

Transparency = Predictability:

What dentists should look for in a network partner

What dentists say makes a stronger insurance network relationship

For dental practices evaluating insurance network relationships, one of the biggest questions they have is if the network can bring additional insured patients through the door. The second question?



Whether that network makes it easier for the practice to operate with clarity, consistency and confidence.

Network participation can support growth, but the day-to-day experience of that relationship matters. Claims resolution, coverage verification, policy clarity and access

to network support all serve to affect how smoothly a practice can manage patient conversations, administrative workflows and reimbursement expectations.

New Humana research among U.S. dentists shows that providers are clear about what they value most from insurance networks. When asked what would strengthen those relationships, dentists pointed to faster claims resolution, easier coverage verification, dedicated support and more transparent policies. In other words, they are looking for predictability.¹

Use claims efficiency as a business indicator

Claims processing is often viewed as a back-end function, but for a dental practice, it can affect more than reimbursement timing. It can influence staff workload, cash-flow expectations and overall confidence in the network relationship.

In Humana's dentist survey, 64% of dentists said faster claims resolution would strengthen their relationship with insurance networks.¹ When asked to identify the single improvement that would most help their practice run smoothly, 27% selected faster claims resolution, more than any other option.¹

For providers, that makes claims efficiency a practical way to evaluate a network partner.

A strong network relationship should help practices understand how claims move, how issues are resolved and what level of consistency they can expect over time.

What dentists value is a more predictable network relationship

64% of dentists say faster claims resolution would strengthen their relationship with insurance networks.¹

Source: 1. "Humana – Dentist Survey," Opinium Research, January 2026

Look for verification that supports patient conversations

Coverage verification is one of the earliest points where an insurance relationship touches the patient experience. Before care is delivered, practice teams often need to confirm eligibility, understand coverage and help patients anticipate next steps.

That process matters, because clear verification can support clearer patient conversations. It can help staff explain coverage with more confidence and reduce uncertainty before treatment decisions are made.

Dentists appear to recognize the importance of this step. In the survey, 59% said easier patient coverage verification would strengthen their relationship with insurance networks.¹ At the same time, 30% reported confusion or inefficiency when verifying patient eligibility and coverage.¹

For practices considering network participation, verification should not be treated as a minor administrative detail. Instead, it should be considered as part of how a network supports the front office, the provider and the patient.

Prioritize transparency, not just access

Access to covered patients is important, but it's not the full measure of a network relationship. Practices also need to understand how the network operates, such as what policies apply to their patients, how requirements are communicated and where to go when questions come up.



Half of dentists surveyed said more transparent policies would strengthen their relationship with insurance networks.¹ Another 52% cited access to a dedicated support representative.¹

A network may offer patient access, but the quality of the relationship depends on how clearly it communicates and how reliably it supports the practice. Transparency helps turn participation from a contractual arrangement into a more manageable operating relationship.

What dentists say would strengthen insurance network relationships



64% Faster claims resolution¹



52%
A dedicated support representative¹



59%
Easier patient coverage verification¹



50% More transparent policies¹

Source: 1. "Humana – Dentist Survey," Opinium Research, January 2026

Evaluate whether the network supports sustainable growth

The right network relationship should help a practice grow in a way that's manageable. That means supporting patient access while also reducing unnecessary administrative friction.



This matters because many practices are already operating under pressure. The dentist survey found that 41% report staffing shortages, 38% report cancellations or no-shows, 33% report increased patient volume and 28% report limited appointment availability.¹

Network relationships should be evaluated in light of those pressures. If a network adds complexity, it can make growth harder to manage. If it provides clearer processes, faster resolution and more reliable support, it can help practices operate with greater confidence.

The takeaway

For providers considering which networks best support their practice, transparency should be viewed as a business asset. The survey data offers a clear framework for evaluating network relationships. Practices need to look for efficient claims resolution, easier verification, transparent policies and accessible support.

These are the areas dentists themselves say would strengthen their relationships with insurance networks.

For growth-minded practices, the right network partner should do more than provide access to covered patients. It should help the practice operate with clarity, reduce avoidable uncertainty and support a more predictable path to sustainable growth.



Predictability helps providers know what to expect

Dentists are not only looking for faster processes. They are also looking for network relationships that are easier to navigate, clearer to communicate, and more consistent over time.

Source: 1. "Humana – Dentist Survey," Opinium Research, January 2026