2022 INDEX
Executive Summary: Dental Industry
DENTAL INSIGHTS LEAD TO GREATER AUTOMATION AND COST SAVINGS

The CAQH Index has been a unique and important resource for government, industry decision makers, researchers and media.

By tracking automation along the healthcare administrative workflow and identifying opportunities for improvement, report findings have enabled health plans, providers, government, and vendor organizations to benchmark progress and set a course for achieving greater efficiency and cost savings.

Given the importance of the Index and the commitment to increasing automation, dental health plans representing 126 million members, 48 percent of covered lives, now contribute data to the research.

In 2021, while COVID admissions and cases were declining and healthcare utilization was increasing, use of electronic transactions continued to rise for most transactions. Automated processes implemented during COVID-19 resulted in more timely responses and outcomes. Staffing shortages during the pandemic, however, increased salaries by almost 10 percent as medical facilities were forced to pay more to attract and retain workers,4,5 countering the savings achieved from the transition to automated workflows. Higher staff salaries impacted costs to complete administrative tasks and overall spend as transaction volumes increased. In several cases, the workforce shortage resulted in providers completing administrative tasks or less experienced staff being hired, impacting the time to complete tasks. Often it took longer for inexperienced or new staff to complete tasks due to a lack of relevant knowledge and skills.

“The definitive industry benchmark for the adoption rates of administrative transactions for ten years, the CAQH Index has proven to be an invaluable tool for policymakers and healthcare stakeholders.”

Robert M. Tennant, MA
Vice President, Federal Affairs, WEDI


DENTAL INDUSTRY KEY FINDINGS

All dental transactions improved except for acknowledgments which remained stable. Use of automated processes by health plans and providers, brought on by the pandemic, expanded.

Dental Plan Adoption of Fully Electronic Administrative Transactions, 2018-2022 CAQH Index

Dental administrative transaction volume increased after decreasing in 2020. Utilization increased as offices slowly re-opened and social distancing requirements were relaxed.

Dental Industry Estimated National Volume, 2013-2022 CAQH Index (in billions)

Note: From year to year reported transactions may change due to low volume collected. 

+9% increase in overall dental transaction volume increase from 2021 to 2022
During the second year of COVID-19 (2021), dental spend on administrative transactions increased 23 percent to $5.4 billion as higher utilization and provider time to complete transactions resulted in higher total annual spend.

The cost savings opportunity for the dental industry remained stable at $2.6 billion.

“We have been able to utilize the CAQH Index as a comparison tool for cost and utilization for our administrative transactions. Seeing the baselines and ranges helps us determine where there may be opportunities in cost reduction.”

Tab Harris | Senior Director, Provider Connectivity Solutions, Florida Blue
Dental Provider Time Savings Highlights

31 Minutes
A dental provider practice could save 31 minutes on average for a patient requiring all five transactions by switching from manual to fully electronic.

12 Minutes
A dental provider practice could save 12 minutes on average for a patient requiring three transactions by switching from partial to fully electronic.

*Eligibility and benefit verification, claim status inquiry, remittance advice

How to Participate in the CAQH Index

All dental plans, providers and vendors are encouraged to contribute data to the CAQH Index. Data collection begins in Summer 2023. To participate in the 2023 CAQH Index and for more information, please visit caqh.org/insights

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