

## Client Success Story: Delta Dental® Plan of Minnesota

### *Leading-edge IT infrastructure contributes to low costs and achieves high growth objectives*

#### **Situation:**

Headquartered in Eagan, Minnesota, Delta Dental Plan of Minnesota\* is among the largest providers of dental benefits in the Upper Midwest, serving more than 8,600 Minnesota-based purchasing groups and comprising more than 2.8 million members.

In the late 1990s, Delta Dental Plan of Minnesota launched an aggressive growth plan to strengthen its position as the leading dental benefits provider in Minnesota. Given the complexities of the dental benefits marketplace, the need to streamline administrative tasks and reduce costs, and increasing regulatory requirements, the company knew that strategic IT development and deployment would be a key driver toward its success.

DeCare Systems Ireland served as an extension of Delta Dental Plan of Minnesota's in-house IT department to facilitate new system development, and at the same time provided the perspectives of an external consultant to drive overall system architecture. This unique dynamic allowed DeCare Systems Ireland to design, develop and support mission critical business applications that eventually served as the model for application development within other health care organizations.

#### **Solution:**

DeCare Systems Ireland worked directly with senior management at Delta Dental Plan of Minnesota to analyze the existing IT infrastructure, identify all weaknesses and opportunities, and define a strategy for future IT systems.

DeCare Systems Ireland then worked with the in-house IT department to consolidate and reduce the total cost of ownership of the existing IT system. Where possible, existing applications were enhanced to support changing business needs and remove fragmentation between various production systems. Additional new business applications were designed and developed to increase system capacity, automate existing manual processes and increase claims processing speed. All applications were carefully structured so that interfaces to and from Delta Dental Plan of Minnesota were fully HIPAA compliant.

A range of technologies were used to redefine the IT infrastructure, including Oracle Forms and PL/SQL, CICS COBOL, Visual Basic, ASP, Siteminder, Java, Oracle 9iAS and Mercator. The new Internet portal, for example, was built using Microsoft ASP and Java, and was secured by Netegrity Siteminder. The portal also was connected to the firm's back-end systems in Oracle and VSE VSAM.

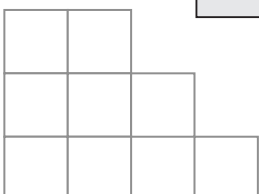
As new applications were ready for deployment, DeCare Systems Ireland worked closely with Delta Dental Plan of Minnesota's development staff to ensure a smooth software launch. Support for production systems is provided 24/7, and developers are on-call to support time-critical break-fix items.

#### **Results:**

Over the last five years, Delta Dental Plan of Minnesota has grown by an average of almost 20 percent each year, while maintaining one of the lowest operating costs of any dental plan in the United States. This growth and cost savings have been driven by the efficiencies available in the industry-leading administration system created with the assistance of DeCare Systems Ireland. Among the key achievements of the new system:

- The new system consistently exceeds established service and performance guarantee standards.

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- As a result of the company's aggressive growth, the volume of claims processed annually rose by over 55 percent. In 2002, Delta Dental Plan of Minnesota processed more than 17,500 claims per day.
- On average, 90 percent of claims are now processed within 1 week of receipt.
- In addition, 98.9 percent of claims are paid within 10 business days, with a 99 percent payment accuracy rate.

DeCare Systems Ireland continues to support Delta Dental Plan of Minnesota's in-house IT department and is advising the company on its future IT system strategy and the recommended consolidation of their mainframe and HP Unix environments. DeCare Systems Ireland also manages overall system maintenance and enhancements, prioritizing and assigning resources to align with business goals. A key priority is the enhancement of existing applications to support new dental plans and business models, as well as the development of an integrated, browser-based customer relationship management application to manage all customer service activities.

Web site: [www.deltadentalmn.org](http://www.deltadentalmn.org)

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