

Selecting a Dental PPO Network Series: Evaluating Network Size (Part 1)

In this three part article series, we will look at several factors to consider when evaluating a network's true value.

- ✓ **Network Size (Part 1)**
- ✓ **Recruitment, Credentialing, and Accreditation (Part 2)**
- ✓ **Access, Utilization, and Savings (Part 3)**

Network Size

Often the first measure considered when evaluating the size of a dental PPO network are provider counts. At first glance, looking at provider counts makes sense, but you could be short changing yourself. Dental plans and networks market size differently. It's important to recognize how providers and locations are being counted to understand the true size of a network.

The most accurate counting methodologies to measure network size are **unique providers** or **unique locations**. As illustrated in the example to the right, this is when a dentist or location is counted only once. It's simple and representative.

Access points are another counting methodology to measure network size. However, counting providers and locations together can inflate the network count resulting in the illusion of more access. For example, providers in a Dental Service Organization or group practice are counted at each location (4 unique providers and 3 unique locations equal 12 access points). Practically, a member can only visit one dentist at one location at any given time.

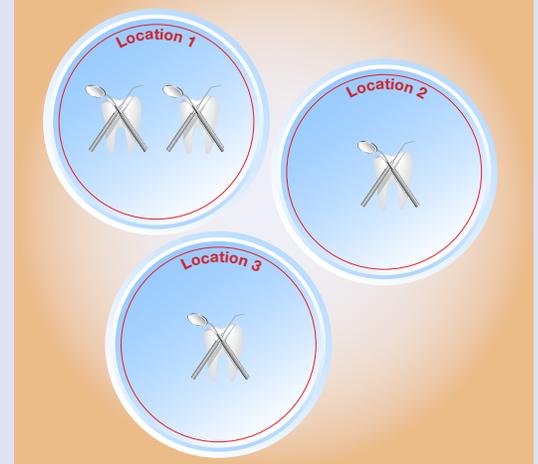
Large network counts may not translate to better member access or a larger network of providers. All dental networks can provide **unique provider** and **unique location** counts so you can accurately evaluate to determine a network's true size.

How Do You Count...

XYZ Dental's 4 Dentists and 3 Locations?

Do you know the unique provider, unique location, and access point counts?

XYZ Dental has 4 providers and 3 locations.



Unique Providers = 4
Dentists are counted once.



Unique Locations = 3
Each office location is counted once.



Access Points = 12
Dentists are multiplied by the number of office locations.

Remember!

Provider counts should not be the only factor used to evaluate a network.