



Dental Carrier Adds Cancer Screening Coverage

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AlwaysCare Benefits is expanding access to oral wellness benefits.

AlwaysCare, a unit of Starmount Life Insurance Company, Baton Rouge, La., says it will pay for one adjunctive, pre-diagnostic oral cancer diagnostic test per year for members ages 40 and older who have suspicious lesions or risk factors for oral cancer.

Oral cancer strikes about 35,000 Americans each year, and it kills 21% of the people diagnosed with having the disease, according to the American Cancer Society, Atlanta.

Early diagnosis can have a big effect on the 5-year survival rate, AlwaysCare says.

AlwaysCare also will be paying for an additional cleaning for pregnant women in the second or third trimester of pregnancy, or periodontal maintenance for women who have been treated for periodontal disease.

AlwaysCare began including the cancer screening and prenatal benefits in new group coverage at no additional cost Sept. 1.

The insurer will add the benefits to existing customers' plans when the customers renew their coverage.

AlwaysCare also will be giving employers the ability to pay for extra dental cleanings for plan members who have diabetes and periodontal disease.

Some studies have indicated that gum disease interferes with the efforts of people with diabetes to control their blood sugar levels.