laura Steff	Gallatin
Michael Rogers	Greeneville
Daniel Carter	Harrogate
Rayna Turner	Hendersonville
Laura Thompson	Hermitage
Hanlan Chambers	Jackson
Thomas Bevelock	Jamestown
Christopher Daniel	Jasper
Frank White	Knoxville
Eric Carter	Knoxville

Wesley Johnson	Lakeland
James Christian	Memphis
Aisha Henry	Memphis
Jacob Stegeman	Memphis
Elizabeth Zebian	Memphis
Liang Hong	Memphis
Sydney Burcl	Millington
Andrew Lepczyk	Mount Juliet
Ashley Bhana	Mount Juliet
Rodney Alles	Nashville
Ronald Dinning	Nashville
Estella Irelan	Nashville
Cynthia Lopez Ventura	Nashville
Paula Ottaway	Nashville
Duke Trinh	Nashville
Ahmad Rahman	Nashville
Wesley Suddarth	Nashville
William Keeton	Nolensville
Hayden Ray	Nolensville
Julia Francois	Oak Ridge
Kimberly Thomas	Powell
Magi Sargious	Pulaski
John Adams	Smyrna
Prakruthi Cegu Phani Raj	Smyrna
Ramsey El Benni	Spring Hill
Amy Hoang	Spring Hill
Lindsay Kuehl	Spring Hill
Ceonna Parran	Spring Hill



Don't let longer delivery times delay your payment

If it seems like your first-class US Postal Service mail is being delivered slower lately, that's because it is.

According to *Business Insider*, the USPS instituted longer delivery times beginning October 1 as part of the postmaster general's decade-long effort to cut costs at the agency.

Prior to October 1, the postal service said delivery for standard first-class mail across the US should take no longer than three days. Under the new guidelines, Americans can expect:

- Mail being delivered 140 or fewer miles to be delivered within two days;
- Within three days for mail traveling between 140 and 930 miles;
- Four days for mail traveling between 930 and 1,907 miles;
- And within five days for mail traveling longer distances.

We know how important timely reimbursement is to our providers, so don't let these changes affect your cashflow. Our network providers still sending claims by mail can cut out the middleman and avoid any delays with our Dental Office Toolkit (DOT) and Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT).

DOT gives your office instant online access to review patient eligibility, check the status of submitted claims and much more at no cost, while helping your office to get paid faster than when you submit paper claims. It also allows your office to avoid the costs associated with physical mailings, like paper, envelopes and postage.

Some offices choose to fax claims instead of mailing them. While faster than mail, faxed claims must still be processed by hand and take several days to input and pay. And payment by check adds even more time to the process.

Electronic claims through DOT for providers who use EFT means that you have money in your account usually within 24-48 hours of claim submission.

If you need assistance using DOT or signing up for EFT, please contact your professional relations representatives at ProfessionalRelations1@DeltaDentalTN.com.





Delta Dental of Tennessee
240 Venture Circle • Nashville, TN 37228-1699



Don't miss these Dental Office Deals

sponsored by Delta Dental

There are significant savings you might be missing on supplies and services you already use. Dental Office Deals is a program that provides significant discounts in a variety of areas for Delta Dental network dentists. The program offers discounts for many common dental practice needs — such as dental instruments, dental supplies, defibrillators, shipping service, cellular phone service, drinking water, office supplies, payroll services and continuing education — with an average discount of 33 percent off retail prices.

Delta Dental has a partnership with United Dental Alliance (UDA), the largest group purchasing organization focused on dentistry. United Dental Alliance is providing these business agreements, developed for their member base, for use by Delta Dental dentists.

This program is free to qualified participants, and there is no cost to enroll with any selected business partner. Each practice will need to invest a little time to understand which opportunity is right for them, but the return on that investment could be high.

Scan this QR Code



or visit

Tennessee.DeltaDental.com/Dentists
to find a full list of savings.



**Find more info and how
to register**

Visit the Delta Dental website and log in to your account through the Dentist portal on the top bar. Select Dental Office Deals at the bottom of the left column to access the Dental Office Deals portal. Select the 'Register For Free' button on the top bar and provide the requested information.



Questions or comments

Delta Dental is sponsoring this program as we believe there is significant value for our Delta Dental networks. United Dental Alliance is available to answer any questions you may have or resolve any enrollment problems that arise. Their contact information can be found on the Dental Office Deals website.