

1 Report of the HDA Dental Benefits Providers Task Force – 2020

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3 **Strategic Plan Goal #3 – Advocacy:** Effectively ensure that the profession of dentistry  
4 is protected and maintained at the highest regard, among key decision makers and the  
5 people of Hawaii, through strong public policy and advocacy efforts.  
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7 The HDA Dental Benefits Provider Task Force (DBPTF) conducted a survey in the  
8 fourth quarter of 2019. The survey was concentrated on topics related to dental benefits  
9 and areas of concern among HDA members. The survey guided the DBPTF to direct its  
10 activity in the areas of:

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12 1. Low reimbursement levels  
13 2. Non-covered services  
14 3. Fee reduction regulation.  
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16 The DBPTF was given a grant of \$18,000 from the ADA FIIST program, an extension of  
17 the ADA SPA program. These are funds for state associations to use for matters related  
18 to dental benefits providers. The Task Force goals were to use these funds for consulting  
19 and legal aid. The ADA SPA FIIST holds regular meetings to discuss the progress made  
20 in the use of the grants.  
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22 Due to the COVID-19 activities, HDA President Dr. Wayne Leong suspended the  
23 activities of the DBPTF in April 2020. FIIST funds were returned to the ADA and the  
24 DBPTF was disbanded.  
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26 In May 2020, the DBPTF was resurrected to assist dental practices with “Return to  
27 Work” under the new CDC guidelines. Tasks asked of the DBPTF were to deal with the  
28 staggering cost of personal protective equipment (PPE), office workflow, and new  
29 engineering changes that were now being recommended.  
30

31 The DBPTF sent a letter to the four large dental benefit carriers in Hawaii, with the  
32 position that PPE, work and patient flow, and office engineering were creating a new  
33 normal in the pandemic. Responses from all four carriers were received. Most decided  
34 to pay for PPE in dental practices that were network providers, through CDT D1999 by  
35 billing description or by supplemental assistance programs.  
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37 The DBPTF ran another survey in May 2020 to poll HDA members on the topics of  
38 Return to Work during the pandemic, and PPE. The data was used to further the  
39 conversations with the dental benefits providers. Many of the dental benefits providers  
40 have time limits to the supplemental aid for PPE, but due to the contagious and persistent  
41 nature of the virus and the costs, shortages and disruptions in the PPE supply chains, the  
42 DBPTF is committed to ongoing vigilance in seeking more support from these providers  
43 for PPE.  
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45 Another letter was sent in July 2020 to the dental benefits providers and the response  
46 yielded time extensions to supplemental aid. Conversations with dental leaders led to the

47 belief that further discussions in this area of elevated costs will have to be handled either  
48 by establishing a CDT code for PPE, and/or by increases in patient care costs that will  
49 have to be factored into future fee schedules.

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51 The DBPTF in 2021 plans to conduct surveys to track the needs of the HDA members.  
52 Although the Task Force has not been able to deal with its original mission from earlier  
53 this year, the work to support HDA Members in the dental benefits arena has been  
54 occurring in small steps. Areas of interest the Task Force is looking into are the Bento  
55 program recently endorsed by the ADA, and reviewing new programs being introduced  
56 by dental benefits providers for new dental networks. The Task Force may seek a FIIST  
57 grant from the ADA if an appropriate activity is identified.

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59 The Chair would like to thank Task Force members: Drs. Kerry Ishihara, Scott  
60 Kanamori, Neil Nunokawa, ex officio President-Elect Dr. Patsy Fujimoto, and President  
61 Dr. Wayne Leong.

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64 Respectfully Submitted,

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67 Dayton Lum, DDS

68 Chair

69 Dental Benefits Providers Task Force

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71 **Recommendation of the HOD Reference Task Force on the Report of the HDA**  
72 **Dental Benefits Providers Task Force:**

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74 The HOD Reference Task Force recommends that the Report of the HDA Dental  
75 Benefits Providers Task Force be accepted.

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77 **Action taken by the House:** The HDA HOD accepted the Report of the HDA Dental  
78 Benefits Providers Task Force.

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