



## 2006 Report of Consumer Survey of Dental Plans

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes results from the 2006 consumer satisfaction dental survey for the Healthy Families Program (HFP). The survey is an important tool in monitoring quality and access to services. Subscribers receive this information during the Open Enrollment period and in the Program handbook which gives them additional facts about their dental plan choices. California continues to be the only state that has used the dental plan survey. Therefore, there is still no comparative data available.

The results from 2006 survey reveal that the Program has maintained the same level of satisfaction since the survey was done in 2003 with some plans showing improvements or declines in some of the measures as indicated on the following pages. Funding was not allocated for this survey in 2004 and 2005. The results also indicate that subscribers continue to report higher levels of satisfaction with the Exclusive Provider Organizations (EPO's) compared to the Dental Maintenance Organizations (DMO's). However, the overall scores in the dental plan survey continue to be lower than the scores in the health plan survey.

### SURVEY METHODOLOGY

MRMIB conducted the survey through an independent survey vendor, DataStat, Inc., using the Consumer Assessment of Dental Plans Survey (D-CAHPS<sup>®</sup> 1.0)<sup>1</sup> questionnaire. The questionnaire contained 70 questions. Responses to the questions have been summarized into four global ratings and five composite scores. The global ratings included ratings of:

- dental plan
- dental care
- regular dentist
- dental specialist

The composite scores included ratings of:

- getting needed dental care
- getting dental care quickly
- how well dentists communicate
- courteous and helpful office staff
- customer service.

DataStat, Inc. conducted the survey over an 8-week period between August and October 2006. DataStat used a mixed mode (telephone and mail) five-step protocol.

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<sup>1</sup> D-CAHPS<sup>®</sup> is a registered trademark of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)

The five-step protocol consisted of:

- a pre-notification mailing
- an initial survey mailing
- a reminder postcard to all respondents
- a second survey mailing
- a second reminder postcard to all non-respondents

Telephone follow-up was conducted for non-respondents in English and Spanish only. The D-CAHPS protocol for conducting the telephone follow-up in the Asian languages has not been developed. DataStat consulted with MRMIB staff to develop the pre-notification and follow-up letters based on recommended samples from the D-CAHPS® 1.0 protocol.

The survey was administered in five languages – English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese. Families with a non-English language preference received two separate survey booklets – one in English and one in the written language selected on the HFP application.

Nine-hundred families per dental plan were sampled for the survey. The sample size for these surveys was determined by the minimum number of returned surveys needed for the analysis and the expected response rates. MRMIB used the sample size recommended for commercial plan surveys because response rates for the HFP surveys have been comparable to commercial plan subscriber response rates.

The six dental plans had sufficient HFP enrollment to provide the target sample. The number of families who were selected for the survey and the distribution of language surveys for each participating dental plan are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1 – Distribution of Surveys in Each Language Group by Health Plan**

<b>Health Plan</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>V</b>
Access Dental	900	344	489	23	25	19
Delta Dental	900	391	433	44	14	18
Premier Access	900	548	348	1	1	2
Safeguard Dental	900	398	441	38	14	9
Health Net Dental	900	337	523	15	9	16
Western Dental	900	402	480	7	5	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,400</b>	<b>2,420</b>	<b>2,714</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>70</b>

***E= English S=Spanish C=Chinese K=Korean V=Vietnamese***

Table 1 shows that most of the surveys were distributed in English and Spanish. Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese surveys comprised five percent (5%) of the total sample.

## **SURVEY RESULTS: OVERALL RATINGS**

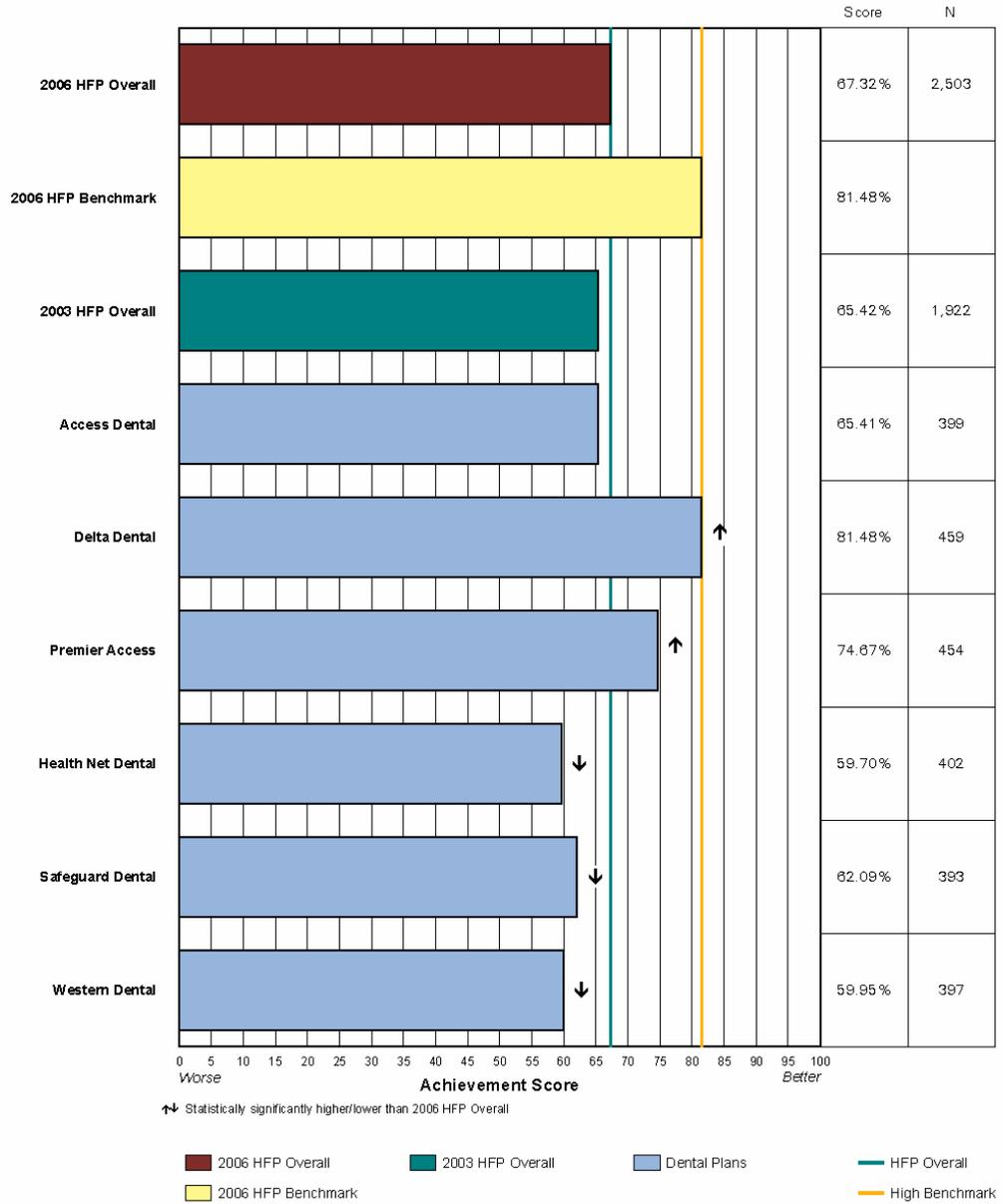
The dental plans had an adequate number of returned surveys to permit the analysis for plan-to-plan comparisons. The minimum number of responses needed for the analysis was 411 completed surveys per plan, which is the target number that (National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) defines for accreditation purposes. This goal allows for at least 100 responses per question for a comparative analysis and is comparable to most types of statistical testing. Tests are considered statistically significant when the number of cases used to compute each score is 30 or greater.

For the four rating questions, a 10-point scale was used to assess overall experience with dental plans, dental care, providers, and specialists. The scale uses “0” to represent the worst and “10” to represent the best score. The achievement scores for these questions were determined by the percentage of families responding to each question using an 8, 9 or 10 rating. Individual plan scores for the 2006 survey are compared with the overall program score in 2006 and 2003 and a benchmark. This benchmark is based on the highest score achieved by a participating dental plan with a minimum of 75 responses.

The following pages contain the HFP overall scores and the individual plan results for the overall rating questions. Plans that have achievement scores significantly higher or lower than the overall program score are indicated by a “↑” or “↓” next to their scores.

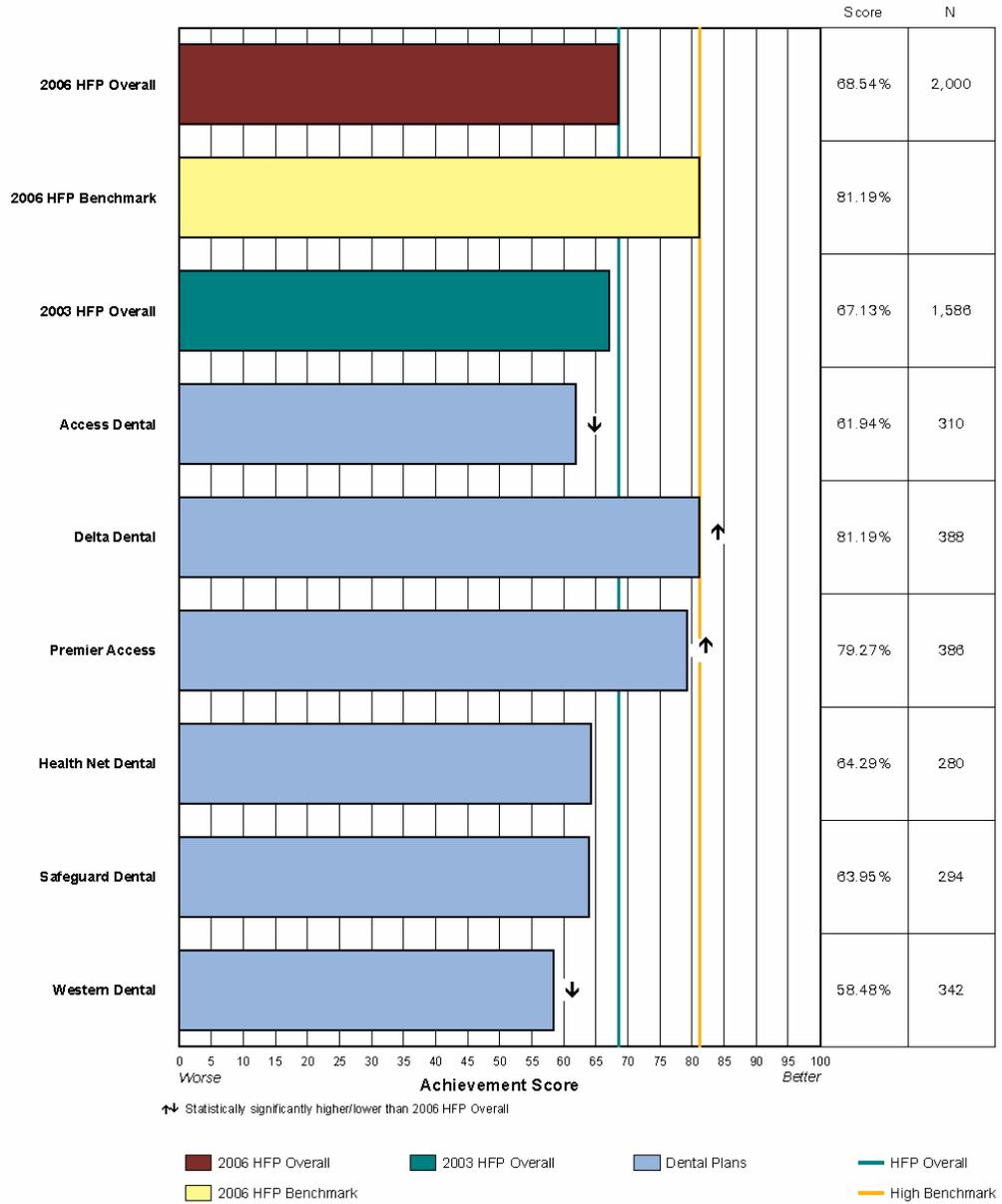
## Overall Ratings

### Q52. Overall rating of dental plan



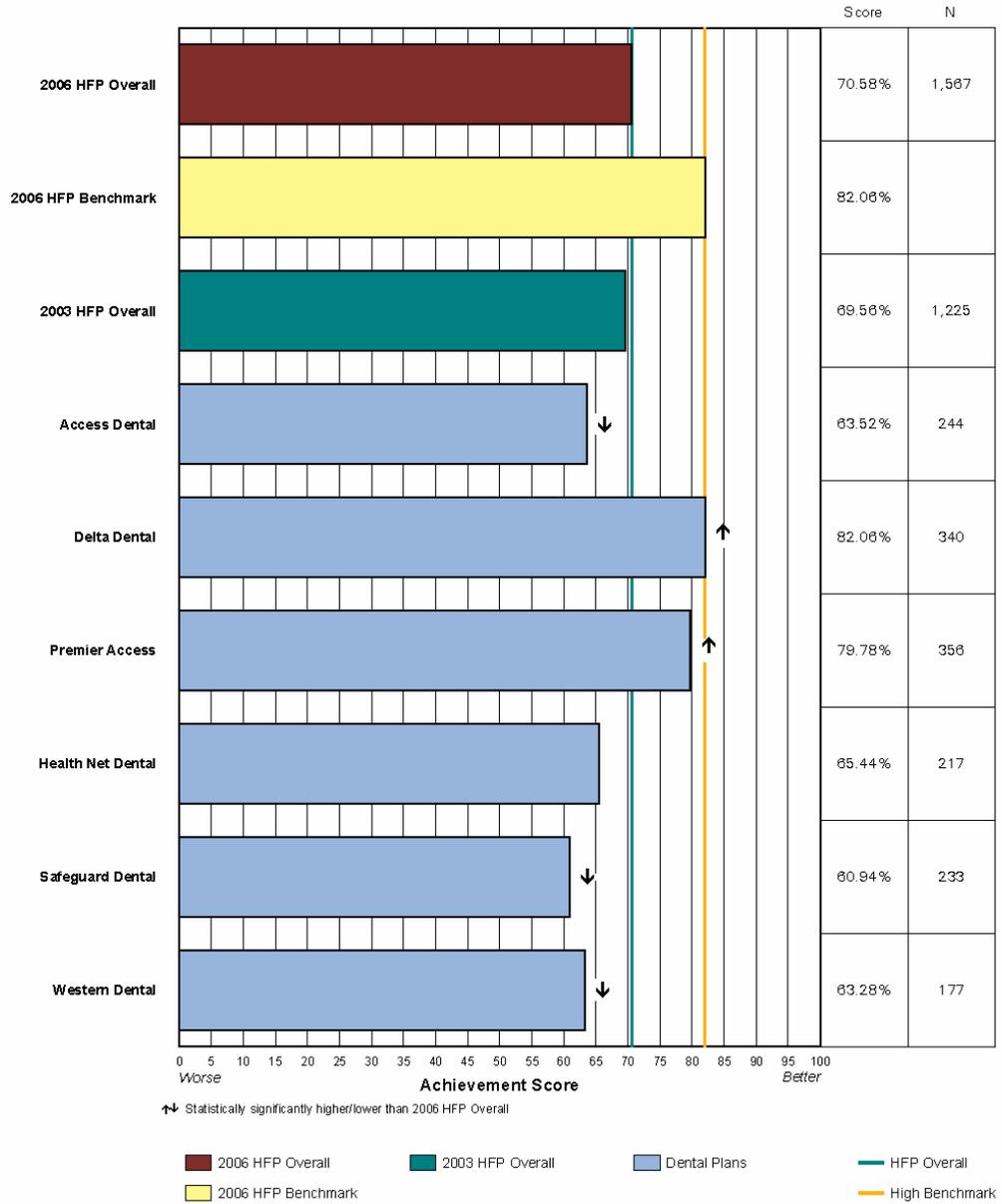
## Overall Ratings

### Q40. Overall rating of dental care



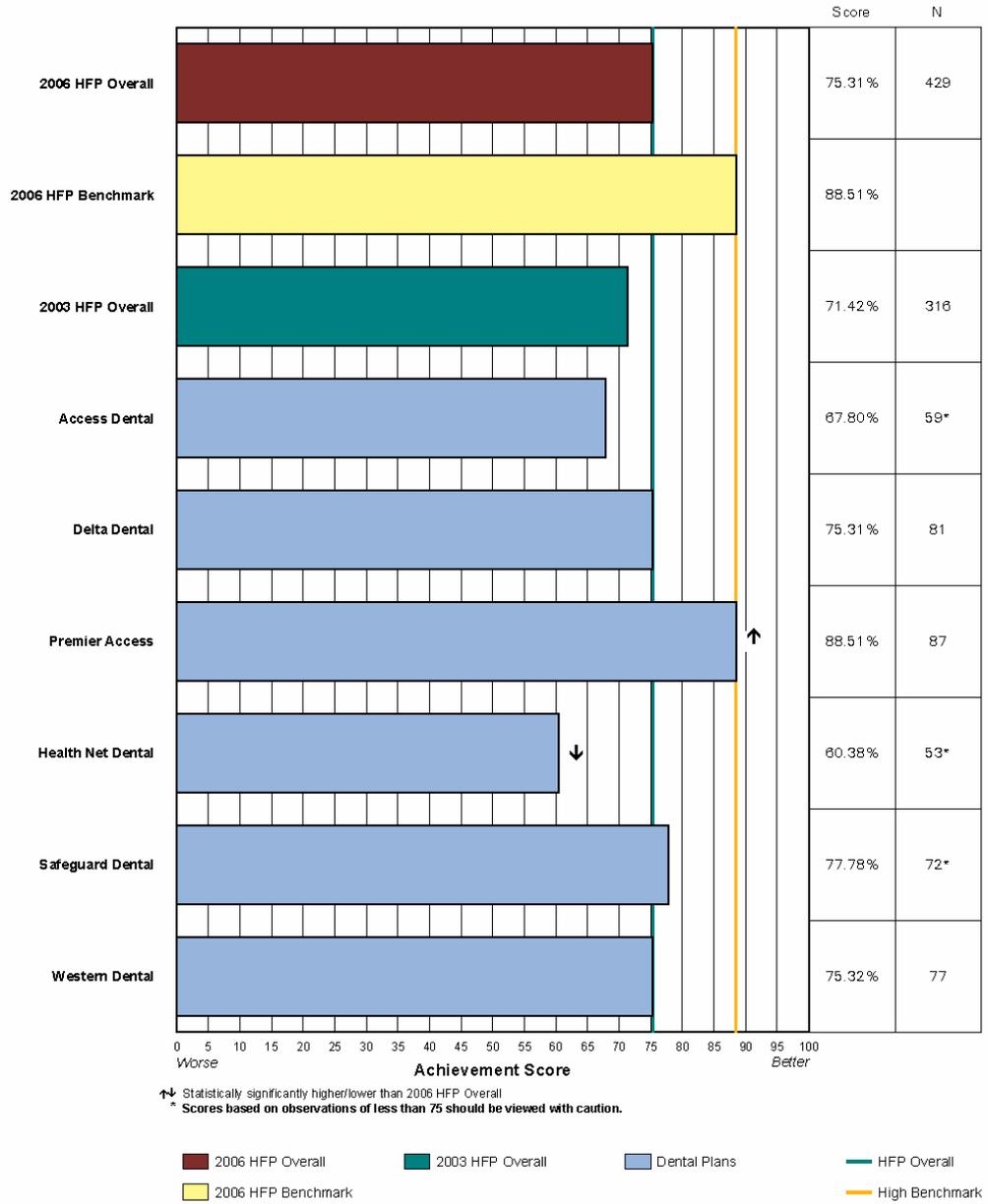
## Overall Ratings

### Q9. Overall rating of personal dentist



## Overall Ratings

### Q14. Overall rating of dental specialist



## Summary of Rating Question Responses

The following changes occurred in the overall ratings from 2003 to 2006:

- The rating of *Dental Plan* increased slightly from 2003 (65.4%) to 2006 (67.3%).
- The rating of *Dental Care* increased slightly from 2003 (67.1%) to 2006 (68.5%).
- The rating of *Personal Dentist* increased slightly from 2003 (69.6%) to 2006 (70.6%).
- The rating of *Dental Specialist* increased from 2003 (71.4%) to 2006 (75.3%).

None of the above increases are statistically significant.

Table 2 shows whether the plan results for the ratings questions were statistically significantly above or below the program average score for 2006.

The following plans had achievement scores that were significantly above the program average in two or more questions:

- Premier Access achieved above average scores in all four questions.
- Delta Dental achieved above average scores in three of the four questions.

The following plans had achievement scores that were significantly below the program average in two or more questions:

- Western Dental received below average scores in three of the four questions.
- Access Dental, Health Net Dental and Safeguard Dental received below average scores in two of the four questions.

**Table 2 – Statistically Significantly Higher or Lower than HFP Overall Ratings Scores**

Dental Plan	Overall Dental Plan	Overall Dental Care	Overall Personal Dentist	Overall Dental Specialist
Access Dental		▼	▼	
Delta Dental	▲	▲	▲	
Health Net Dental	▼			▼
Premier Access	▲	▲	▲	▲
Safeguard Dental	▼		▼	
Western Dental	▼	▼	▼	

▲ = Statistically significantly higher than HFP Overall Rating Scores

▼ = Statistically significantly lower than HFP Overall Rating Scores

Table 3 shows changes in plan scores that have increased or decreased 4 or more percentage points from 2003 to 2006.

**Table 3 – Plan Performance Changes in Overall Ratings from 2003 to 2006**

Dental Plan	Overall Dental Plan	Overall Dental Care	Overall Personal Dentist	Overall Dental Specialist
Access Dental	↑ (5%)			
Delta Dental			↑ (5%)	
Health Net Dental		↑ (5%)	↑ (5%)	↓ (6%)
Premier Access	↑ (10%)			↑ (13%)
Safeguard Dental*				
Western Dental*				

\* Safeguard Dental and Western Dental are new plans participating in the Healthy Families Program and no data is available for the 2003 survey for comparison.

## SURVEY RESULTS: COMPOSITE SCORES

The composite score is made up of questions that are grouped by related broad domains of performance. An example of this grouping, *Getting Dental Care Quickly*, includes questions about getting advice by phone, about how soon appointments were scheduled, and about time spent waiting in the dentist’s office. The achievement score for each composite is determined by the percentage of families who respond positively to each question that comprises the composite. A response is considered positive if the answers are “not a problem” for the questions comprising the *Getting Needed Dental Care* and *Customer Service* composites, and “usually” and “always” for the *Getting Dental Care Quickly*, *How Well Dentists Communicate*, and *Courteous and Helpful Office Staff* composites.

The survey questions that comprise each composite score are listed below.

### “Getting Needed Dental Care”

- Able to get your child a dental office or clinic you are happy with
- Able to get a referral to a specialist for child
- Able to get the care for child believed necessary
- No problems with delays in child’s dental care while awaiting approval

### “Getting Dental Care Quickly”

- Usually or always got help of advice needed of child
- Child usually or always got an appointment to fill or treat a cavity as soon as wanted
- Child usually or always got an appointment for routine care as soon as wanted
- Child usually or always got needed care for mouth pain or dental problem as soon as wanted
- Child never or sometimes waited more than 15 minutes in dentist’s office or clinic

#### “How Well Dentists Communicate”

- Dentists usually or always listened carefully
- Never or sometimes had a hard time speaking with or understanding dentist because you spoke different languages
- Dentists usually or always explained things in an understandable way
- Dentists usually or always showed respect
- Dentists usually or always spent enough time with child

#### “Courteous and Helpful Office Staff”

- Usually or always treated with courtesy and respect by office staff
- Office staff usually or always helpful

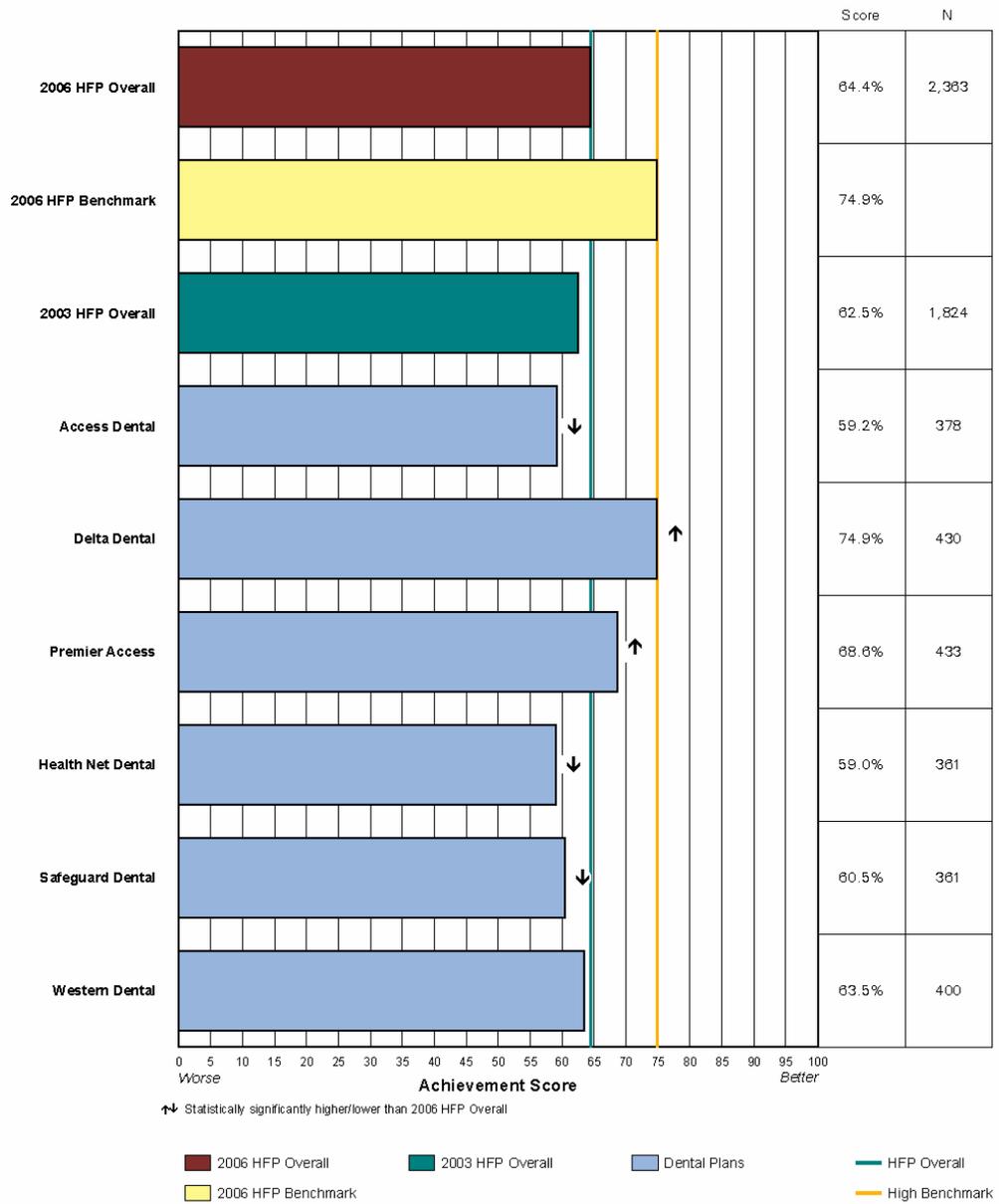
#### “Customer Service”

- Able to find or understand information in written materials
- Able to get help needed when you called child’s dental plan’s customer service

Meaningful differences in the composite scores from one year to the next are more appropriately evaluated by examining changes in the scores of the individual questions that make up each composite score rather than testing for statistical significance.

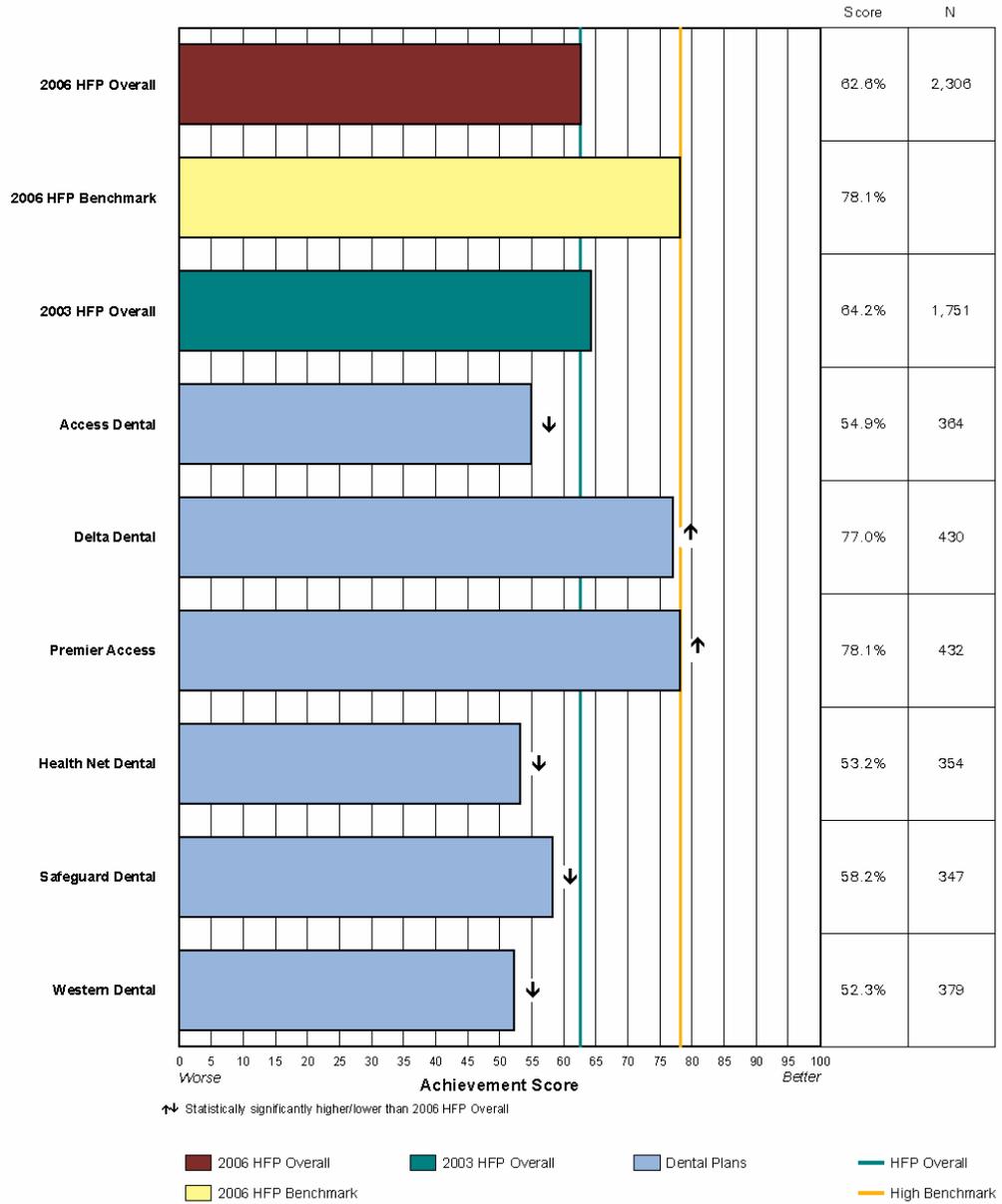
The following pages contain the HFP overall scores and the individual plan results for the composite scores. Plans that have achievement scores significantly higher or lower than the overall program score are indicated by a “↑” or “↓” next to their scores.

## Getting Needed Dental Care Composite Score



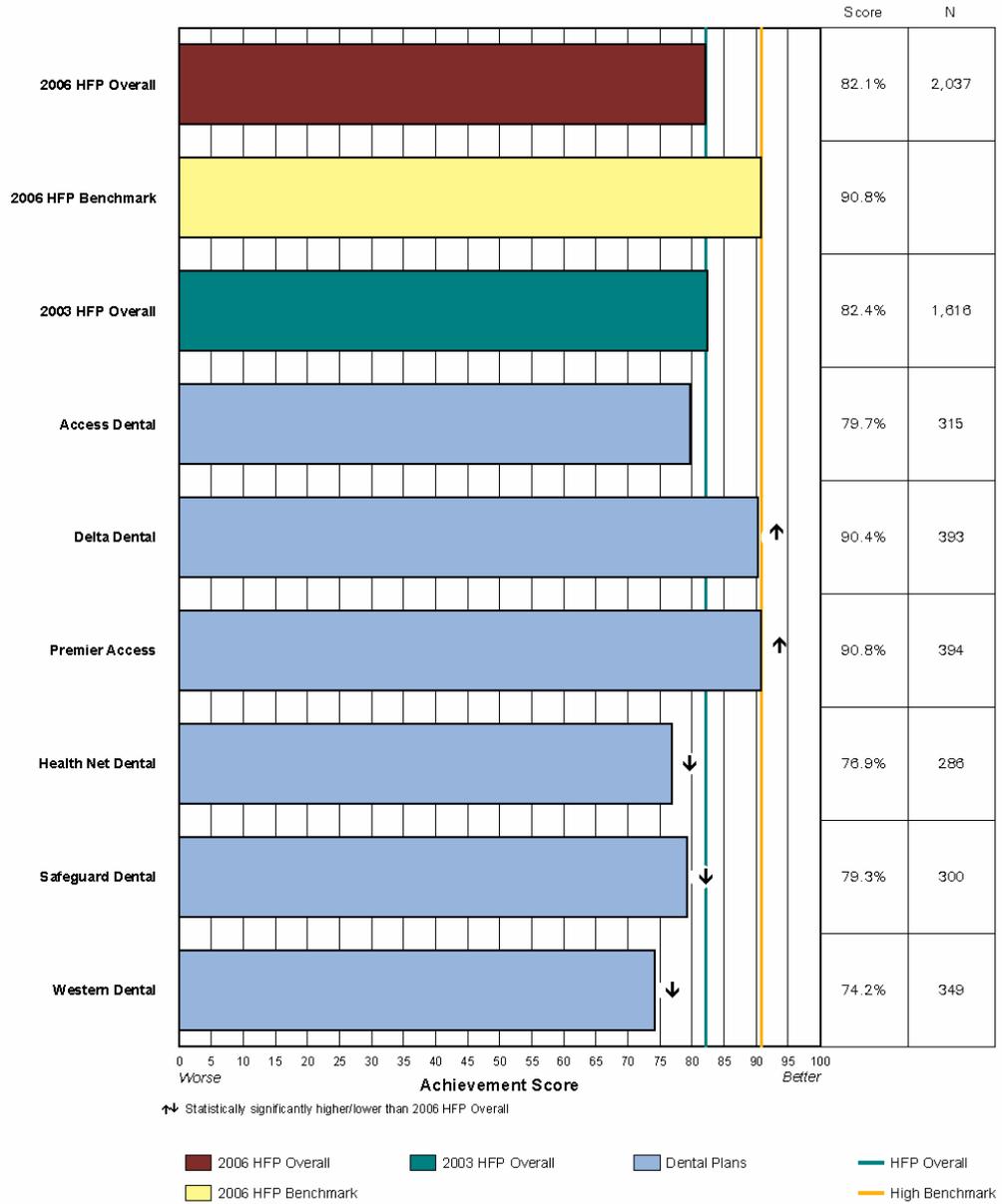
# Getting Dental Care Quickly

## Composite Score



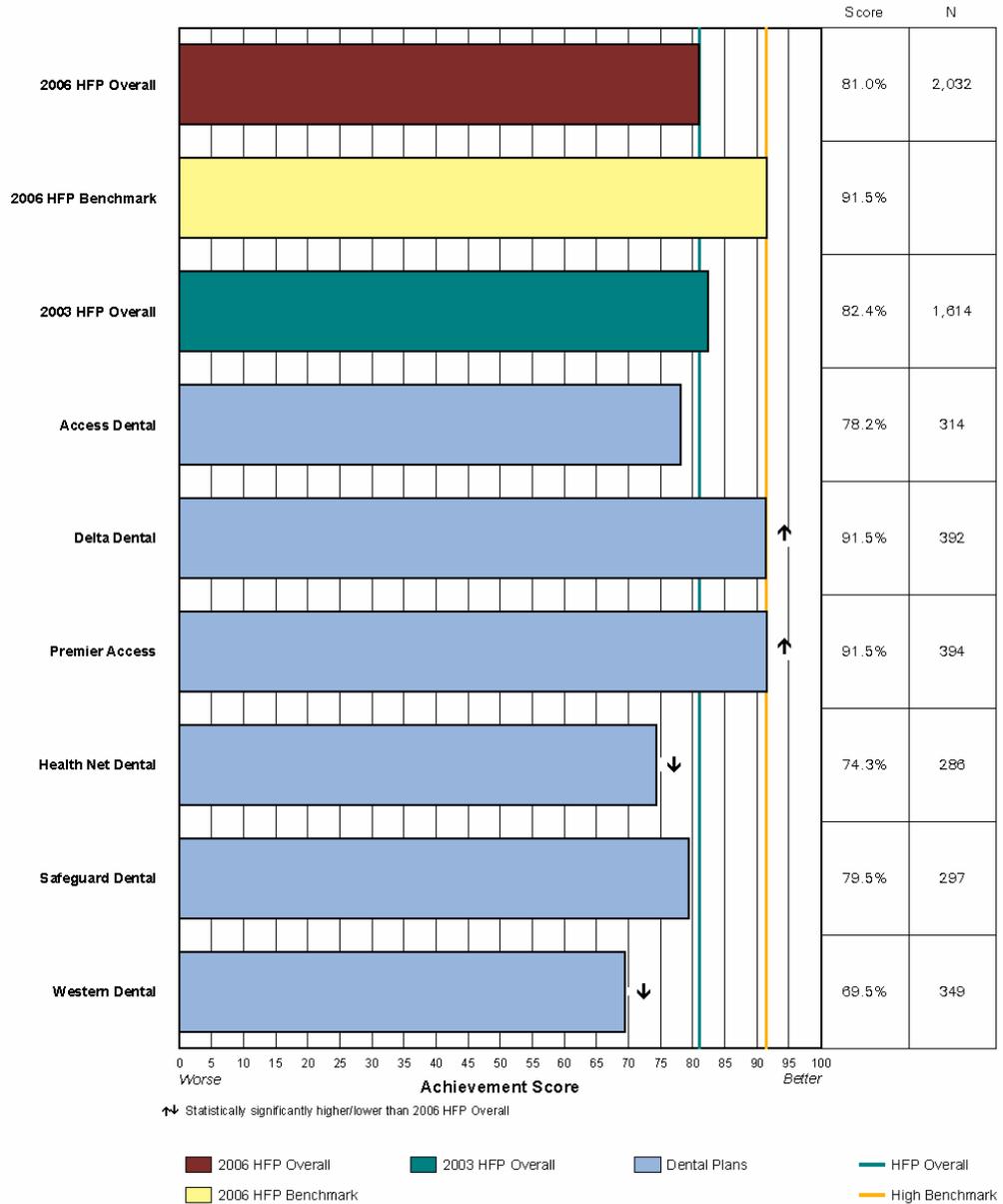
# How Well Dentists Communicate

## Composite Score



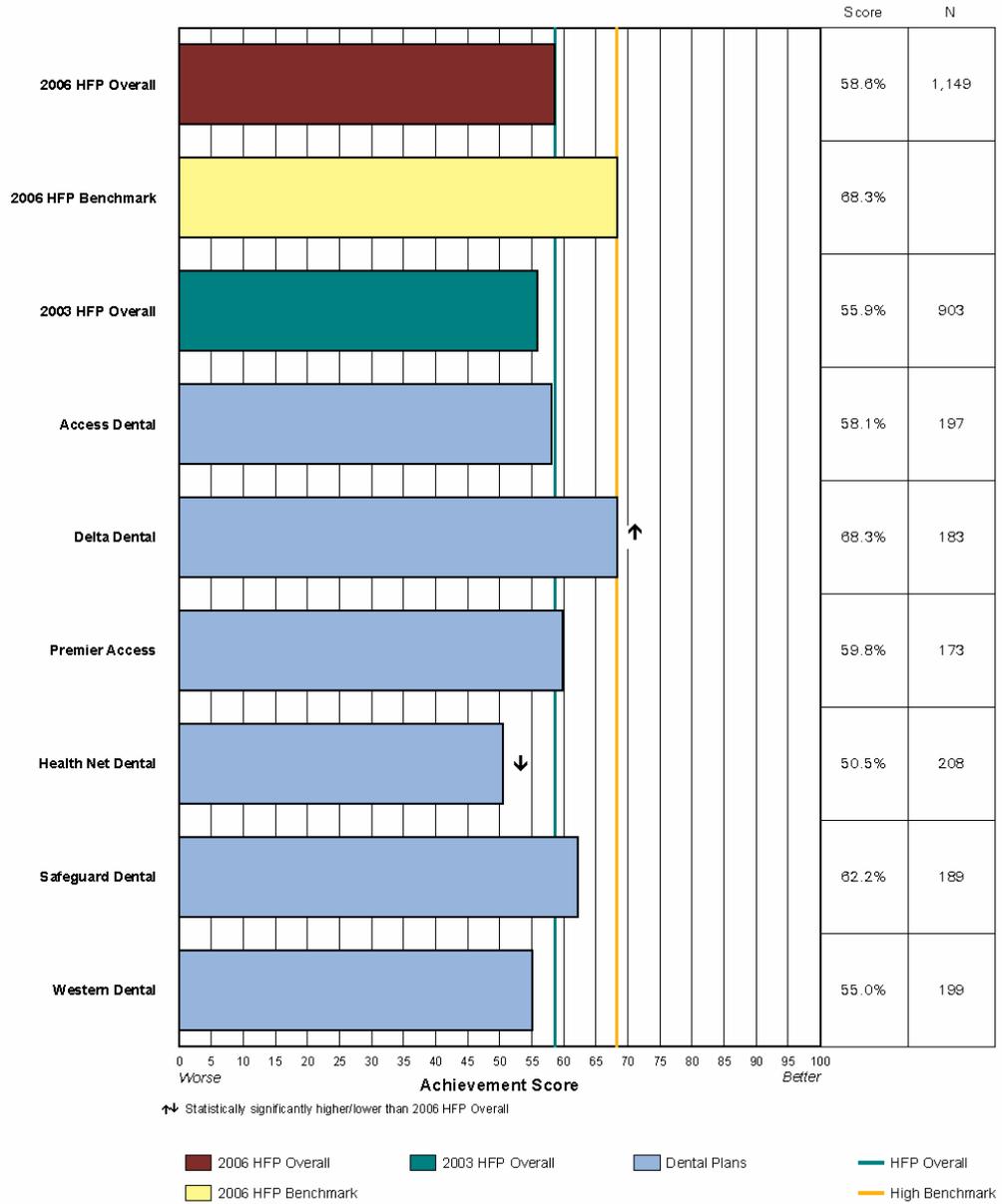
## Courteous and Helpful Office Staff

### Composite Score



# Customer Service

## Composite Score



**Summary of Composite Score Results**

Scores generally remained the same from 2003. The following changes occurred in the composite scores from 2003 to 2006:

- The rating of *Getting Needed Dental Care* increased slightly from 2003 (62.5%) to 2006 (64.4%).
- The rating of *Getting Dental Care Quickly* decreased slightly from 2003 (64.2%) to 2006 (62.6%).
- The rating of *How Well Dentists Communicate* remained about the same from 2003 (82.4%) to 2006 (82.1%).
- The rating of *Courteous and Helpful Office Staff* decreased slightly from 2003 (82.4%) to 2006 (81%).
- The rating of *Customer Service* increased from 2003 (55.9%) to 2006 (58.6%).

Table 4 shows each plan having composite scores that fell significantly above or below the program average. The following plans had achievement scores that were significantly above the program average in two or more domains:

- Delta Dental achieved above average scores in all five domains.
- Premier Access achieved above average scores in all five domains.

The following plans had achievement scores that were significantly below the program average in two or more domains:

- Health Net Dental received below average scores in all five domains.
- Safeguard Dental and Western Dental received below average scores in three of the five domains.
- Access Dental received below average scores in two of the five domains.

**Table 4 – Statistically Significantly Higher or Lower than HFP Overall Composite Scores**

Dental Plan	Getting Needed Dental Care	Getting Dental Care Quickly	How Well Dentists Communicate	Courteous and Helpful Office Staff	Customer Service
Access Dental	▼	▼			
Delta Dental	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Health Net Dental	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Premier Access	▲	▲	▲	▲	
Safeguard Dental	▼	▼	▼		
Western Dental		▼	▼	▼	

▲ = Statistically significantly higher than HFP Overall Rating Scores  
 ▼ = Statistically significantly lower than HFP Overall Rating Scores

Table 5 shows changes in plan scores that have increased or decreased 4 or more percentage points from 2003 to 2006.

**Table 5 – Plan Performance Changes in Overall Ratings from 2003 to 2006**

Dental Plan	Getting Needed Dental Care	Getting Dental Care Quickly	How Well Dentists Communicate	Courteous and Helpful Office Staff	Customer Service
Access Dental					↑ (4%)
Delta Dental					↑ (7%)
Health Net Dental		↓ (7%)		↓ (4%)	↓ (6%)
Premier Access	↑ (4%)				
Safeguard Dental*					
Western Dental*					

\* Safeguard Dental and Western Dental are new plans participating in the Healthy Families Program and no data is available for the 2003 survey.

## SURVEY RESULTS: CORRELATION OF SCORES AND SATISFACTION

DataStat, Inc. conducted three analyses in addition to the overall and individual plan scores. The analyses were used to illustrate the program’s strongest and weakest areas of performance and the top ten questions that were highly correlated with satisfaction. The areas of strongest and weakest performance are based on the highest and lowest achievement score for a particular question. Questions were identified as having a high positive performance if their achievement score was greater than or equal to eighty-five percent (85%). The question “Dentists usually or always showed respect” had greater than eighty-five percent (85%) of subscribers responding positively and it was highly correlated with satisfaction as shown in Table 6. Questions were identified as having a low positive performance if their achievement score was lower than 85 percent. There are eleven items that had less than eighty-five percent (85%) of subscribers responding positively. These items are identified in Table 7. The weakest plan performance areas were identified in the questions that were highly correlated with satisfaction.

A correlation coefficient of 0.40 or greater indicates a relatively high correlation with plan satisfaction. Coefficients less than 0.40 indicate a low correlation with plan satisfaction.

**Table 6 – Area of Strongest Performance**

Question	HFP Achievement Score	Correlation with overall Satisfaction (Yes or No)	Composite Group
Dentists usually or always showed respect	86.7%	Y (0.42)	How Well Dentists Communicate

**Table 7 – Areas of Weakest Performance**

Question	HFP Achievement Score	Correlation with Satisfaction (Yes or No)	Composite Group
Able to get help needed when you called child's dental plan's customer service	54.4%	Y (0.44)	Customer Service
Child usually or always got an interpreter when needed	58.4%	Y (0.53)	How Well Dentists Communicate
Child usually or always got needed care for mouth pain or dental problem as soon as wanted	59.2%	Y (0.47)	Getting Dental Care Quickly
Usually or always got help or advice needed for child	66.9%	Y (0.41)	Getting Dental Care Quickly
Overall rating of dental care	68.5%	Y (0.61)	Overall Ratings
Overall rating of personal dentist	70.6%	Y (0.53)	Overall Ratings
Overall rating of dental specialist	75.3%	Y (0.44)	Overall Ratings
Usually or always got an interpreter when needed	76.1%	Y (0.42)	How Well Dentists Communicate
Dentists usually or always spent enough time with child	76.1%	Y (0.43)	How Well Dentists Communicate
Office Staff usually or always helpful	78.0%	Y (0.45)	Courteous and Helpful Office Staff
Dentists usually or always listened carefully	78.8%	Y (0.43)	How Well Dentists Communicate

## CONCLUSION

The results of the survey show significant variations in the scores between the dental plan types. As seen in previous years, the EPO dental plans had higher scores than the DMO dental plans.

The data obtained from this survey provides plans and MRMIB with an opportunity to determine areas of best practices and areas needing improvement. HFP dental plans are provided with detailed information about their results which they have used to initiate changes in the delivery of services. MRMIB will be meeting with the plans to develop an approach to use the results from the survey for developing collaborative quality improvement activities for deficient areas and for sharing best practices among participating health plans. In addition, the survey results will be used in conjunction with other quality measurement tools to assess plan performance.

### Acknowledgements

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