

## **Aetna And Columbia Announce Results From Study Showing Relationship Between Periodontal Treatment And A Reduction In The Overall Cost Of Care For Three Chronic Conditions**

**HARTFORD, Conn., March 20, 2006** — Aetna (NYSE: [AET](#)) and Columbia University College of Dental Medicine conducted a study that found a relationship between periodontal (gum) treatment and the overall cost of care for several chronic diseases. The results of the study, which included approximately 145,000 Aetna members with continuous dental and medical coverage, indicate that periodontal care appears to have a positive effect on the cost of medical care, with earlier treatment resulting in lower medical costs for members with diabetes, coronary artery disease (CAD), and cerebrovascular disease (CVD) or stroke.

"The results of this study are encouraging because they show the connection between good oral health and overall well-being, as well as illustrating that the early treatment of periodontal disease can help reduce medical costs for these conditions," said Pat Farrell, head of Aetna Specialty Products. "We believe that in addition to lowering medical costs, we are also helping to improve members' quality of life. We will continue to work with Columbia to demonstrate ways that dental care can improve the overall health of our members."

"Systemic health is often associated with the condition of the oral cavity in that many systemic diseases manifest in the mouth; however, less is known about the connection between a diseased periodontium and the impact it may have on systemic health," said David A. Albert, D.D.S., M.P.H., Associate Professor of Dentistry at Columbia University. "The association between periodontal infection and systemic health has important implications for the treatment and management of patients."

The retrospective study of claims data included an examination of approximately 145,000 members participating in Aetna PPO plans with continuous dental and medical coverage over two years. Periodontal care appeared to have a positive effect on the cost of medical care in this two-year study (2001, 2002), with earlier treatment resulting in lower medical costs for diabetes, CVD and CAD. In addition, the actual cost of medical care for patients with diabetes and CAD was found to be lower if they received periodontal care in the first year of the study.

### **About Columbia University College of Dental Medicine**

Since its inception in 1852 and its incorporation into Columbia University in 1917, the College of Dental Medicine has vigorously pursued its commitment to education, patient care and research. Recognizing the value to the public and the dental specialties, the college established the first formal specialty education program in orthodontics in the 1920s. Columbia went on to establish programs in periodontics, endodontics, oral/maxillofacial surgery, prosthodontics, pediatric dentistry and advanced programs. The college provides general dentistry, oral surgery, pediatric dentistry, orthodontics, and other clinic services to many members of the community through its Faculty Practice, Postgraduate and Specialty Practice, and Undergraduate Clinic. Columbia encourages and supports all forms of academic research efforts that have direct impact on improving oral health by fostering faculty and student participation in research and training students in current research methodologies.

### **About Aetna**

Aetna is one of the nation's leading diversified health care benefits companies, serving approximately 27.9 million unique members with information and resources to help them make better informed decisions about their health care. Aetna offers a broad range of traditional and consumer-directed health insurance products and related services, including medical, pharmacy, dental, behavioral health, group life, long-term care and disability plans, and medical management capabilities. Our customers include employer groups, individuals, college students, part-time and hourly workers, health plans and government-sponsored plans.

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