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**Despite Continued COVID Concerns, Virginians Appear Ready to Return to the Dentist  
Delta Dental Urges Virginians to Visit the Dentist**

**ROANOKE, Va. — June 9, 2021 —** A new statewide survey conducted by Delta Dental of Virginia shows 35% of Virginians still feel hesitant to return to the dentist, and more than half of Virginians postponed or missed dental visits as a result of the pandemic last year. With decreasing mask mandates and the gradual return to normalcy, Delta Dental is encouraging Virginians to return to the dentist to guard against the potentially painful consequences of neglected preventive care.

“We spent the last year with our smiles covered. Now, as many of us begin to remove our masks, it’s a perfect reminder that we need to take care of those smiles,” said Dr. Brad Guyton, chief dental officer for Delta Dental of Virginia. “Preventive care is crucial to maintaining physical, mental and emotional well-being, and putting off a routine visit is doing more harm than good. Dentist offices are safer than ever, and there is really no reason to postpone that visit,” said Guyton.

The Delta Dental survey, which was conducted May 26-27, also found that, despite lingering COVID concerns, nearly 73% of Virginians do plan to visit the dentist two or more times over the next 12 months and nearly 94% plan to visit at least once. Those with dental insurance are more likely to visit the dentist, with 79% of insured Virginians saying they plan to visit the dentist two or more times over the coming 12 months and 57% of the uninsured indicating an intention to do so. Seventeen percent of the uninsured said they do not plan to visit the dentist at all.

Americans in general are still largely underinformed about the serious link between oral health and the rest of our well-being. According to Delta Dental’s national [2020 State of America's Oral Health Report](#) only about one in two Americans understand that oral health is closely linked to several medical conditions, including strokes, diabetes, dementia and high blood pressure. The report also points out that:

- The average number of cavities per child increased from one to two, and children missed 4.5 days of school due to oral health issues in the last 12 months.
- Seventy-seven percent of parents worry that oral health issues will have a negative impact on their child’s confidence.
- Fifty-one percent of adults faced unwanted consequences as a result of oral health issues, including lost sleep and missed work.

In addition, 26% of Americans said that not having dental insurance was the reason they failed to visit the dentist in 2020. Dr. Guyton reminds people that most dental plans cover regular check-ups at 100% so, for people with insurance, there is really no reason to skip those visits. And 77% of Virginians feel that having dental insurance is a good motivation to maintain positive oral health.

“For many Virginians, employer-sponsored dental benefits may not be an option,” said Guyton. “Carriers, such as Delta Dental and others, offer individual plans at various price-points, and the uninsured should certainly check out the federal health benefits exchange for other options,” said Guyton.

To read the full 2020 State of America's Oral Health Report and learn more about its findings, [click here](#).

## **About the surveys**

Delta Dental's Adult's Oral Health & Wellness Survey was conducted December 28, 2020, through January 8, 2021, among a nationally representative sample of 1,000+ Americans ages 18+, with a margin of error of +/- 3%.

Delta Dental's Children's Oral Health & Wellness Survey was conducted during the same period, among a nationally representative sample of 1,000+ American parents with children 12 and under, with the same margin of error.

Delta Dental of Virginia's Thoughts on Dental Insurance Survey was conducted May 26-27, 2021 among a representative sample of 250 Virginians.

## **About Delta Dental of Virginia**

*Established in 1964, Delta Dental of Virginia is the largest dental benefits provider in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Delta Dental of Virginia provides high-quality, cost-effective dental plans to more than two million members. Through its foundation, Delta Dental of Virginia has donated millions of dollars to improve the oral health of Virginians.*

*Delta Dental of Virginia is a member of the national Delta Dental Plans Association (DDPA). For more than 50 years, the DDPA has worked to improve oral health nationally. Delta Dental member companies serve more than 80 million people in more than 148,000 groups across the nation.*

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