

Baldrige Award Application

Eligibility Submission Date: 03/13/2024 09:27 ET

Eligibility Submitted By: Rob Kleiner

Application Submission Date: 04/10/2024 13:45 ET

Application Submitted By: Robert Kleiner

Organizational Profile

Note: The information requested in this section will provide context to ensure a deeper understanding of your organization and its environment. The Organizational Profile section will not be evaluated. You will have a limit of 2,000 characters and up to 3 charts, graphs, and/or tables for each question. This section should not include details of your key processes or results.

1 - What are your key products, services, and/or programs?

Northeast Delta Dental's (NEDD's) main product or service is dental insurance sold directly to employer-groups for their employees- 95% of our revenue.

NEDD's dental insurance product and service are unique because they are backed by the 7-part Guarantee of Service Excellence (GOSESM), implemented in 1995, and this has resulted in six Sigma level performance. (Figure OPQ1-1)

When NEDD began, we focused on providing one product – dental insurance. Over time, we have grown our business substantially by adding new products and services. Our first new product began in 2009 and was our vision insurance. DeltaVision[®] was initially offered in New Hampshire and Maine, and more recently in Vermont. This accounts for 5% of our revenue.

One of NEDD's core competencies is the Innovative use of Technology. PreViser[®] is a unique-to-the-industry software product we give to our dentists because it supports our mission of better oral health for all. One key element of PreViser[®] is a software assessment tool that we call Health through Oral Wellness (HOW[®]). It lets the dentist graph and track the optimum number of visits per year for each individual patient.

While some patients need only two visits a year, close to 15% of patients require three or more cleanings and other procedures. HOW[®] is a NEDD innovation and win-win tool because it allows dentists to provide more services per year when warranted, improves the dental health of many subscribers, and earns NEDD goodwill and loyalty from dentists and subscribers. HOW[®] is a national best practice that is being used by other Delta Dental members and their dentists.

While the cost of preventive dental care was 14% higher for groups with PreViser[®] in the five years between 2015 and 2020, the cost of oral surgery was 21% lower, the cost of prosthodontics was 11% lower, and the cost of other adjunctive dental services was 14% lower.

NEDD has used the Baldrige Excellence Framework since 1995 as our business model.

FIGURE OPQ1-1 *Guarantee Of Service Excellence*SM (GOSESM)



Northeast Delta Dental is committed to providing exceptional service to all its customers. To emphasize our commitment, our *Guarantee Of Service Excellence*SM program guarantees the following seven major areas of service and reinforces them with our comprehensive group refund policy.



We Guarantee Our Service.

1	SMOOTH IMPLEMENTATION TO NORTHEAST DELTA DENTAL	Guarantee: Successful implementation will be determined by you through the results of a survey.	Refund: Your group will be reimbursed the administration fee charged for the second month of service per your contract.
2	EXCEPTIONAL CUSTOMER SERVICE	Guarantee: We will resolve inquiries immediately or guarantee an initial update within one business day.	Refund: Your group will be reimbursed \$50 per occurrence.
3	QUICK PROCESSING OF CLAIMS	Guarantee: During the course of a contract year, 90% of your group's accurately completed claim forms will be processed within 15 calendar days.	Refund: Your group will be reimbursed the administration fee for its last month of service per your contract.
4	NO INAPPROPRIATE BILLING BY PARTICIPATING DENTISTS	Guarantee: Patients will not be charged for more than the appropriate co-payments at the time of service or for any difference between a participating dentist's submitted fee and our approved amount.	Refund: Your group will be reimbursed \$50 per occurrence.
5	ACCURATE AND QUICK TURNAROUND OF IDENTIFICATION CARDS	Guarantee: Accurate identification cards will be available within 15 calendar days upon receipt of a completed enrollment form.	Refund: Your group will be reimbursed \$25 per pair of identification cards.
6	TIMELY EMPLOYEE BOOKLETS	Guarantee: Standard Plan Description Booklets and/or Outlines of Benefits will be available within 15 calendar days of request, finalized benefits change, or receipt of signed contract.	Refund: Your group will be reimbursed \$50 per occurrence.
7	MARKETING SERVICE CONTACTS	Guarantee: You will receive at least two Marketing service contacts during a contract term.	Refund: Your group will be reimbursed \$50 per occurrence.

FIGURE OPQ1-2 Key Product Offerings

Key Product / Service Offerings	Key Delivery Mechanisms to Customers	Relative Importance
Dental insurance services and benefits sold to Employer-Groups	Sold through benefits consultants or brokers and NEDD sales staff	Generates 62% of Revenue
Dental Insurance Services and Benefits Sold to Consumers	Sold through insurance brokers or online	Generates 36% of Revenue
csONE™, PreViser®, DeltaVision®	Insurance-related products sold by subsidiaries	Generate combined 2% of Revenue

OPQ1-2

2 - What are your mission, vision, and values or guiding principles?

Northeast Delta Dental's **informal mission statement** is "everybody deserves a healthy smile."

NEDD's **formal mission** statement is "We advance the oral health and overall wellness of our customers and the general public by providing innovative benefits and professional partnerships to diversify strategic business and philanthropic initiatives."

Our **Vision**: To be a world-class benefits company that is community focused.

The way NEDD's senior leaders demonstrate by their actions the **Four Core Values** is shown in Figure OPQ2-1:

1. We believe that effective **communication** is essential for our continued success as a great place to work and a stellar place to do business for all customers, service providers, and employees.
2. We believe that **teamwork** is key to working effectively towards our mission, being committed to giving 100%, and to working collaboratively with shared responsibility and accountability.
3. We believe that **quality** is a core value that enables us to strive continuously toward reaching our mission and goals and to achieve excellence in all that we do, resulting in our consistent feeling of pride in our work at NEDD.
4. We believe that **integrity** is our crucial value and that enables us to be respectfully honest and responsive to internal and external customers.

The guiding principles of the NEDD organization are encompassed in their Guarantee of Service Excellence (GOSESM). This was implemented beginning in 1995. Over time the cumulative impact of GOSESM has resulted in customer service that has exceeded the Six Sigma level as shown in Figure SQ2-1. As soon as a GOSESM payment is made, employees at all levels work to fix the cause and prevent the underlying problem from happening again. All claims and fixes are reviewed at All Colleague meetings.

Paying customers for your mistakes looks counterintuitive. But the results are worth far more than the cost – they drive satisfaction, which increases customer retention. (Figure CMQ3-3)

FIGURE OPQ2-1

Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission

To advance the oral health and overall wellness of our customers and the general public by providing innovative benefits and professional partnerships through diversified strategic business and philanthropic initiatives.

Everybody deserves a healthy smile. (Informal mission)

Vision

To be a world-class benefits company that is community focused.

Values

- We believe that effective **COMMUNICATION** is essential for our continued success as a great place to work and a stellar place to do business for all customers, service providers, and employees.
- We believe that **TEAMWORK** is key to working effectively toward our mission, being committed to giving 100%, and to working collaboratively with shared responsibility and accountability.
- We believe that **QUALITY** is a core value that enables us to strive continuously toward reaching our mission and goals, and to achieving excellence in all that we do, resulting in our consistent feeling of pride in our work at Northeast Delta Dental.
- We believe that **INTEGRITY** is a crucial value that enables us to be respectfully honest and responsive to internal and external customers.

OPQ2-1

Figure OPQ2-2

Senior Leaders Demonstrate Commitment to Our Values

Value	Value Statement	Personal Action of Senior Leaders	A Senior Leader Story
Communication	We believe that effective communication is essential for our continued success as a great place to work and a stellar place to do business for all customers, service providers, and employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate effective communication as being essential for creating an atmosphere that allows opportunities for personal and organizational improvement. • Encourage two-way communication with employees, participating dentists and customers. 	Brian Duffy, VP & General Counsel, ensures our team meets three times per week and on the two days we do not meet as a team, he calls us to ask how our day is going. He exemplifies the value of communication .
Teamwork	We believe that teamwork is key to working effectively toward our mission, being committed to giving 100% and to working collaboratively with shared responsibility and accountability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and promote teamwork which guides the organization to work effectively toward our mission. • Support a culture which collaborates with shared responsibility and accountability. 	Mike Bourbeau, VP of IT, encourages teamwork and communication at all times and understands the importance of maintaining a team atmosphere where everyone is respected equally. He ensures quality by having regular check-ins and by monitoring metrics tied to our SMART goal. Mike further encourages teamwork and communication by holding monthly IS divisional meetings to ensure everyone is up to speed on what is going on and has the chance to ask questions or give feedback openly. He also incorporates fun activities occasionally to promote team bonding and maintain a positive culture within the division.
Quality	We believe that quality is a core value that enables us to strive continually toward reaching our mission and goals, and to achieving excellence in all that we do, resulting in our consistent feeling of pride in our work at Northeast Delta Dental.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create performance expectations and embracing a philosophy that promotes continual improvement. • Lead and/or participated in performance improvement for Senior Leadership. • Promote an environment in achieving excellence by supporting the workforce with on-going training. • Strive towards quality in reaching our mission and goals, resulting in our consistent feeling of pride in our work. 	Laurie Bienefeld, VP of Finance, reinforces quality with her attention to detail. Laurie has always had the company's financial interests as her top priority. She is diligent in keeping all the financial processes compliant and within budget. She reviews and approves any payments going out in order to keep track of the department's integral processes as well as validating all of NEDD expenses.
Integrity	We believe that integrity is a crucial value that enables us to be respectfully honest and responsive to internal and external customers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enables respectfully honest responses to internal and external customers. • Maintain Code of Conduct • Fosters a culture which integrity guides our actions and influences our decisions. 	William (Bill) Lambrukos, SVP Operations, role models integrity in all of his interactions. Recently regarding an incident with an Employer Group, while a different division was responsible for the problem, Bill urged his Operations managers to proactively assist our NEDD colleagues, with the betterment of the company in mind.

OPQ2-2

3 - What is your overall organizational leadership and governance structure?

NEDD uses the best governance practices to make its boards high functioning. These practices include (1) board skills recruitment, (2) board member Code of Conduct, (3) annual evaluations of board members, (4) annual board evaluation of the CEO, (5) board member training and (6) anticipating needed innovations and risks.

NEDD operates in three states and has four boards, one for each state and one overall board. The membership is approximately 50% dental professionals and 50% business community leaders.

Because the tri-state boards have so many members we created a four-member executive committee for each of the state boards. These are empowered to authorize actions approved later by the whole board. The existence of executive committees had a huge and positive impact on our ability to react quickly when the pandemic hit.

Our organizational leadership structure includes our senior leaders reporting to our president, who are his 8 vice presidents. In addition, we have 14 directors and 11 managers.


The stability of senior leaders has contributed to NEDD's exceptional results. Only one senior leader position has been turned over in the past 10 years. A result of our effective succession planning is that we only had to hire one senior leader from the outside in the past 5 years.


The senior leaders focus the organization on the 7 Guarantees of Service Excellence (GOSESM) and cascade SMART goals from the corporate level (See OPQ4-2) to every department. These SMART goals are also deployed to every individual colleague as part of our leadership structure.

NEDD is committed to demonstrating DEI with nearly 50% of our 42-member tri-state board members being women and about 20% are black, indigenous, or people of color. As for our top leadership, nearly 40% are women.

With more than half a century of experience developing innovative programs for dental benefits administration, our leadership team has earned a reputation for its expertise in the dental insurance industry.

FIGURE OPQ3-1 Senior Leaders Create an Environment for Success

<p>Senior Leaders Create an Environment for the Achievement of our Mission</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Execute our Strategic Plan Set customer focused goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocate resources to strategies that support the mission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deploy goals to direct reports Workforce education
<p>Senior Leaders Create and Reinforce an Organizational Culture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open communication with the workforce One-on-one Employee meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share activities to build strong relationships with the workforce  Employee development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include the workforce in the goal setting and results. Employee recognition
<p>Senior Leaders Create and Reinforce an Organizational Culture Values and Fosters Customer and Workforce Engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit and hire staff Train on our Mission, Vision, and Values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share methods of communication: website, email, telephone with customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to employees' and customers' feedback
<p>Senior Leaders Create and Reinforce an Organizational Culture that Values and Fosters Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate the value of equity and inclusion to staff Human Resources research and respond to employee equity and inclusion inquiries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate the importance of equity and inclusion to the workforce, customers, stakeholders, and community Provide detailed training and information on equity and inclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board receives DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) training Board guides DEI initiatives and monitors progress via the Board DEI Committee
<p>Ensuring Legal, Ethical, and Regulatory Compliance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educate workforce on legislative and ethical requirements HIPAA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate how we protect personal health information (PHI) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold everyone to our legislative and ethical standards
<p>Senior Leaders Cultivate Organizational Agility and Resilience, Accountability, Organizational and Individual Learning, Innovation, and Intelligent Risk Taking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open minded to changes in our business processes. Study and utilize stakeholder feedback Best practice study. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support procedures that facilitate agility, resilience, & accountability. Workforce empowerment to problem solve Employee leadership development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment in employees. Collaboration in school and community programs. Senior Leadership Team (SLT) access in cross-functional teams
<p>Senior Leaders Participate in Succession Planning and the Development of Future Leaders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board of Directors succession plan for CEO CEO creates succession plan for SLT roles and develop leaders CEO reviews SLT professional development plans with Board Leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SLT teach direct reports to create succession plans and develop leaders Increased responsibility Identification of high-performing employees through feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross-training Employee development Education Promote from within Mentoring

 the toothbrush represents a breakthrough change or innovation

OPQ3-1

4 - What is your workforce profile, including makeup/important characteristics of your workforce (segments, demographics, the environment [centralized/dispersed, in-office/virtual])?

The *Business NH Magazine* has recognized NEDD as one of **Best Companies to Work For** the past 8 years in a row! NEDD demonstrates long-term sustainability by being the only company to consistently be rated in the top 5 based on the results of their employee engagement survey. Other awards and recognition are shown in Figure OPQ4-1.

NEDD has about 199 employees; all of them are centralized at the Concord NH headquarters, with the exception of 10 marketing salespeople working in the Maine and Vermont offices.

While normal work is conducted in a safe modern environment, during the COVID-19 pandemic most of the work was rapidly shifted to working at home. The call distribution system was modified to route calls to

employees' homes so that we were able to provide uninterrupted service to our dentists and their dental patients.

While the normal working environment is in the office, during the pandemic we rapidly adapted to our virtual environment as described in the response to question 9 in the Organizational Profile.

Our employees are non-union.

The most meaningful and useful way to **segment our workforce** is 1) senior leaders and 2) all other colleagues (staff).

The corporate SMART goals are deployed to every department and then to each staff member whom we call colleagues. The workforce is kept informed through the monthly publication of results from *Tom's Corner* (Figure OPQ4-2) and in quarterly All Colleagues meetings.

Our employees are highly engaged and motivated to provide consistently excellent customer service. This is one of NEDD's core competencies.

Note: Formula for Naming of Figures: In order to be able to reference the figures, we created a formula. For example, OPQ4-1. OP = Organizational Profile. Q4= the question number 4. -1 = the first figure for that question.

FIGURE OPQ4-1 Example Awards and Recognition**Recent Awards**


















2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2022, 2023	One of the "Best Companies to Work For" in New Hampshire <i>Business NH Magazine recognizes businesses that go out of their way to create employee-friendly workplaces. Winners are selected based on the combined results of an employee engagement survey and an extensive employer survey, detailing benefits and workplace practices.)</i>
2022	Business Excellence Awards Hall of Fame recipient <i>NH Business Review's Business Excellence Awards is an annual awards program that recognizes the achievements of business owners and operators in New Hampshire.</i>
2021	Insurance Business of the Year <i>Business NH Magazine and the New Hampshire Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives recognized Businesses of the Year in 10 industry categories.</i>
2020-2021	One of the "Best Companies to Work For" in New Hampshire: Hall of Fame <i>Business NH Magazine lists companies in their Hall of Fame after being named as one of the "Best Companies to Work For" in New Hampshire, four out of five consecutive years.</i>
2011	New Hampshire Business Review's Health Innovator Award <i>"Harvard Pilgrim commends Northeast Delta Dental for their longstanding commitment to employee wellness. Over the past decade, they've evolved their wellness programs, creating a true culture of wellness that has measurable benefits for their employees and for the company," said Beth Roberts, Vice President of Northern New England, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, in presenting this award.</i>

Community Recognition

2022	Campus Compact for New Hampshire Presidents' Community Partner Award <i>This award honors a nonprofit organization that has partnered with a CCNH member campus to enhance community life in meaningful and measurable ways.</i>
2022	Community Service Award <i>The Granite State YMCA presented the Community Service Award to Northeast Delta Dental for its charitable support and dedication.</i>
2021	Pillar of Support <i>Concord Coalition to End Homelessness</i>
2018	Recognition for Excellence <i>Workgroup for Electronic Interchange</i>
2011	Gold Circle Award <i>New Hampshire Partners in Education</i>

OPQ4-1

FIGURE OPQ4-2 Tom's Corner

Tom's Corner Update from Tom Raffio, President & CEO				
Northeast Delta Dental's Corporate SMART Goals - Objectives, Measures, and Goals				
OBJECTIVES	MEASURES (Results Figure #)	1/1/23 – 11/30/23		©
		TARGET	PERFORMANCE	
FINANCIAL Perspective				
Combined Ratio	Total claims & admin/total Annual: 99.9% Figure FQ2-1	99.7%	99.4%	
Control Administrative Costs	Total admin percentage Annual: 12.3% Figure FQ2-3	12.2%	12.0%	
Covered Lives	Total covered lives Annual: 1,041,500 Figure CMQ2-1	1,037,536	1,055,081	
Subscriber Growth	Subscribers from new groups Annual: 21,000 AOS	20,425 New Group Subscribers	23,111	
Customer Retention	Group-based subscriber retention net of state plans (100% retention) and Delta USA transfers Figure CMQ3-3	95%	98.8%	
CUSTOMER Perspective				
Quality Service	Annual overall satisfaction score for subscribers / decision maker / dentists and dental office staff Figures CMQ5-1, CMQ5-2, LGQ3-3	Attain over 85% world class benchmark	97%	
Network Accessibility	Satisfaction ratings from subscribers and purchasers on access to participating dentists AOS	Attain over 85% world class benchmark and track individual state satisfaction results for more than five points fluctuation	92%	
INTERNAL Perspective				
Prompt claims turnaround	Claims processed within 15 calendar days of receipt Figure OQ2-1	95% (GOSE guarantee remains 90%)	99.97%	
Accurate claims processing	% monetary accuracy rate meet or exceed DDPA standards Figure OQ2-2	99%	99.93%	
Best in class customer service	Abandonment Rate AOS	10% or less	2%	
	Speed of answer Figure OQ3-1	45 seconds or less	29 seconds	
INNOVATION, LEARNING, and GROWTH Perspective				
Hire and retain capable employees	Turnover % Figure WQ2-1	Less than industry average Ending October 2023 20.1%	Northeast Delta Dental Jan. – Nov. 2023 4.7%	
	Productivity (Claims/FTE) Annual: 11,192 AOS	10,634	10,869	
Select, implement, and maintain technology to support corporation	Aggregate system availability AOS	Better than 99.5%	99.99%	
Employee alignment with company mission and values	Employee Engagement Survey Figure WQ4-1	Overall Score = Norm + 10 points 76%	89%	
©  "Happy Frank"  "Not-So-Happy Frank"				

OPQ4-2

5 - What are your key market segments and/or customer groups? What percentage of business volume/revenue does each comprise?

NEDD's primary customers for our dental insurance are employers across many industries and of all sizes. The employers who purchase insurance as a benefit for their employees account for 95% of our revenue and lives covered. Over 95% of our covered lives are members of employer group plans. This dental insurance is purchased by the employer's HR department.

In 2020 Congress passed the Affordable Care Act, which meant that individuals could buy insurance directly, and this encouraged us to develop and market dental insurance for individual consumers and their families. Individual subscribers account for 5% of our revenue and lives covered.

In 1995 we had 136,000 subscribers. We set the challenging goal of serving 1,000,000 covered lives by 2023. That goal was reached a year early in 2022 when we covered 1,003,161 lives. Figure FQ1-2.

We focus on extending coverage to people who need our services; the neediest are the people who have no dental insurance at all. In some rural areas there are adults who have never seen a dentist in their lives. Some live with constant pain and the embarrassment of unsightly teeth. That is why NEDD has been lobbying since 1996 to cover this segment of the population. Our long-term efforts paid off with New Hampshire approving the expansion of Dental Medicaid in 2023. We are in the process of expanding our systems to enroll people in Maine and then Vermont.

NEDD exists to serve and retain all our customers through exceptional service and customer intimacy, another NEDD core competency (See Figure OPQ9-1). There are 39 other Delta Dental member companies across the country, and NEDD has the highest customer retention rate of them all. Around 98% of our employer group customers typically renew with us each year. This is the highest dental insurance renewal rate in the country.

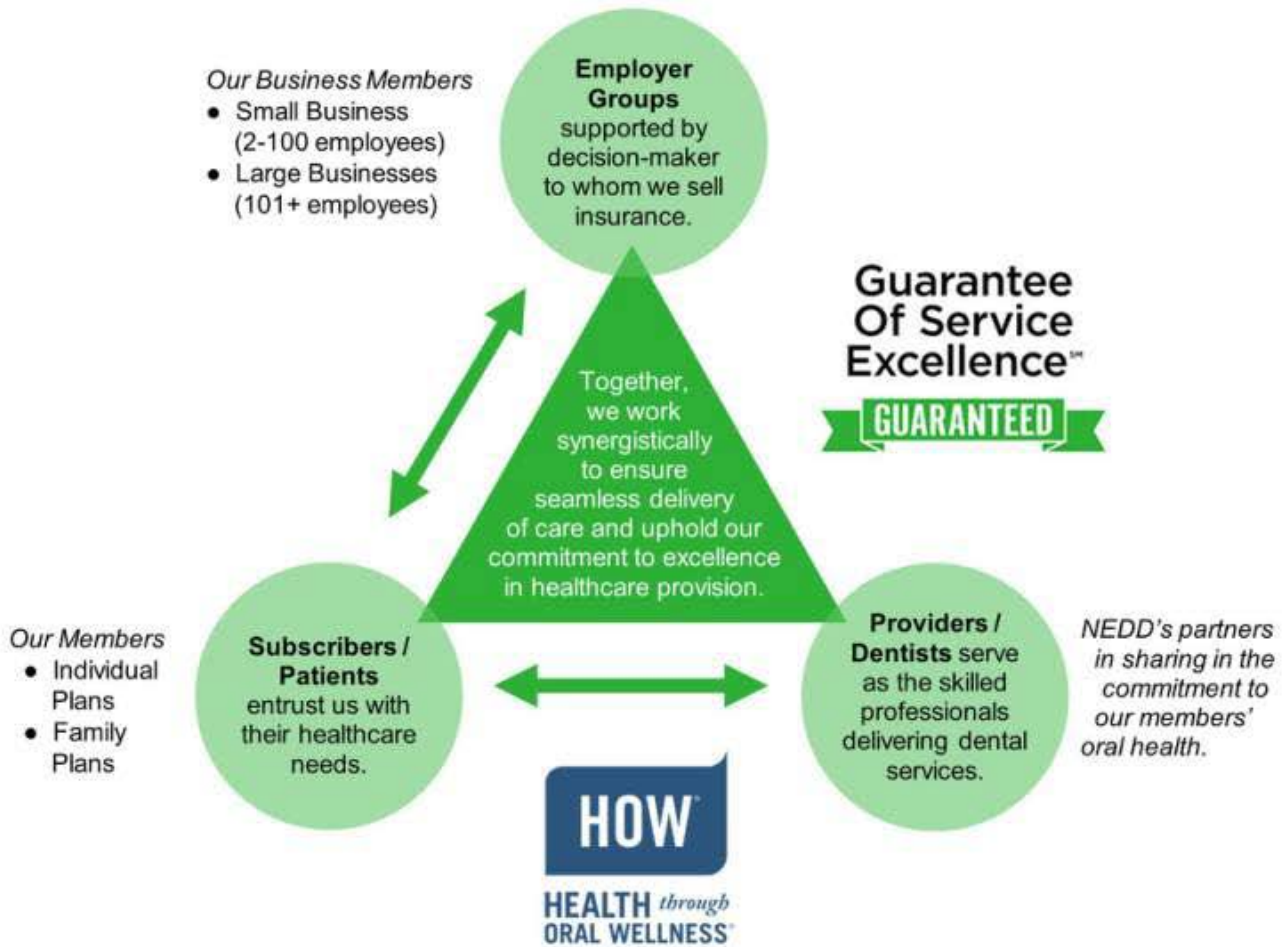
Note: the terms consumers, subscribers, and patients are all used to describe the primary customer group. Customer groups are shown in Figure OPQ5-2.

FIGURE OPQ5-1 Key Customers, Customer Groups, Stakeholders, and Their Requirements

Groups	Key Requirements and Expectations of Your Products / Services	Results (Figure)
Customers		
Employer-Groups	Quick Claims Processing	OQ2-1
	Accurate Claims Processing	OQ2-2
	Quick Call Handling	OQ3-1
	Issue Resolved on First Contact	OQ3-2
Consumers / Subscribers / Patients	Quick Claims Processing	OQ2-1
	Accurate Claims Processing	OQ2-2
	Effective Call Handling	OQ3-2
Stakeholders		
Community	Support oral health and overall wellness of the community	CEQ2-2
	Providing innovative benefits and professional partnerships through strategic business and philanthropic initiatives	CEQ3-3

OPQ5-1

FIGURE OPQ5-2 Key Customer Groups



OPQ5-2

6 - What role do suppliers, partners, and collaborators perform in producing and delivering your key products, services, and/or programs?

Our supply network has two tiers, with the most important being our partners, the participating dentists. Efficient error-free service of our partners is paramount.

Credentialing is completed when a dentist begins participating with NEDD for the first time, or if there has been a lapse in their participation and they are rejoining our network. Our credentialing meets DDPA (Delta Dental Plans Association), and CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services) standards. We are audited by DDPA every 3 years to ensure that we are meeting the credentialing standards. (Figure LGQ4-2)

NEDD has over 20,000 suppliers. Suppliers include everyone from the ones who care for our plants and stock our vending machines to large organizations that supply strategically important services such as our software and technology platforms or our HIPAA protected benefit statements for our insured. Of these there are 50 critical vendor/supplier partners without whom we could not operate optimally.

For these other suppliers, the department that contracts with them oversees their performance and provides feedback, as needed. For example, IS oversees third-party cybersecurity monitoring companies.

The relative importance of Technology support is 38% of the total, claims payment and operational support is 35% of the total. (Dental sites clearing houses that send electronic claims from the dentist to the correct insurer or that handle the purchase options and payments from individual subscribers.)

The attached Figure OPQ6-1 for Key Partners and Suppliers shows: their roles in delivering products and services, their role in innovation, key supply chain requirements, and communication mechanisms.

FIGURE OPQ6-1 Key Partners and Suppliers

Key Categories	Examples	Service Delivery
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insurance Brokers and Benefits Consultants Participating Dentists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market knowledge and relationships Provide cost effective and high-quality dental treatment
Suppliers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technology support Claims payment and operational support Building and grounds support Marketing services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speed and accuracy for technical support and for claims and operational support Market knowledge for marketing services Quality of work for building and grounds
Role in Delivering Products and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timely Delivery / Product Quality / Capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service Quality, Sharing Best Practices, Subject Matter Expertise
Role in Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject Matter Expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing Best Practices
Key Supply Chain Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competitive Pricing, Meets Contract Requirements / Capacity Due to Volumes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service Quality, Sharing Best Practices
Key Communication Mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-on-one Meetings / E-mail / Telephone / Fax / WebEx's / Reports / Videos / Newsletters 	

OPQ6-1

7 - What types of competitors do you have, and what differentiates your organization?

NEDD has many competitors and respects all of them. Many commercial insurers such as Cigna or Anthem offer dental as well as integrated health insurance. In contrast, NEDD cannot offer health insurance products; however, while those competitors are bigger and broader than we are, we almost never lose business to them because our customers know and appreciate our quality and customer service, our extensive network of dentists, and our HOW® program powered by PreViser®; as a result, we keep 98% of our insured customer groups year after year, well above the Delta Dental Plans Association (DDPA) average of 92% and the 87% average for the national dental insurance industry.

NEDD has integrated health competitors like Cigna and Anthem, but they don't break out their results for dental insurance separately. **Therefore, the data are confounded, and there are no relevant competitor benchmarks.**

One of our differentiators in the insurance industry is our commitment to continuous quality improvement. Tom Raffio, CEO and President introduced the principles of the Malcolm Baldrige national quality award to our senior executives when he arrived in 1995, and many of our managers and other colleagues took the training to be Baldrige examiners at the national or state levels and continue to use its principles today. This aligned our thinking about good management and still binds us together today.

Another differentiator is NEDD's resiliency and long-term success. They are a direct result of our 29-year Baldrige-based Performance Excellence Journey. No other competitors enjoy NEDD's track record of sustainable excellent performance. (See Figure SQ2-1 for NEDD's Six Sigma performance of key processes important to our customers. This has given NEDD a sustained competitive advantage.)

In 2020, Tom Raffio was awarded the prestigious Baldrige Foundation Award for Leadership Excellence in the health care sector.

8 - What are your key communities? What role do these relationships play in supporting your organization and your key communities?

Note: Key communities may include the following:

- Local/geographic (e.g., volunteerism and other activities that benefit your community)
- Professional (e.g., participation and/or leadership of professional societies)
- Industrial (e.g., participation and/or leadership of trade associations)

We serve the communities in our tri-state area. Our informal mission states that everybody deserves a healthy smile. The reality is that poverty and inequality too often prevent people from receiving dental and orthodontic care and forces them to live with constant pain and the embarrassment of unsightly teeth. We focus on improving the oral health of our communities looking beyond our paying customers to everybody in our three states regardless of whether they're insured or not.

To reach beyond our paying customers, we established the Northeast Delta Dental Foundation in 1995. Each state contributes financially to the foundation and relies on it to take a scientific and equitable approach to oral health philanthropy.

We have a dentist loan repayment program to provide scholarships for dental and dental hygiene students because there are not enough in certain rural areas in our three states. In 2023, that amounted to \$1,398,560. Both our Foundation and our corporation support oral care for children whose families cannot afford to pay and for veterans for oral care needs that are not met by the Veterans Administration. In 2023 the Foundation and the other corporate entities invested \$410,000 in dental education and \$74,100 on on-site dentistry at Boys and Girls Clubs, schools, and other organizations to bring dentistry to underserved populations.

NEDD supports arts, community service, sports, child early learning, and organizations that serve those who are physically challenged. Our employees serve on several non-profit boards (See Figure CEQ2-1). In 2023, NEDD invested over \$1,335,104 in community nonprofits of all types over and above what we invested in oral health for the underserved.

NEDD partners with other organizations to find lasting oral health solutions and to encourage people to view oral health as a vital component of overall health. We convene forums to encourage physicians and dentists to find ways to work together to benefit their patients.

9 - What are the strategic challenges, threats, advantages, opportunities, core competencies, or other critical factors that most impact your organization's success and sustainability?

A summary of our strategic challenges and strategic advantages is summarized in the attached table (See Figure OPQ9-1). The main strategic opportunity is the expansion of Medicaid beyond New Hampshire by gaining approval in Maine and Vermont. The threats have been identified, and we have contingency plans to deal with each of them. By anticipating a pandemic, our COVID-19 response was rapidly implemented and is a role model for other organizations.

Each department has its own disaster recovery plan. Using the Customer Service group as an example, their plan revealed their dependency on technology for all operations (handling customer inquiries and claims processing) and their interconnection with the other departments. Their plan laid out the need and timeline to quickly find and secure replacement technologies to get them up and running. For instance, we had to evacuate our offices, and people had to work from home, so this required a new call handling system to distribute the calls to many sites.

NEDD has 3 core competencies: customer intimacy, highly engaged workforce, and innovative use of technology. For instance, our strategic planning for FY2019 led us to plan and budget for a substantial technology upgrade to our phone system. We ordered a new phone system installed in the fall of 2020, six months late for COVID-19

pandemic responses. Even so, our disaster recovery plan allowed us to respond. We had 20 of our customer service reps coming to the office in person. Since there were only 20 of them instead of the usual 100 people in that space, we could physically distance them, and there were no safety issues. When the new phone system was working in October 2020, we made a seamless switchover. This enabled our customer service representatives and others to work safely, quickly, and efficiently from home.

FIGURE OPQ9-1 Strategic Context

	Strategic Challenges (SC)	Strategic Advantages (SA)	Strategic Threats (ST)	Strategic Opportunities (SO)	Core Competencies (CC)
Business	(SC1) "Storefront" competition from large retailers is increasing but still small. Main competitors offer combined health and dental insurance with dental "thrown in": Cigna Guardian, and Anthem (each has about 5% market share)	(SA1) Dominant dental insurance provider in served states	(ST1) Identified Risk and Created Disaster Recover Plans	(SO1) Expand Medicaid Dental Coverage	(CC1) Customer Intimacy
Operations	(SC2) Shortage of dentists in rural areas	(SA2) Information technology and innovation (SA3) Sustained beneficial financial performance	(ST1) Identified Risk and Created Disaster Recover Plans	(SO1) Expand Medicaid Dental Coverage	(CC3) Innovative Use of Technology
Societal Responsibilities	(SC3) Uninsured/ Underinsured consumers	(SA4) Strong presence in the community with an active Foundation		(SO1) Expand Medicaid Dental Coverage	
Workforce	(SC4) Recruitment area talent shortage	(SA5) Highly engaged workforce	(ST1) Identified Risk and Created Disaster Recover Plans	(SO1) Expand Medicaid Dental Coverage	(CC2) Highly Engaged Workforce

OPQ9-1

10 - What are your key applicable regulations, as well as accreditation, certification, or registration requirements?

NEDD's key regulations are by the insurance commissioners in our three states. We're proud to be a member of the national Delta Dental Plans Association (DDPA). Today DDPA is comprised of a network of 39 independent Delta Dental member companies operating in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and other US territories. All dental member companies share a mission to put a healthier, happier smile on every American's face by providing greater access to oral health care.

NEDD serves employer groups and individuals in New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine and is subject to the insurance regulations of each of those three states. Some of their insurance regulations pertain to having reserves within certain limits. If an insurance company does not have sufficient reserves, they raise prices. If they have too many reserves, they have to lower their prices, so NEDD's strategy is to operate within those control limits but perform near the higher end giving us more flexibility. (See Figure FQ2-2)

NEDD has also worked to establish trusting relationships with our legislators and regulators in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont for over 20 years. We hold annual receptions in each state capital to get to know and thank them for their service along with asking them for anything needed. Taking this long view has proven helpful when NEDD was allowed to be included in the state-based exchanges for marketing dental insurance to individuals, not just HR managers, in accordance with the Affordable Care Act.

NEDD was able to secure needed approvals to respond to the COVID-19 crisis very quickly because of the relationship we established with legislators and regulators. We were able to accomplish this because we got to know and trust each other over the years. Established trusting relationships with legislators and regulators.

We were able to secure needed approvals to respond to the COVID-19 crisis very quickly because of the relationships we had with these legislators and regulators.

11 - Is there anything you consider unusual about your environment or business model that would aid in understanding your organization?

NEDD is a resilient organization. Our CEO's book, *Prepare for Crisis, Plan to Thrive*, is the inside story of how one company did it right. We assessed risks and anticipated the possibility of a pandemic.

NEDD received the Business of the Year 2021 Award in the Insurance category from *Business New Hampshire Magazine*. We were recognized for our commitment to excellence, our COVID relief efforts, and our support of oral health programs through the NEDD Foundation.

NEDD is a role model of long-term success:

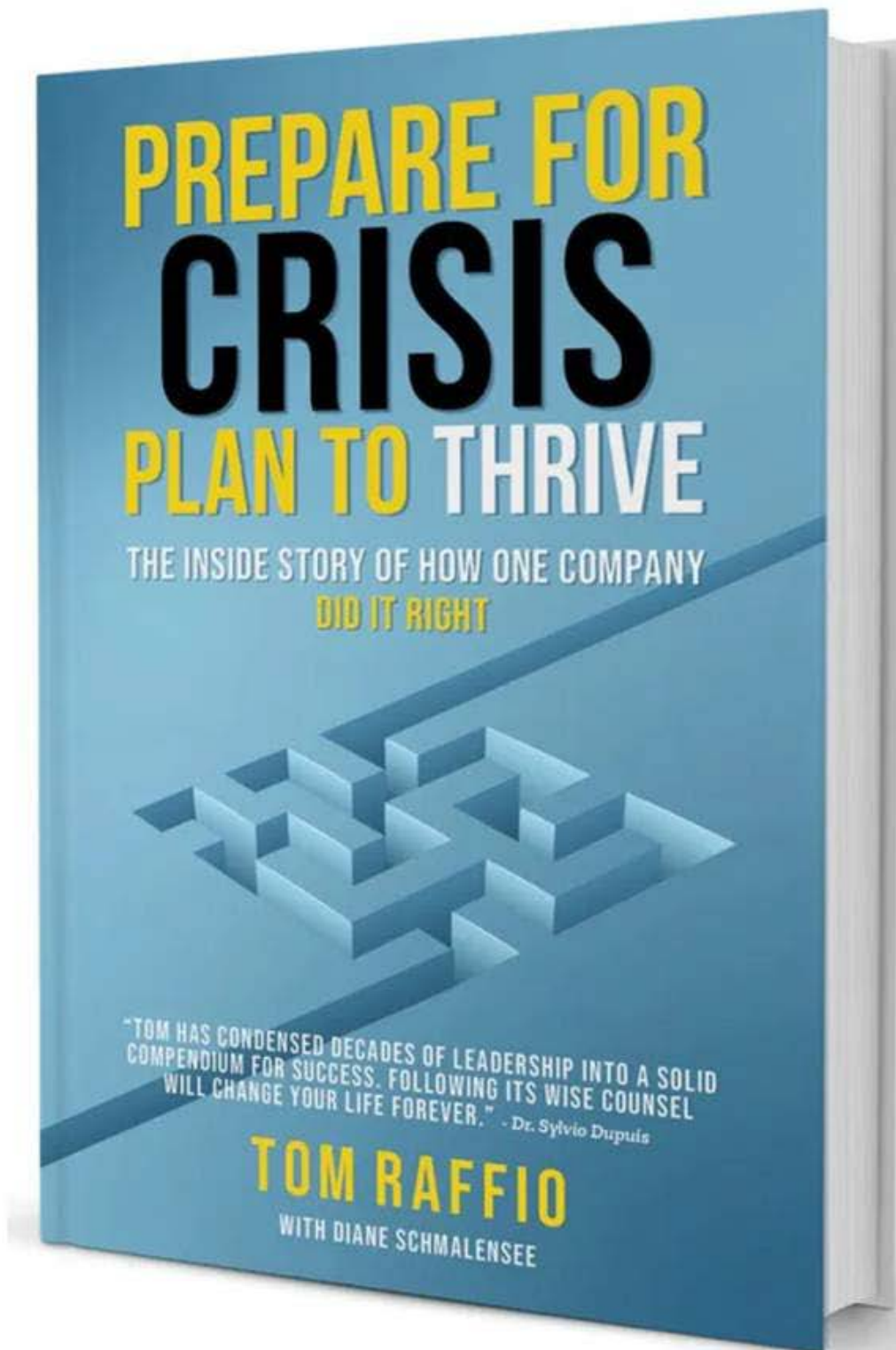
- Used the Baldrige Framework as its business model since 1995.
- Used its Guarantee of Service Excellence (GOSESM) since 1996
- The GOSESM system has focused on key processes and services that are critical to retaining customers. The customer retention rate of 98% exceeds all benchmarks.
- The key guarantees have driven cumulative improvements, so the processes have exceeded the Six Sigma performance for the past 3 years. (Less than 3.4 defects per million opportunities.) See Figure SQ2-1.

NEDD is a role model of resilience:

- NEDD completed a full risk assessment and had business continuation plans for all risks including a pandemic.
- When COVID-19 hit, NEDD rapidly implemented their emergency plans for employees, dentists, and patients.
- They sent masks and personal protection equipment to dental offices.
- They rapidly moved work from the office to homes by modifying the call distribution system per their emergency preparedness plan.

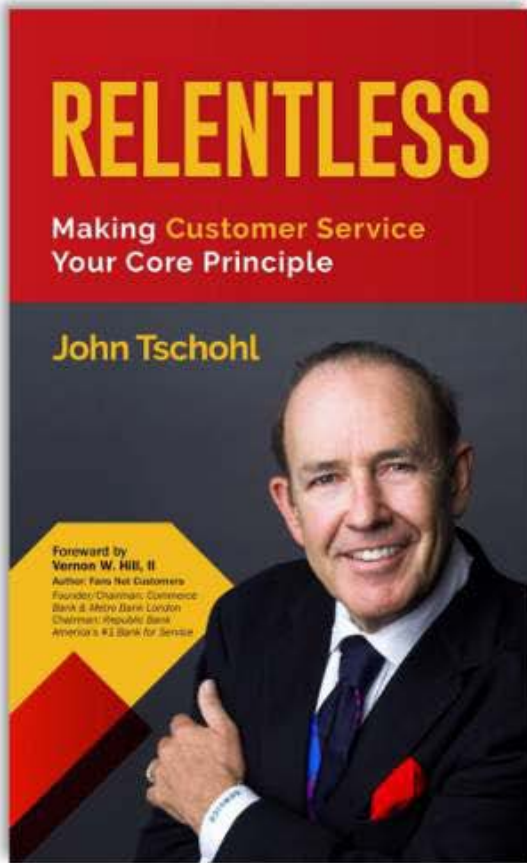
GOSESM was described in the book, *Relentless*, by John Tschohl, that strengthened NEDD's brand and built their reputation for excellent customer service and quality performance. Mr. Tschohl writes, "Amazon, I believe, is the most customer-driven firm in the world. They are Relentless. Another Relentless national role model is Northeast Delta Dental. In both my books, I featured Tom Raffio and NEDD. I suspect they have the largest market share of any insurance company in the world. Relentless customer service pays off."

FIGURE OPQ11-1 NEDD CEO's Book



OPQ11-1

FIGURE OPQ11-2 Books Referencing NEDD



OPQ11-2

Leadership and Governance

1 - Briefly describe and/or depict your leadership and governance processes and/or systems, including processes for succession planning and for two-way communication.

Our Leadership System is shown in Figure LGQ1-1. The customers and stakeholders include our community and our highly engaged workforce. We practice servant leadership and Level 5 leadership from Jim Collin's book, Built to Last. NEDD is led internally by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), consisting of President & CEO, Tom Raffio, and his direct reports, the seven vice presidents. The SLT oversees daily operations and facilitates NEDD reaching its strategic goals. Our colleagues (Staff) report to their managers and directors. The MVV are described in our Organizational Profile, and the Strategic Planning is described in the Strategy section.

A real strength is NEDD's alignment and Integration through the clarity of the corporate SMART goals that are deployed to every department, process, and colleague. (See *Tom's Corner*, Figure OPQ4-2)

The Governance System is described in both the attached table, Figure LGQ1-2, from our 2020 Baldrige Award application and the summary in response to question 3 in the Organizational Profile.

How effective are the Leadership and Governance Systems? In his book, The Extraordinary Leader, Joe Folkman wrote, "to be exceptional, leaders must produce sustained balanced results." John Tschohl of the Service Quality Institute writes in a recent article about NEDD, "I suspect they have the largest market share of any insurance company in the world." Relentless customer service pays off. Northeast Delta Dental is a non-profit. The Reserve/Surplus is \$186,313,898 vs \$8,573,838 when Raffio started in 1995 as CEO.

Succession Planning happens at multiple levels as shown in the Governance System Figure LGQ1-2. The BOD plans the succession for the CEO. The CEO develops succession plans for SLT roles. SLT identifies successors and begins the knowledge transfer. The SLT succession plans are reviewed by the Delta Dental Plans of ME, NH, and VT.




The forums for Senior Leader frank, two-way communication are shown in the attached Figure LGQ1-3.


FIGURE LGQ1-1 Leadership System



LGQ1-1

FIGURE LGQ1-2 Governance System

Key Aspect	Process of Reviewing / Achieving
Accountability for Senior Leaders' Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior Leadership Team (SLT) receives 360-Feedback from direct reports President & CEO receives formal evaluation by Board Members Compliance with bylaws Employee Surveys Peer evaluations by Board Members
Accountability for Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of SMART Goals and action plan Alignment to Mission, Vision, Values Achievement of action plan Stakeholder feedback
Fiscal Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly review by SLT of financial performance Finance/Audit Committee (ME, NH & VT) have access to independent auditors, Baker Newman & Noyes, without management present. (Baker Newman & Noyes can also freely contact any employee.)
Transparency in Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular updates of goals shared at All Colleagues Tom's Daily Emails  Tom's Weekly Emails with NEDD's Dashboard
Selection of Governance Board Members and Disclosure Policies for them, as appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential board members are interviewed by the Corporate Governance Committee's (ME & VT) and the External Nominating Committee (NH) before being recommended to the full Board of Directors/Trustees. The boards are composed of highly qualified executives with diverse backgrounds and skill sets. Selection criteria for potential board members is approved by the Corporate Governance Committee and/or External Nominating Committee, and nominations are solicited through current and former board members; Membership; & SLT. Applicants are assessed/interviewed by the Corporate Governance Committee/External Nominating Committee, and the Corporate Governance Committee/External Nominating Committee makes its recommendation to the Board of Directors/Trustees. Each board member of Delta Dental Plans of Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont receives his/her performance metrics juxtaposed to corporate norm on several criteria taken from the Corporate Directors/Trustees Code of Conduct Annual peer evaluations are used by the Corporate Governance and External Nominating Committees  These peer evaluations are also used by the Corporate Governance Committees and the External Nominating Committee to determine whether a board member should serve a second or third term. Although a board member is eligible to serve three three-year terms, after serving a term, the Corporate Governance Committee/External Nominating Committee must make a recommendation on whether the member should continue to serve, based on peer evaluations and other data (e.g., the director's/trustee's self-evaluation form). This process keeps our board members active, fresh, and committed. All board members, new and veteran, must complete a Conflict of Interest every year. All board members, new and veteran, must read and sign the Code of Conduct every year.
Independence & Effectiveness of Internal and External Audits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An annual audit activities plan is presented to the Finance/Audit Committees and executed throughout the year. To ensure financial transparency and accountability, external auditors answer to the Finance/Audit Committees of our three boards and have a direct line of communication to our three boards.
Protection of Stakeholder and Stockholder Interests, as appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northeast Delta Dental does not have any stockholders Protection of stakeholder interests is managed through regulatory compliance, compliance with policies and procedures, operational oversight, Board of Directors/Trustees oversight, fiscal accountability, and accountability for the achievement of strategic objectives. NEDD has a robust Enterprise Risk Management framework. President & CEO Reports to Board Guarantee Of Service ExcellenceSM Program 
Succession Planning for Senior Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Succession planning for SLT is facilitated by Human Resources. It is supported by mentoring, leadership development opportunities, and special assignments. SLT identifies successors and begin the knowledge transfer. The SLT succession plans are reviewed by the Delta Dental Plans of ME, NH, and VT. Company and SLT grow by embracing culture and succession planning. SLT create succession plan and deploys it to the department level.

 signifies a cycle of learning, evaluation, and improvement;  represents a breakthrough change or innovation

LGQ1-2

FIGURE LGQ1-3 Leadership Communication Approaches

Mechanism*	Purpose(s)	Audience**
Annual		
Employee Survey ↓↑	Ensure that employees are fully engaged; provides an opportunity to be heard; offers a venue to receive feedback if Senior Leadership Team's actions are in line with values	WF
Consumer Survey ↓↑	Drive customer engagement, and receive feedback	C
Annual Report ↑	Share company's activities and financial performance. MVV	WF, D, BM, C, E, S, P, KS
Tri-State Report ↑	Details the activities and accomplishments of NEDD by department	WF, DR, BM
Biennial		
Participating Dentist Satisfaction Survey ↓↑	Ensure that dentists are fully engaged; provides an opportunity to be heard; offers a venue to receive feedback if SLT's actions are in line with values	D
Employer-Group Satisfaction Survey ↓↑	Drive customer engagement, and receive feedback	C
Quarterly		
Incisor Newsletter ↑	Provides news/updates to dentists. Engagement of provider network	WF, BM, D
Monthly		
All Colleagues Meetings ↓↑	Led by CEO and SLT-SMART Goals, Corporate Initiatives, Anniversaries, Birthdays, Education Accomplishments, Company Performance/Financial, HR and updates, HR Featured topics	WF
Team Power ↑	Recognize individuals & teams; educate & inform employees and Board members about corporate goals, departmental news, events, committee projects, initiatives	WF
One-on-One Meetings ↓↑	Frank, two-way communication	WF
Department Meetings ↓↑	Led by SL-Update on strategic initiatives, policies, and processes	WF, DR
Weekly		
Managers Meeting (OPS) ↓↑	Led by SL-Update on strategic initiatives, policies, and processes	DR
Dentist Emails (2020-21) ↑	Provide updates and assistance, describe PPE availability	D
Daily		
Employee Emails (2020-21)↑	Provide updates, guidance and support	WF, BM, D
Walk Around Campus ↓↑	Interact with employees-teamwork and communication	WF
NEDDWeb ↓↑	Internal website-messages to employees	WF, DR
As Needed		
Onboarding ↓↑	Interact with new hires	WF, BM
Tom's Blog ↑	Option for SL to connect and network	WF, D, BM, C, E, S, P, KS
Social Media ↓↑	Option for SL to connect and network on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn	WF, D, BM, C, E, S, P, KS
NEDD Website ↑	Informational	WF, BM, C, KS, P
Coffee with the Coach ↓↑	Interact with new hires	WF
Informational Emails ↑	Provide updates	DR, D, BM
Emails from Tom ↑	Communication, provide updates 🔄	WF, D, BM
Letters to Subscribers ↑	Thank you to subscriber for acknowledging excellent service	C
Emails to Dentists ↓↑	Communications with dentists, provide and receive feedback on certain topics	D
Letters to Employer Groups ↑	Provide and receive feedback on certain topics	E

*↓↑=frank two-way communication, ↓=incoming, ↑=outgoing; ** WF-Workforce, BM-Board Member, S-Stakeholder (Community), C-Consumer, D- Participating Dentists, E-Employer Groups, KS-Key Suppliers, P-Partners, DR-Direct Reports; 🔄 signifies a cycle of learning, evaluation, and improvement

LGQ1-3

2 - What are your results for the effectiveness of senior leaders' engagement and communication by key workforce segments (e.g., workforce ratings of leaders)?

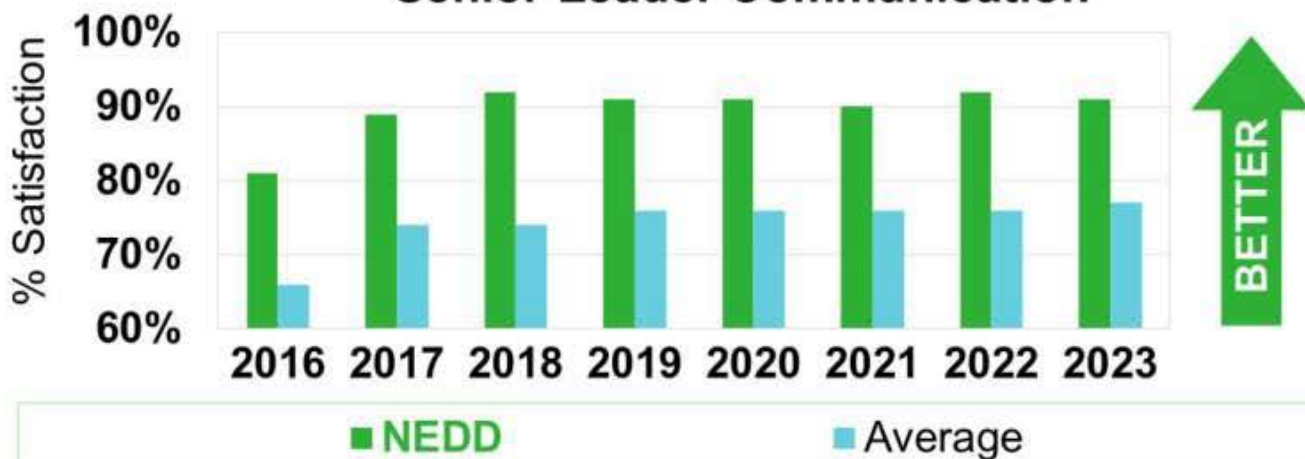
Figure LGQ2-1 shows the results of the employee engagement survey for our senior leader communication. These surveys are conducted as part of the *Business New Hampshire Magazine Best Companies To Work For*. Comparisons are shown against the average responses. Although we have asked, the magazine does not have top quartile comparisons.

LGQ2-2 shows the employee engagement survey responses for confidence in the effectiveness of senior leaders' engagement and communication. Performance significantly exceeds that of the other companies in this survey.

Creating a motivational culture is important to the organization's performance, and Figure LGQ2-3 shows again that NEDD significantly outperforms the other participants in the *Business New Hampshire Magazine* survey.

All of these results have contributed to NEDD being one of the best companies to work for eight years in a row. In 2021 NEDD was named the insurance business of the year by the business New Hampshire magazine. (Figure OPQ4-1)

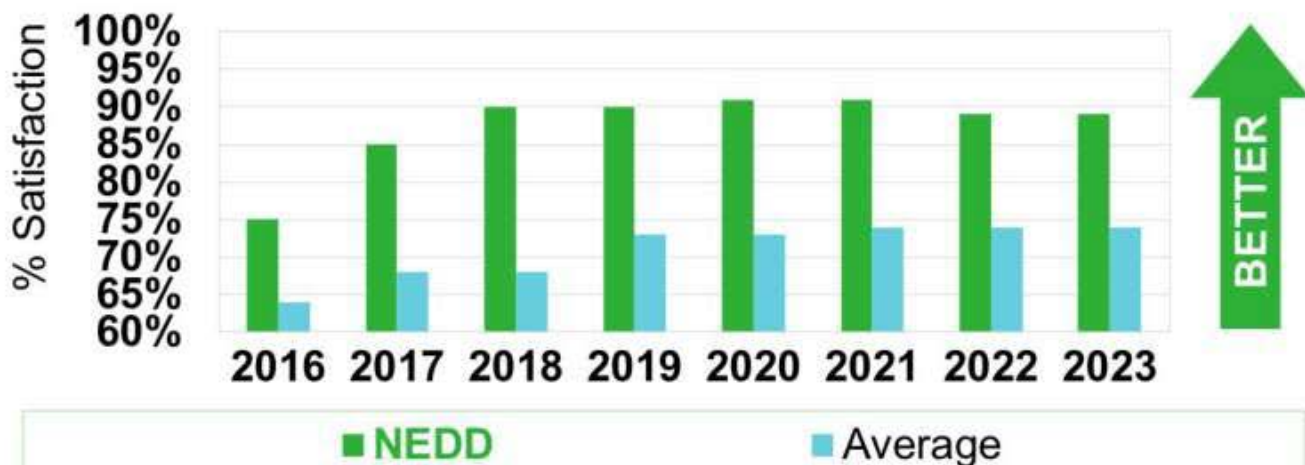
FIGURE LGQ2-1 Employee Engagement Survey: Senior Leader Communication



Source: Average represents all NH companies who have completed the Best Companies to Work For - Business NH Magazine.

LGQ2-1

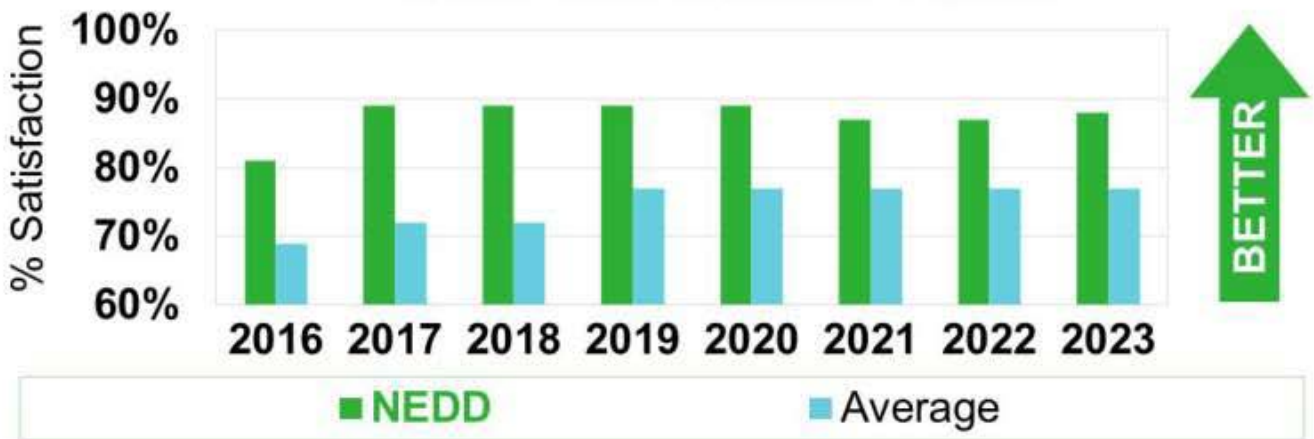
FIGURE LGQ2-2 Employee Engagement Survey: Confidence in Senior Leaders (It Starts at the Top)



Source: Average represents all NH companies who have completed the Best Companies to Work For - Business NH Magazine.

LGQ2-2

FIGURE LGQ2-3 Employee Engagement Survey: Create a Motivational Culture



Source: Average represents all NH companies who have completed the Best Companies to Work For - Business NH Magazine.

LGQ2-3

3 - What are your results for the effectiveness of senior leaders' engagement and communication by key customer and stakeholder segments?

Our employees, who we call colleagues, are one of our most important stakeholder groups. In Figure LGQ3-1, senior leader annual communications with key employee groups has been at the 100% level for the past eight years and is the best possible performance, which compares favorably with top percentile performance. The extra communication during COVID helped maintain this best possible performance rating.

In Figure LGQ3-2, the employer group customer satisfaction shows that the likelihood to renew is 98% consistently. This is one of the highest ratings among all of the Delta Dental Plan Association (DDPA) groups. This survey is conducted every two years. The next survey is due later in 2024. The Net Promoter Score is 95%. See CMQ3 for an explanation of the NPS calculation.

Figure LGQ3-3 shows the participating dentists' overall satisfaction. This data is segmented between excellent, very good, and good. There is no relevant comparison available as this survey is unique to NEDD.

FIGURE LGQ3-1 Senior Leader Annual Communication with Key Employer Groups



Source: NEDD

LGQ3-1

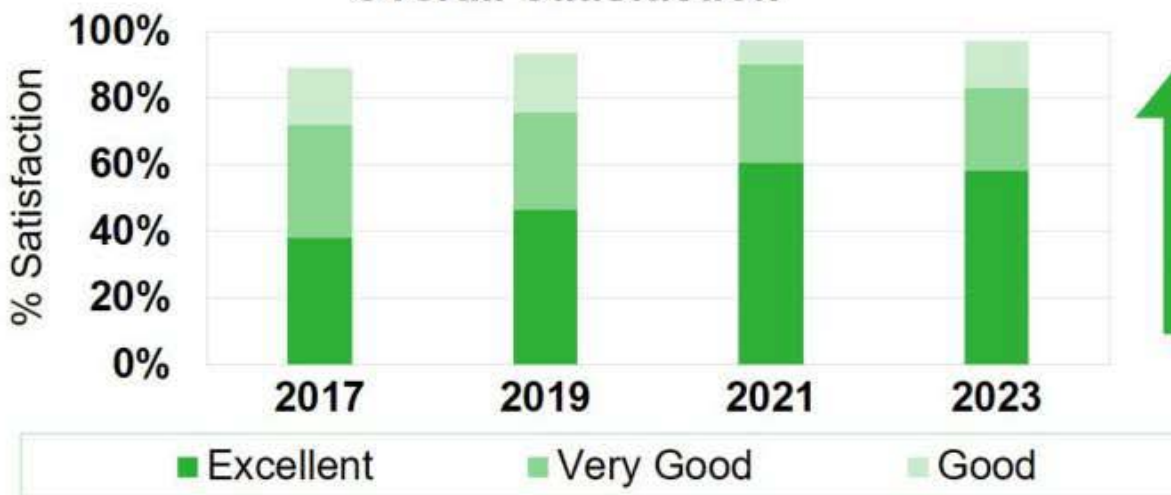
FIGURE LGQ3-2 Employer-Group Satisfaction: Likelihood to Renew with NEDD

Year	Definitely	Probably	Unsure	Probably Not	Definitely Not	NPS
2016	58%	36%	5%	0%	1%	93
2018	67%	29%	4%	1%	0%	95
2020	69%	26%	5%	0%	0%	95
2022	60%	34%	5%	1%	0%	93

Source: Satisfaction Survey. Survey done every other year.

LGQ3-2

FIGURE LGQ3-3 Participating Dentist Overall Satisfaction



Source: Satisfaction Survey. Survey done every other year.

LGQ3-3

4 - What are your results for leadership and governance accountability (e.g., internal and external audits and assessments, certifications, and accreditations)?

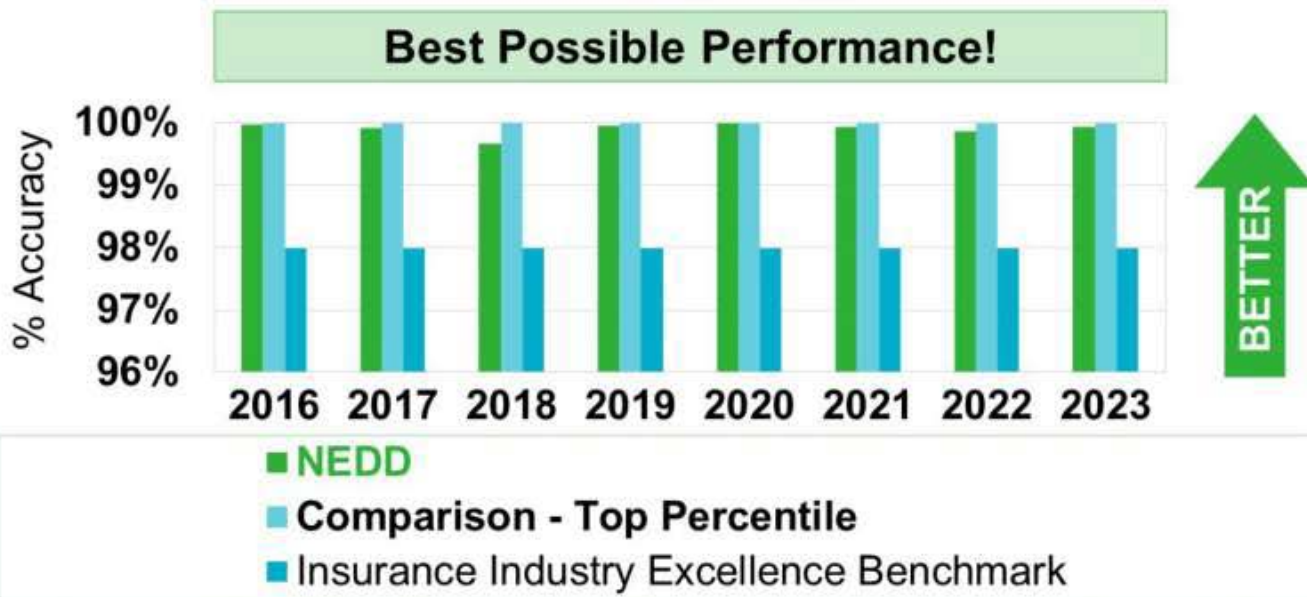
Note: Comparisons are not expected for this question.

The financial accuracy of claims is an important requirement. It is one measure of the effectiveness of our governance accountability. Figure LGQ4-1 shows the effectiveness of our governance accountability. It compares the NEDD internal claims financial accuracy audits to the insurance industry excellent benchmarks, and, in all cases, NEDD outperforms the insurance industry excellence benchmarks for the past eight years.

It is important for organizations to comply with OSHA, IRS, and DDPA requirements. Figure LGQ4-2 shows that for the past eight years NEDD has had 100% compliance for OSHA, for their Internal Revenue Service 990 annual filing, and the DDPA requirements and business policy compliance. 100% is the best possible performance.

A third critical measure in the insurance industry is meeting the insurance commission requirements in the three states that we serve. As shown in Figure LGQ4-3, NEDD presents 8 years of 100% compliance that puts us in the top percentile.

**FIGURE LGQ4-1 Internal Claims Financial Accuracy Audits
Delta Dental Plans Association (DDPA)**



Source: NEDD Quality Audit. This represents the percentage of all claims submitted that are processed with no monetary errors.

LGQ4-1

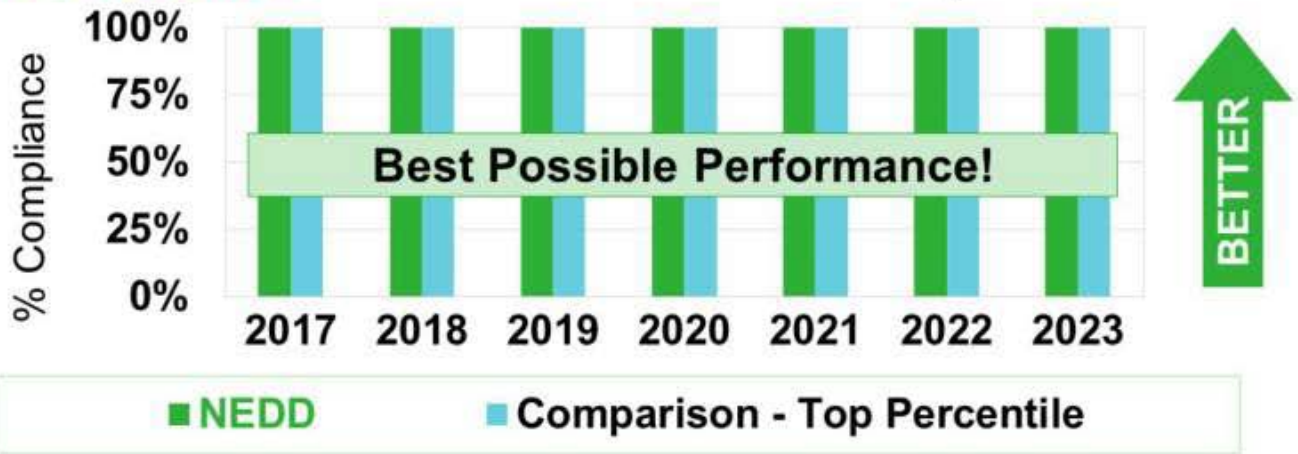
FIGURE LGQ4-2 Filing and Policy Compliance

Year	Occupational Safety and Health Administration 300 Annual Filing Compliance	Internal Revenue Service 990 Annual Filing Compliance	Delta Dental Plans Association Requirements: e-Business Policy Compliance	Comparison – Top Percentile
2016	100%	100%	100%	100%tile
2017	100%	100%	100%	100%tile
2018	100%	100%	100%	100%tile
2019	100%	100%	100%	100%tile
2020	100%	100%	100%	100%tile
2021	100%	100%	100%	100%tile
2022	100%	100%	100%	100%tile
2023	100%	100%	100%	100%tile

Sources: OSHA, IRS, DDPA Report Card. Higher is Better.

LGQ4-2

FIGURE LGQ4-3 Insurance Commission Requirements Met



Source: Insurance Commissions of ME, NH, VT

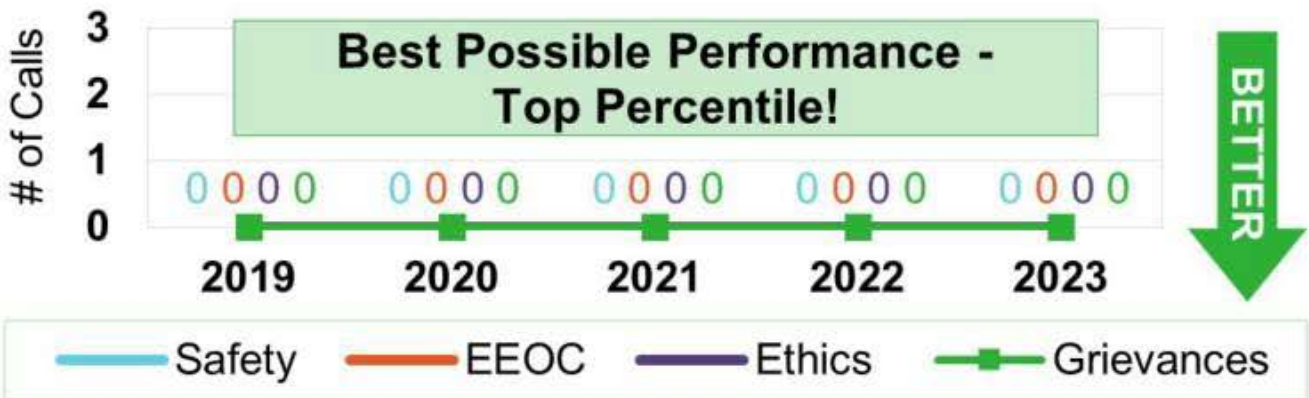
LGQ4-3

5 - What are your results for grievances and complaints, including those related to safety, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), and ethics?

NEDD has a hotline for receiving grievances and complaints. Figure LGQ5-1 shows NEDD performance for complaints and is segmented by grievances, safety, EEOC, and ethics for a five-year period. All results are zeros. There are no validated complaints or grievances. NEDD conducts annual training for all colleagues on the importance of ethics, compliance, and excellent customer service. This is the best possible performance and, as such, represents the top percentile in the industry.

Figure LGQ5-2 shows HIPAA breaches, and over the last five years there has been only one breach that was quickly deemed not to be significant. Again, this represents near best possible performance.

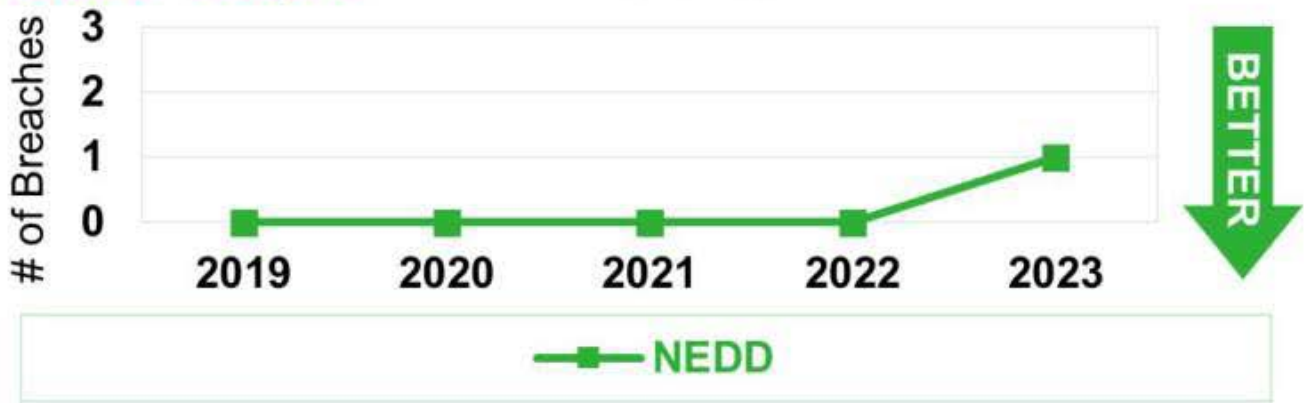
FIGURE LGQ5-1 Hotline Calls



Source: NEDD Legal and Compliance Department.
All employees trained every year.

LGQ5-1

FIGURE LGQ5-2 HIPAA Breaches



Source: NEDD Legal and Compliance Department

LGQ5-2

Strategy

Note: Comparisons not expected for the results in this section.

1 - Briefly describe and/or depict your key processes used in strategic planning, including development, resource allocation, and execution.

We conduct our Strategic Planning Process (SPP) as shown in Figure SQ1-1, beginning in June with a Long-Range Planning (LRP) Strategic Conference to review any strategic opportunities and/or philanthropic initiatives for the coming year. Any R&D budget needs are determined in July/August in preparation for the November Budget Meetings. Budgets are approved at the December state board meetings.

We solicit feedback from employees at the monthly All Colleagues meetings. Vetting is accomplished by a Tri-State Long Range Planning Committee (3 members from each state) with further vetting at monthly Board Leadership teleconferences. As appropriate, we also seek regulatory approvals.

We ensure that financial and other resources are available to support the achievement of our action plans while we meet current obligations through adherence to a strict budgeting process. (Phase 3, Figure SQ1-1) In addition, we ensure a buildup of reserves in the event of unforeseen circumstances. And, we may review and increase the fee structure to our participating dentists as necessary.

We manage the risks associated with the plans to ensure our financial viability through vetting grants through our External Affairs Department or approved by our NEDD Foundation Board.

We **deploy** our action plans first by meeting with the teams identified to address them. We also **deploy our action plans to our workforce** through Department and the All-Colleague meetings. As appropriate, we deploy action plans to key suppliers, partners, and collaborators through calls, emails, and meetings. Key communication methods are shown in Figure LGQ1-3. Deployment of corporate SMART goals align with department SMART goals, which are evaluated at least monthly in *Tom's Corner* communications and then in face-to-face quarterly and All Colleague meetings.

We **ensure that we can sustain the key outcomes of our action plans** through contractual agreements and frequent review to ensure that the performance is maintained.

FIGURE SQ1-1 Strategic Planning Process (SPP)



SQ1-1

FIGURE SQ1-2 Aligning Strategic Objectives, SC, Action Plans, HR Plans (WF), Measures and Results

Key Strategic Objectives SA/SC/CC	Short-term (ST), Long-term (LT), and Workforce (WF) Action Plans	Key Performance Measure / Indicator	2024 Target	Projections vs. Comp.*	SMART Goal Timeline	Results (Figure)
Customer-Focused Excellence SA1, SA4, SC3, CC1	Increase Covered Lives (LT)	Total Covered Lives	≥ 1,037,536	1) +	12/31/24	CMQ2-1
	Increase Consumer Growth (LT)	Consumers from New Groups	≥ 25,000	N/A	12/31/24	AOS
	Increase Customer Retention (LT)	Employer-Group Based Subscriber Retention Net of State Plans (100% Retention) and Delta USA Transfers	≥ 98%	2) +	12/31/24	CMQ3-3
	Improve Quality Service (ST) (LT)	Employer-Group Satisfaction	≥ 85%	3) +	12/31/24	CMQ5-1
		Consumer Satisfaction	≥ 85%	3) +	12/31/24	CMQ5-2
		Participating Dentist Satisfaction	≥ 85%	3) +	12/31/24	LGQ3-3
	Achieve Best in Class Customer Service (ST) (LT)	Speed of Answer	≤ 45 Seconds	+	12/31/24	OQ3-1
		Issue Resolved on First Contact	≥ 90%	+	12/31/24	OQ3-2
Abandonment Rate		≤ 5%	+	12/31/24	AOS	
Building a Culture of Employee Performance Excellence SA5, SC4, CC2	Hire and Retain Capable Employees (WF)	Turnover %	≤ 20.1%	+	12/31/24	WQ2-1
	Align Employees with Company Mission and Values (WF)	Employee Engagement Survey: Overall Score	≥ 76%	+	12/31/24	WQ4-1
Operational Performance Improvement & Innovation SA2, SC2, CC3	Increase Network Accessibility (LT)	Satisfaction from Consumers on Access to Participating Dentists	≥ 85%	3) =	12/31/24	AOS
		Satisfaction from Employer-Groups on Access to Participating Dentists	≥ 90%	3) =	12/31/24	AOS
	Reduce Claims Turnaround (LT)	Claims Turnaround Within 15 Calendar Days of Receipt	≥ 95%	NA	12/31/24	OQ2-1
	Improve Claims Processing Accuracy (LT)	% Monetary Accuracy Rate Meet or Exceed DDPA Standards	≥ 99%	NA	12/31/24	OQ2-2
	Select, Implement, and Maintain (LT) Technology to Support Corporation	Aggregate System Availability	≥ 99.5%	NA	12/31/24	AOS
Financial Excellence SA3, SC1	Achieve Combined Ratio (ST) (LT)	Total Claims and Administrative Costs / Total Revenue	≥ 99.7%	+	12/31/24	FQ2-1
	Control Administrative Costs (LT)	Total Administrative Percentage	≤ 12.2%	+	12/31/24	FQ2-3
Social Responsibility Focused Excellence SA4, SC3, CC2	Address Oral Health Disparities (LT), Implement Infrastructure Architecture as well as Social Justice pertaining to Oral Health Disparities (ST)	Fund Reduction of Oral Health Discrepancies	≥ \$220,000	NA	12/31/24	CEQ1-3
		Dollars Spent on Dentist Student Loan Repayment Program	≥ \$300,000	NA	12/31/24	CEQ2-3
		Foundation Awards Support	≥ \$400,000	NA	12/31/24	CEQ2-2
	Participate on Nonprofit Community Boards (ST) (LT)	Community Boards Participation: # Employees, # of Organizations # of Hours	≥ 30 Employees ≥ 80 Organizations ≥ 4000 Hours	NA	12/31/24	CEQ2-1

*Projections & Competitor Projections: + better than the projections of comparisons, = at parity, - worse than projections of comparisons.

1) LT: Exceed DDPA average of % of population covered;

2) LT Goal: Retain a higher % of subscribers than DDPA average;

3) Overall satisfaction at 85% is a "World Class" benchmark.

SQ1-2

2 - What are your results for accomplishment of your action plans?

Figure SQ2-1 shows the impact of long-term success cumulative results for the accomplishment of action plans focused on accomplishing our mission and strategic objectives over the past 28 years. NEDD is unique in measuring the number of incidents where we failed to meet our GOSESM guarantees. **It shows that 6 of 7 of our key processes perform better than Six Sigma.** Smooth implementation process is 4.5 Sigma.

Figure SQ2-2 illustrates the alignment of NEDD's strategic objectives, action plans, key performance measures/indicators, the 2024 target, and projected performance. Where there are results figures they are indicated. With only 3 results per question, other results are available on site (AOS).

Figure SQ2-3 shows the years of lobbying the New Hampshire legislature to expand dental care to those on Medicaid. This was finally approved in 2023 and is in the process of implementation.

FIGURE SQ2-1 NEDD's Key Processes are Effective and Efficient

NEDD's Guarantee of Service Excellence (GOSESM) Consistently Delivers Six Sigma Performance
Six Sigma is defined as 3.4 defects per million opportunities

Guarantee	# of Incidents					Annual Opportunities	Sigma Level
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023		
1. Smooth Implementation	4	3	6	3	4	8,000	4.5 Sigma
2. Customer Service	0	4	0	0	0	270,000	6 Sigma
3. Quick Claims	10	3	0	0	0	2,000,000	6 Sigma
4. Inappropriate Billing	8	0	0	1	0	2,000,000	6 Sigma
5. ID Cards	0	0	1	1	1	1,000,000	6 Sigma
6. Booklets and OOBS	0	1	0	0	0	1,000,000	6 Sigma
7. Marketing Contacts	0	0	0	0	0	8,000	6 Sigma
8. Above and Beyond	1	12	0	1	2	2,000,000	6 Sigma
<i>Annual Total</i>	23	23	7	6	7		

SQ2-1

FIGURE SQ2-2 Aligning Strategic Objectives, SC, Action Plans, HR Plans (WF), Measures and Results

Key Strategic Objectives SA/SC/CC	Short-term (ST), Long-term (LT), and Workforce (WF) Action Plans	Key Performance Measure / Indicator	2024 Target	Projections vs. Comp.*	SMART Goal Timeline	Results (Figure)
Customer-Focused Excellence SA1, SA4, SC3, CC1	Increase Covered Lives (LT)	Total Covered Lives	≥ 1,037,536	1) +	12/31/24	CMQ2-1
	Increase Consumer Growth (LT)	Consumers from New Groups	≥ 25,000	N/A	12/31/24	AOS
	Increase Customer Retention (LT)	Employer-Group Based Subscriber Retention Net of State Plans (100% Retention) and Delta USA Transfers	≥ 98%	2) +	12/31/24	CMQ3-3
	Improve Quality Service (ST) (LT)	Employer-Group Satisfaction	≥ 85%	3) +	12/31/24	CMQ5-1
		Consumer Satisfaction	≥ 85%	3) +	12/31/24	CMQ5-2
		Participating Dentist Satisfaction	≥ 85%	3) +	12/31/24	LGQ3-3
	Achieve Best in Class Customer Service (ST) (LT)	Speed of Answer	≤ 45 Seconds	+	12/31/24	OQ3-1
		Issue Resolved on First Contact	≥ 90%	+	12/31/24	OQ3-2
Abandonment Rate		≤ 5%	+	12/31/24	AOS	
Building a Culture of Employee Performance Excellence SA5, SC4, CC2	Hire and Retain Capable Employees (WF)	Turnover %	≤ 20.1%	+	12/31/24	WQ2-1
	Align Employees with Company Mission and Values (WF)	Employee Engagement Survey: Overall Score	≥ 76%	+	12/31/24	WQ4-1
Operational Performance Improvement & Innovation SA2, SC2, CC3	Increase Network Accessibility (LT)	Satisfaction from Consumers on Access to Participating Dentists	≥ 85%	3) =	12/31/24	AOS
		Satisfaction from Employer-Groups on Access to Participating Dentists	≥ 90%	3) =	12/31/24	AOS
	Reduce Claims Turnaround (LT)	Claims Turnaround Within 15 Calendar Days of Receipt	≥ 95%	NA	12/31/24	OQ2-1
	Improve Claims Processing Accuracy (LT)	% Monetary Accuracy Rate Meet or Exceed DDPA Standards	≥ 99%	NA	12/31/24	OQ2-2
	Select, Implement, and Maintain (LT) Technology to Support Corporation	Aggregate System Availability	≥ 99.5%	NA	12/31/24	AOS
Financial Excellence SA3, SC1	Achieve Combined Ratio (ST) (LT)	Total Claims and Administrative Costs / Total Revenue	≥ 99.7%	+	12/31/24	FQ2-1
	Control Administrative Costs (LT)	Total Administrative Percentage	≤ 12.2%	+	12/31/24	FQ2-3
Social Responsibility Focused Excellence SA4, SC3, CC2	Address Oral Health Disparities (LT), Implement Infrastructure Architecture as well as Social Justice pertaining to Oral Health Disparities (ST)	Fund Reduction of Oral Health Discrepancies	≥ \$220,000	NA	12/31/24	CEQ1-3
		Dollars Spent on Dentist Student Loan Repayment Program	≥ \$300,000	NA	12/31/24	CEQ2-3
		Foundation Awards Support	≥ \$400,000	NA	12/31/24	CEQ2-2
	Participate on Nonprofit Community Boards (ST) (LT)	Community Boards Participation: # Employees, # of Organizations # of Hours	≥ 30 Employees ≥ 80 Organizations ≥ 4000 Hours	NA	12/31/24	CEQ2-1

*Projections & Competitor Projections: + better than the projections of comparisons, = at parity, - worse than projections of comparisons.

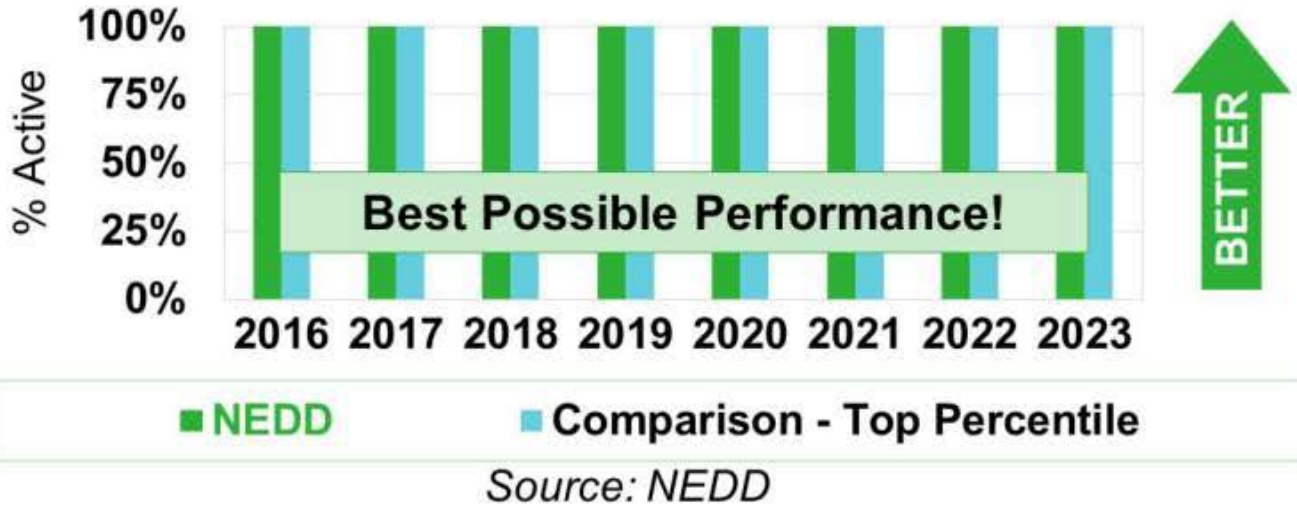
1) LT: Exceed DDPA average of % of population covered;

2) LT Goal: Retain a higher % of subscribers than DDPA average;

3) Overall satisfaction at 85% is a "World Class" benchmark.

SQ2-2

FIGURE SQ2-3 Medicaid Years of Lobbying



SQ2-3

3 - What are your results for the impact of your organizational strategy?

Note: These are the results demonstrating the impact of accomplishing your strategic goals and/or objectives.

The impact of NEDD's organizational strategy has earned national recognition for our resilience and our long-term success. Figure SQ3-1 summarizes our 5 key strategic objectives; each of those is aligned with our key performance measures and indicators; and, shows our performance for five years. The strategic implementation results mirror our annual strategic planning objectives and key performance indicators.

Figure SQ3-2 shows the progress and success of the last nine years of our **journey to a million lives covered**. This journey began in 2015 and continues today. We set a goal of covering a million lives in 2023, but we actually accomplished that a year early in 2022. We are continuing to expand that through the Medicaid dental program in New Hampshire.

Figure SQ3-3 shows the percent of our goals that have been accomplished each year. These goals are set against the industry's best standards. Goals are set to exceed the industry top performer excellence standards.

FIGURE SQ3-1 Strategic Implementation Results

Key Strategic Objectives	Key Performance Measure / Indicator	Results (Figure)	2024 Target	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Customer-Focused Excellence	Total Covered Lives	CMQ2-1	≥ 1,037,536	928,991	938,061	966,000	1,000,905	1,055,081
	Consumer Growth from New Groups	AOS	≥ 25,000	48,592	9,070	25,613	29,248	23,949
	Employer-Group Subscriber Retention	CMQ3-3	≥ 98%	97.5%	97.6%	98.8%	98.9%	98.8%
	Employer-Group Customer Satisfaction	CMQ5-1	≥ 85%	n/a	96%	n/a	96%	n/a
	Consumer Satisfaction	CMQ5-2	≥ 85%	92%	90%	93%	92%	92%
	Participating Dentist Satisfaction	LGQ3-3	≥ 85%	89%	n/a	97.5%	n/a	97%
	Customer Service: Speed of Answer	OQ3-1	≤ 45 Seconds	30	34	26	30	29
	Issue Resolved on First Contact	OQ3-2	≥ 90%	97.0%	96.0%	96.2%	95.8%	95.9%
	Customer Service: Abandonment Rate	AOS	≤ 5%	2%	2%	1.8%	2.2%	2.3%
Employee Performance	Turnover %	WQ2-1	≤ 20.1%	14.0%	14.0%	9.78%	10.4%	4.7%
	Employee Engagement Overall Score	WQ4-1	≥ 76%	89%	88%	87%	86%	89%
Operational Performance Improvement & Innovation	Consumers Access to Participating Dentists	AOS	≥ 85%	81%	82%	83%	87%	84%
	Employer-Group Access to Participating Dentists	AOS	≥ 90%	n/a	90%	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Claims Turnaround Within 15 Days	OQ2-1	≥ 95%	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%
	% Monetary Accuracy Rate	OQ2-2	≥ 99%	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%
	Aggregate System Availability	AOS	≥ 99.5%	99.96%	99.99%	99.97%	99.99%	99.99%
Financial Excellence	Combined Ratio Percent	FQ2-1	≥ 99.7%	99.8%	98.0%	97.6%	99.5%	99.4%
	Control Administrative Costs	FQ2-3	≤ 12.2%	12.1%	13.8%	11.9%	9.9%	12%
Social Responsibility Focused Excellence	Oral Health Discrepancies Fund	CEQ1-3	≥ \$220,000	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Dentist Student Loan Repayment	CEQ2-3	≥ \$300,000	\$320,000	\$320,000	\$362,500	\$389,522	\$1,398,560
	Foundation Awards Support	CEQ2-2	≥ \$400,000	\$616,279	\$404,214	\$473,963	\$533,999	\$1,335,104
	Community Boards Participation	CEQ2-1	≥ 30 Employees	45	41	36	34	33
≥ 80 Organizations			94	83	91	80	81	
≥ 4000 Hours			3,179	4,038	4,466	3,690	2,908.5	

Key: Met Target/On Track to Meet Target Yellow = At Risk to Not Meet Future Target Red = Below Target/Will Not Meet Future Target

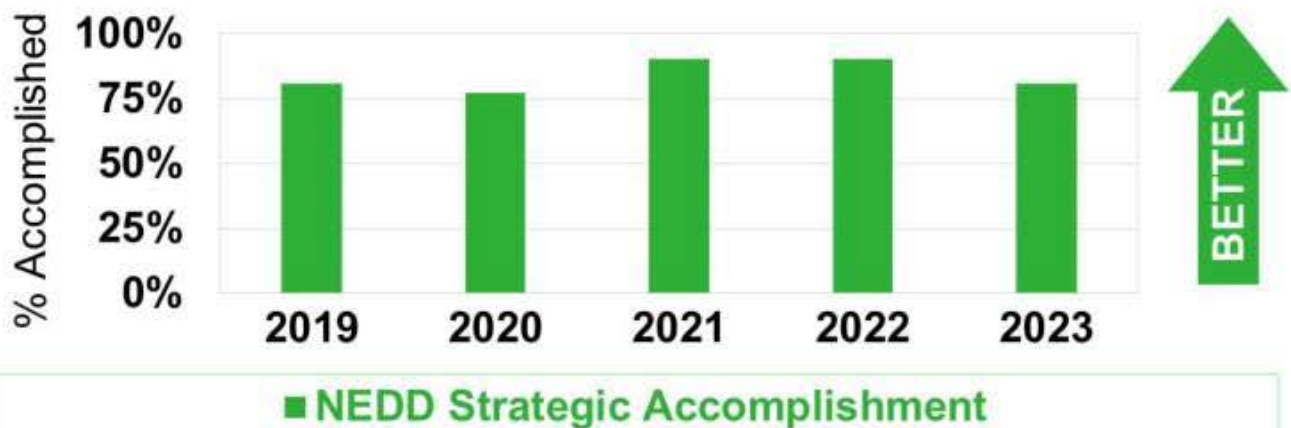
SQ3-1

FIGURE SQ3-2 NEDD's Journey to One Million Covered Lives



SQ3-2

FIGURE SQ3-3 Strategic Accomplishment



Source: NEDD

SQ3-3

4 - What are your results for achievement of workforce plans, including capability and capacity for strategically important positions?

Our results for workforce plans for capability and capacity, Figure SQ4-1, show how many new hires have occurred each year to support growth and increase our capacity. This measure is unique to NEDD, and no industry benchmark is available. While we don't have space to show another capacity measure, NEDD enjoys a very high acceptance rate of job offers. In fact, in the last five years only four job offers have not been accepted.

An important measure of capability is colleague's jobs that are covered by job descriptions, which spell out their knowledge and skills. As you can see in Figure SQ4-2, for the past eight years NEDD has had 100% of our staff jobs covered by job descriptions.

Professional background screening is important before job offers are made. The Professional Background Screening Association (PBSA) indicates that 96.1% is a high performing organization. As you can see from Figure SQ4-3, NEDD has been 100% for the last eight years.

FIGURE SQ4-1 New Hires Support Growth and Capacity



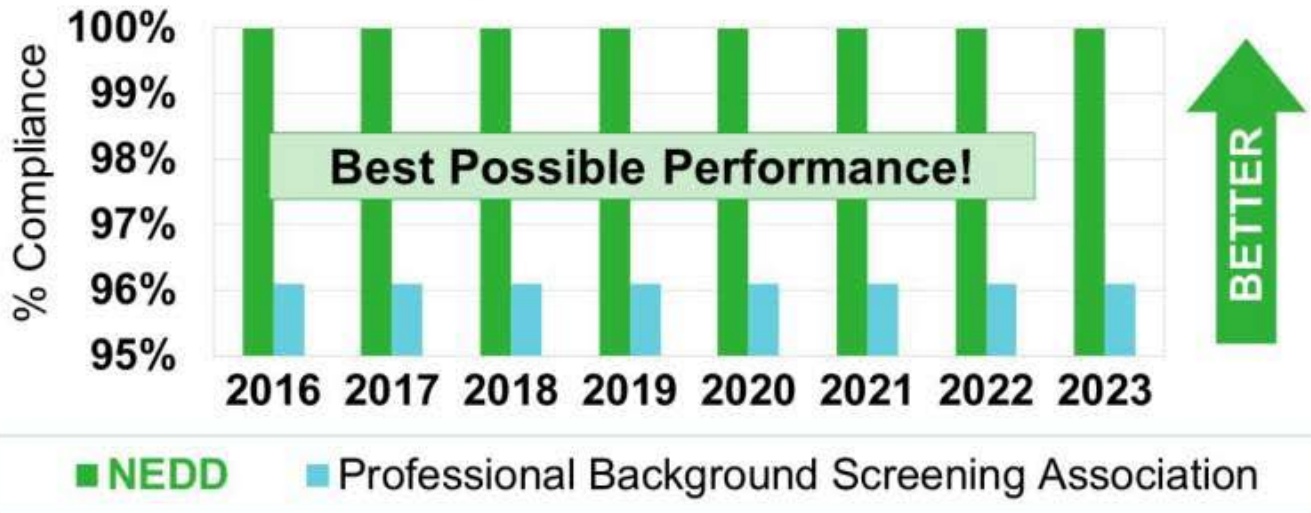
SQ4-1

FIGURE SQ4-2 Staff Jobs Covered by Job Descriptions Defining Knowledge and Skills



SQ4-2

FIGURE SQ4-3 Background Checks



Source: NEDD Human Resources and PBSA

SQ4-3

Operations

1 - Briefly describe and/or depict your key processes used for the following:

1. design and delivery of your products and services,
2. supply network management, and
3. innovation management.

We determine key product and work process requirements as members of Delta Dental Plans Association where we are required to offer dental insurance plans to employers and consumers in our assigned geographic area. However, we also complete extensive research through our own customer listening methods and processes (Figure CMQ1-1), knowledge of our regulatory requirements, and input from our workforce, partners, suppliers, and stakeholders. Further, we ensure that our work process requirements are aligned to our key work processes: Customer Service, Claims Processing, Enrollment, and Dental Provider Networks. Our process improvements have been driven by our GOSESM results and now are performing at a consistent Sigma Level as shown in Figure OQ2-1.

Our supply network (Figure OQ1-2) has two tiers, with the most important being our partners, the participating dentists. Management of our partners is paramount. Our other suppliers are vendors who perform work that we either have in the past done ourselves or work that we might continue to do currently. They do not represent a key factor for NEDD.

We pursue our identified opportunities for innovation through our Innovation Management System (Figure OQ1-3). Although our SPP encourages the identification of innovation opportunities and intelligent risks that we might pursue as strategic opportunities, we also have created an environment where anyone – colleague, customer, partners, suppliers – is encouraged to bring forth innovative ideas for consideration. As part of our SPP, we pursue the strategic opportunities that we have determined are intelligent risks by developing a business plan and pro forma. If we still determine to pursue them, we allocate financial and other resources to them up until a stage gate review. We discontinue pursuing them when it appears that our initial assumptions regarding Return on Investment (ROI) or potential market interest are significantly less.

FIGURE OQ1-1 New Product Design Process



OQ1-1

FIGURE OQ1-2 Key Partners and Suppliers

Key Categories	Examples	Service Delivery
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insurance Brokers and Benefits Consultants Participating Dentists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market knowledge and relationships Provide cost effective and high-quality dental treatment
Suppliers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technology support Claims payment and operational support Building and grounds support Marketing services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speed and accuracy for technical support and for claims and operational support Market knowledge for marketing services Quality of work for building and grounds
Role in Delivering Products and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timely Delivery / Product Quality / Capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service Quality, Sharing Best Practices, Subject Matter Expertise
Role in Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject Matter Expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing Best Practices
Key Supply Chain Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competitive Pricing, Meets Contract Requirements / Capacity Due to Volumes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service Quality, Sharing Best Practices
Key Communication Mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-on-one Meetings / E-mail / Telephone / Fax / WebEx's / Reports / Videos / Newsletters 	

OQ1-2

FIGURE OQ1-3 Innovation Management System



OQ1-3

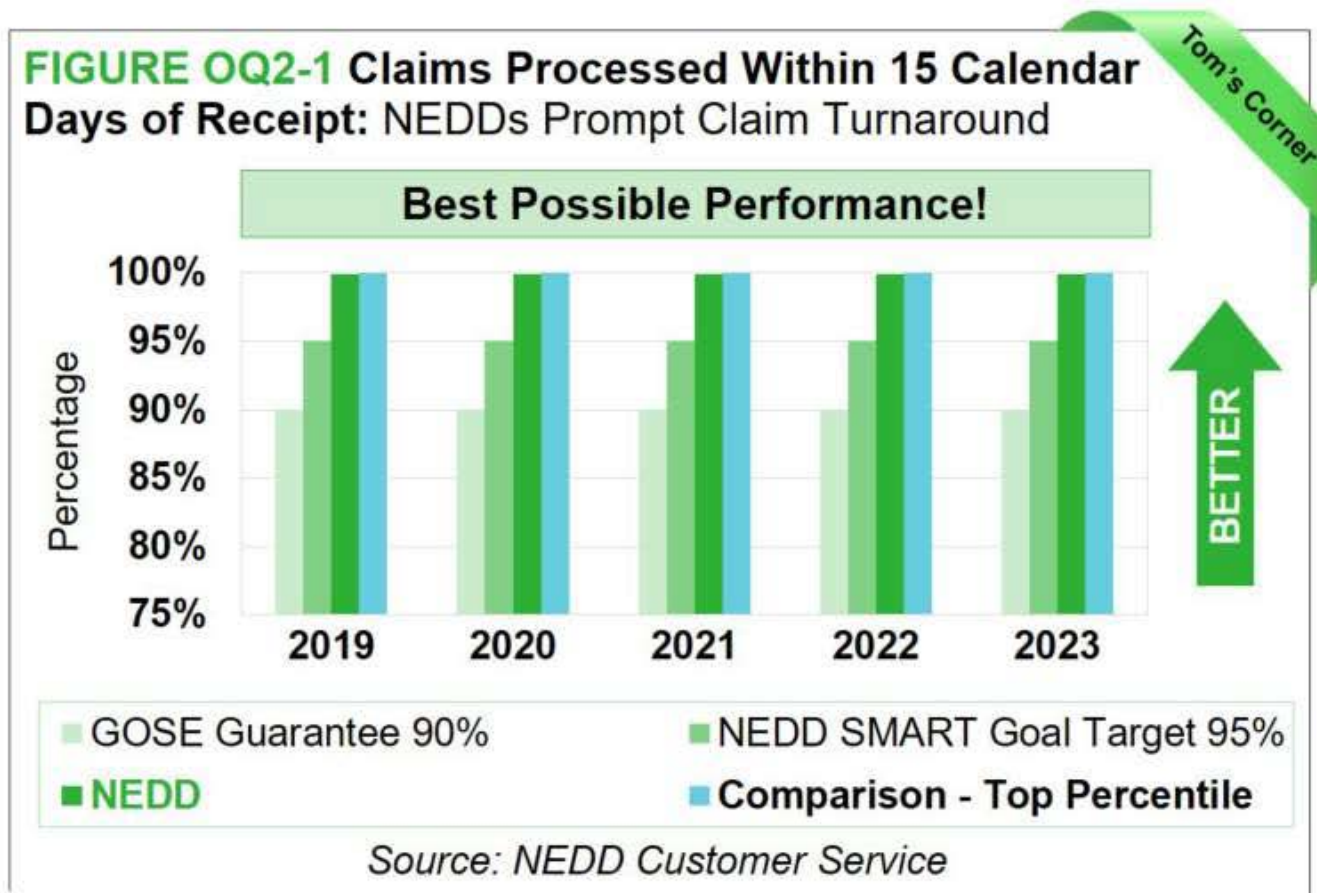
2 - What are your results for the effectiveness and efficiency of your key processes?

The effectiveness of our key processes is shown in Figure SQ2-1 with 6 of 7 key processes performing at better than Six Sigma.

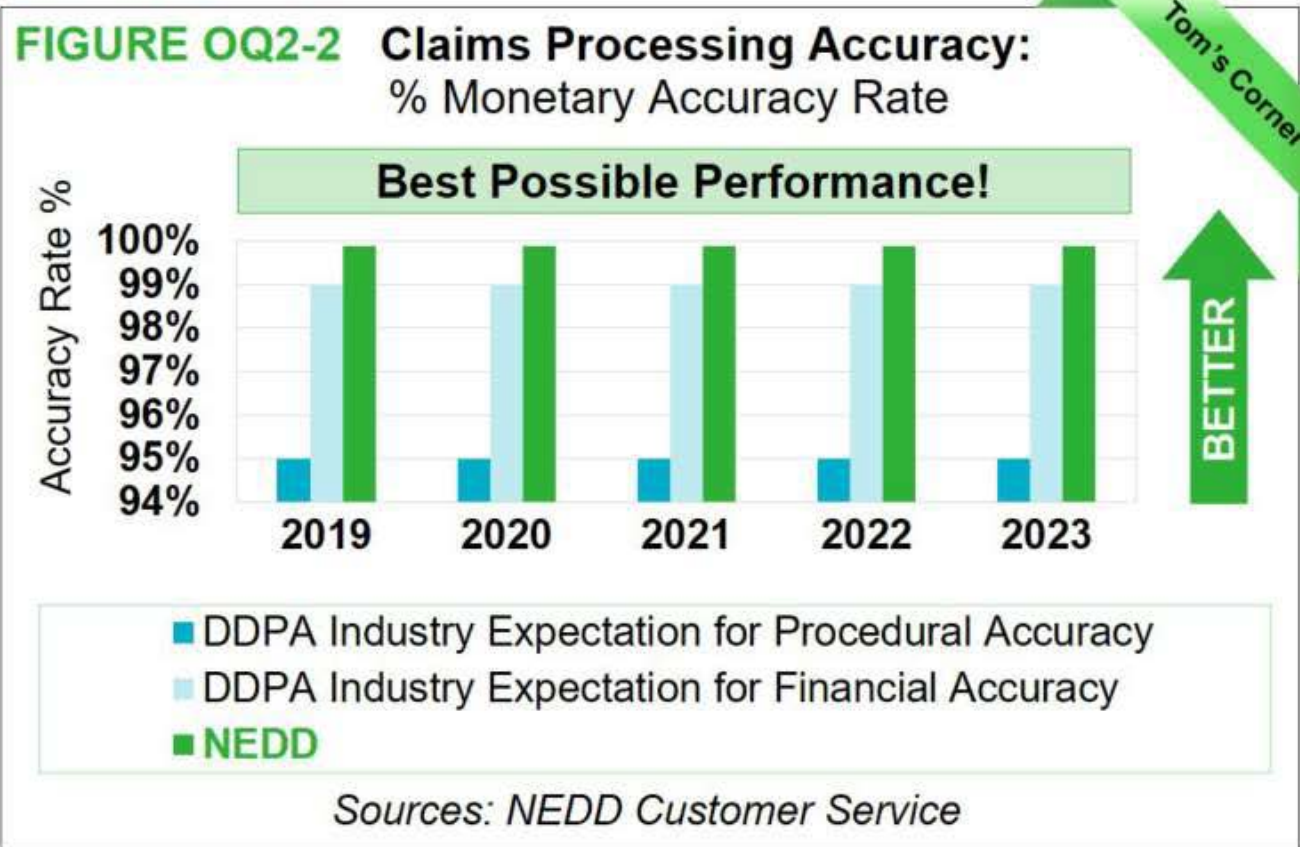
Figure OQ2-1 shows claims processed within 15 calendar days of receipt. The GOSEsm guarantee is 90 percent; the SMART goal target is even higher at 95%. NEDD has performed at 99.9 percent for the last five years. This is superior top percentile performance.

Figure OQ2-2 shows the accuracy of claims processing, also 99.9% for each of the last five years, which ranks it in the top percentile nationally for insurance claims processing.

Figure OQ2-3 shows the Group Maintenance Process Accuracy. Group Maintenance keys and maintains all necessary system configuration components in the DCS System for our customers' benefit plans. Their work can significantly impact large numbers of subscriber benefits.



OQ2-1



OQ2-2



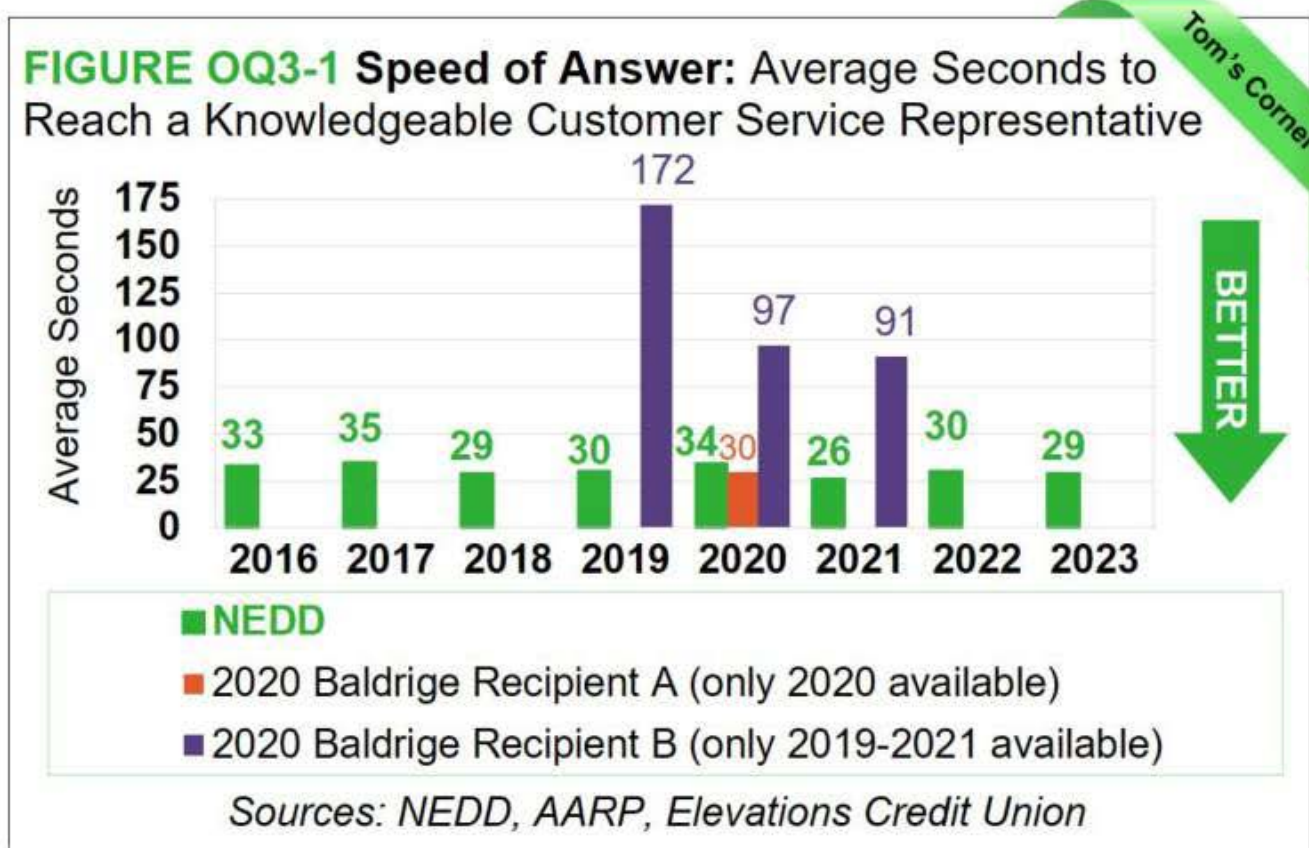
OQ2-3

3 - What are your results for the performance of your key products, services, and/or programs?

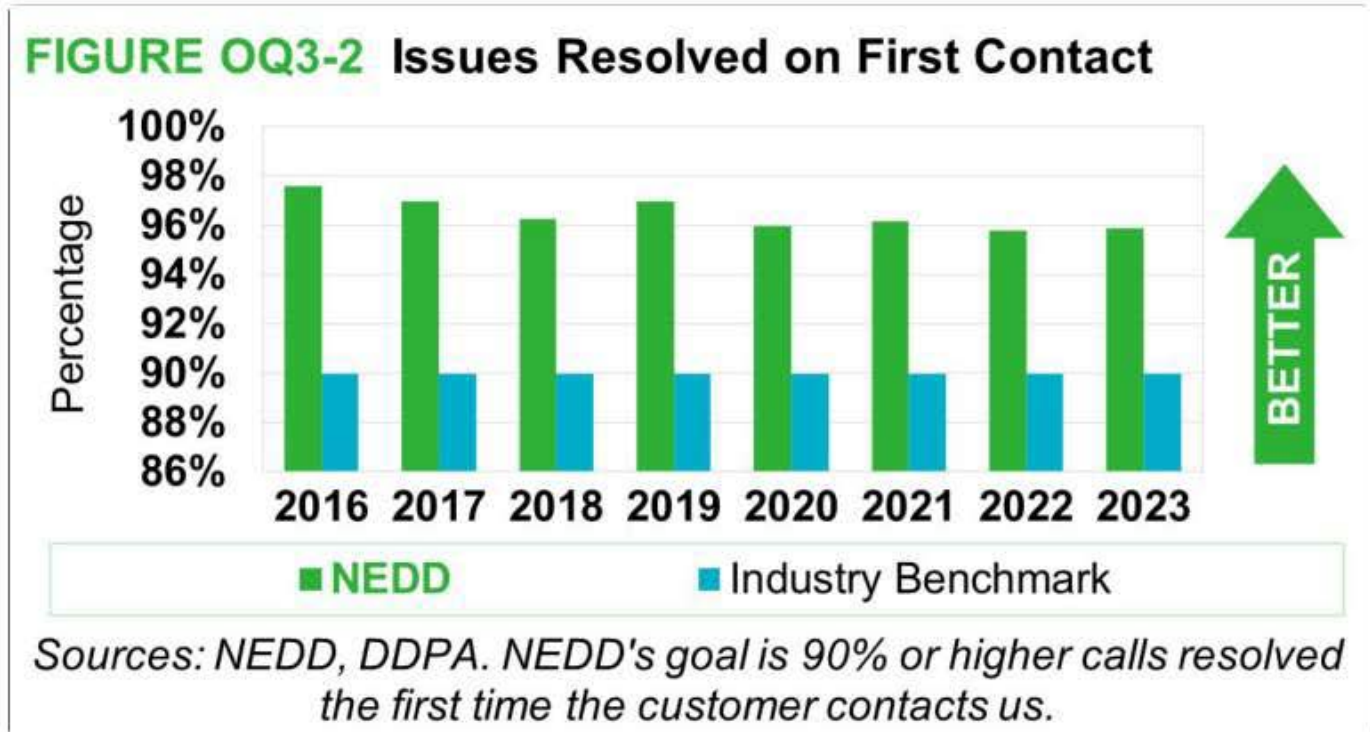
Figure OQ3-1 shows the excellent performance at NEDD, speed of answering calls measured in the number of seconds to reach a knowledgeable customer service representative. NEDD demonstrates superior performance when compared with 2 other Baldrige Award recipients, AARP and Elevations Credit Union.

Figure OQ3-2 shows NEDD's performance on resolving issues with one contact. It's frustrating to be passed around from one person to another. The Delta Dental Plan Association (DDPA) has a performance excellence standard of 90%, and the graph shows that NEDD demonstrates superior performance that for the past eight years exceeding 95% every year and some years up to 97%.

Figure OQ3-3 shows the response time when letters or emails are received, and NEDD responds 100% within one day, which represents best possible performance and is top percentile in the insurance industry.

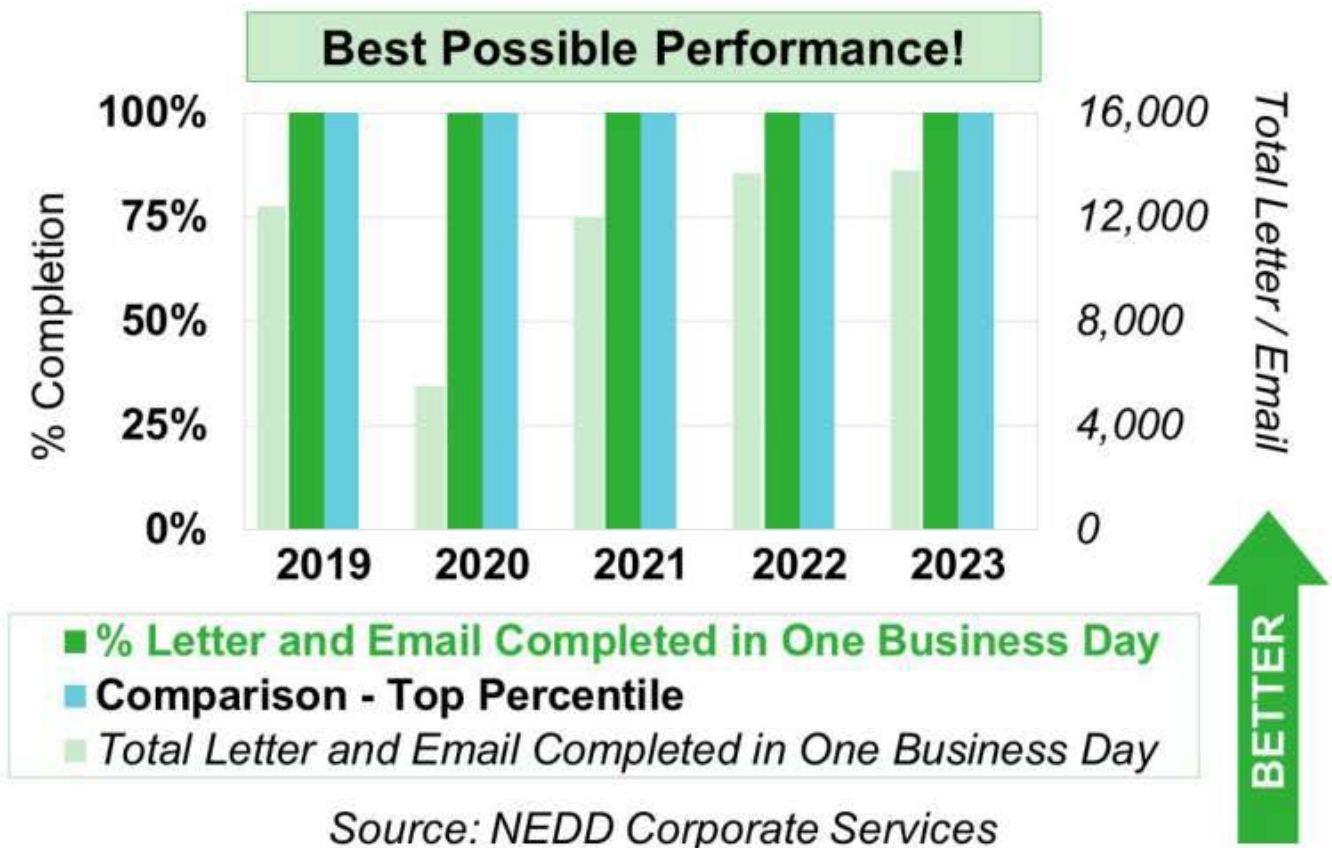


OQ3-1



OQ3-2

FIGURE OQ3-3 GOSESM Exceptional Service: One Business Day Response to the Customer's Inquiry



OQ3-3

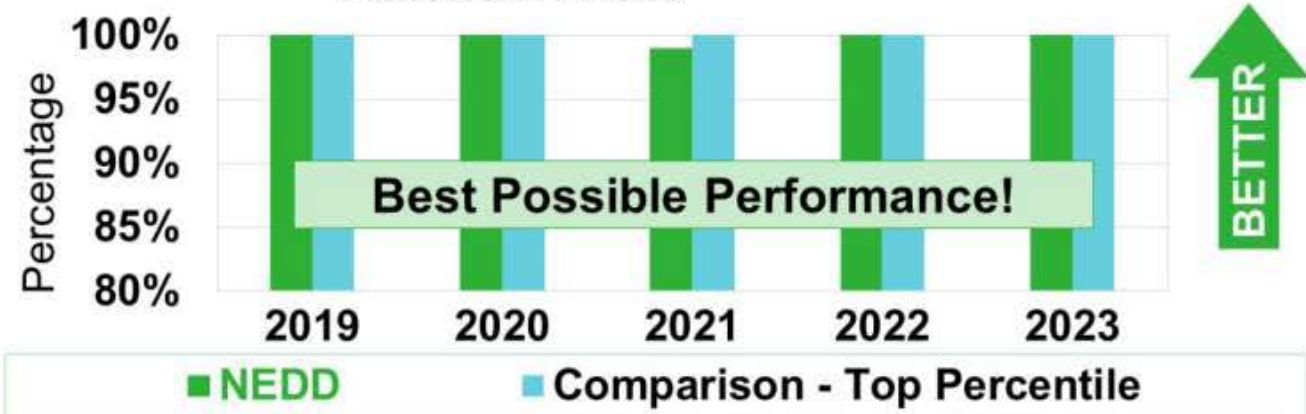
4 - What are the results for the performance of key components of your supply network (e.g., on-time delivery, availability of critical materials, quality)?

Dentists who are our providers are an important partner and are our supply network. Their continuing participation is important to providing care to our insured. NEDD's success shown in Figure OQ4-1 demonstrates the retention of network participating dentists is superior performance with over 99% for 2021 and 100% for years 2019, 2020, 2022, and 2023.

One of the challenges in rural areas like New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine is having access to a network providing dentists. The standard that we use is having a network dentist within 20 miles of the consumers. In Figure OQ4-2, this is pretty stable at 97.5%.

Vendor compliance and prompt resolution of issues are important for excellent customer service. Figure OQ4-3 segments three results: 1) annual audit compliance with federal and state regulations security standard measures, 2) Vendor HIPPA Compliance, and 3) prompt issue resolution. NEDD demonstrates superior performance for the past 5 years.

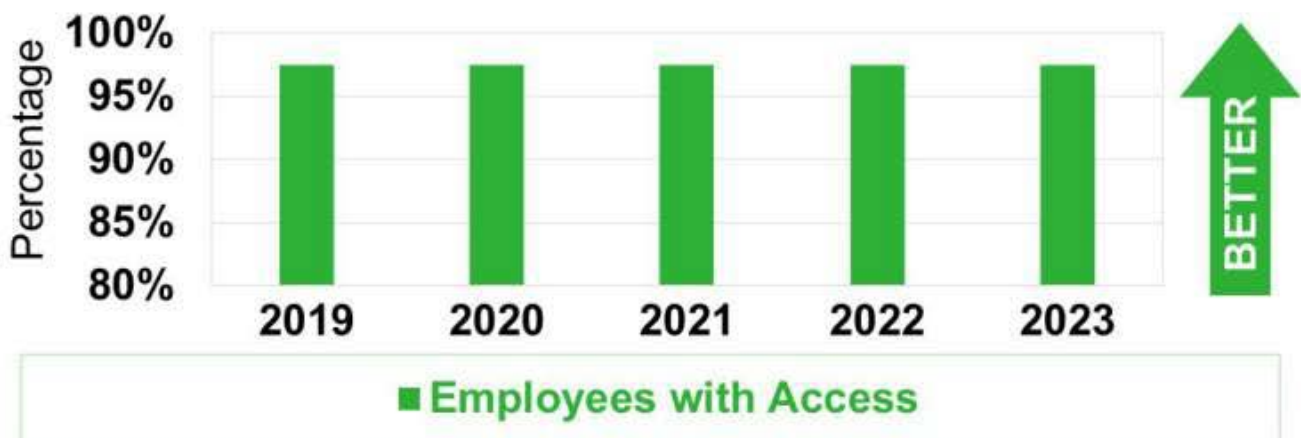
FIGURE OQ4-1 Network Participating Providers / Dentists Retention Rate



Source: NEDD Provider Service

OQ4-1

FIGURE OQ4-2 Access to a Network Participating Dentist: Access to Network Dentist Within 20 Miles of Consumer's Home



Source: NEDD Provider Service. NEDD Marketing and Sales Department. The Access Standard is defined as Tri-State employees accessing two Delta Dental Premier providers in 20 miles.

OQ4-2

FIGURE OQ4-3 Vendor Compliance and Issues Resolution

Year	Vendor Annual Audit Compliance with Federal/State Regulations and Security Standard Measures	Vendor HIPAA Compliance	Vendor Issues Resolved: Vendor Audit Issues Identified Are Resolved and Completed by Target Date	Comparison - Top Percentile
2019	100%	100%	100%	100%tile
2020	100%	100%	100%	100%tile
2021	100%	100%	100%	100%tile
2022	100%	100%	100%	100%tile
2023	100%	100%	100%	100%tile

Source: NEDD Risk and Compliance. Higher is Better.

OQ4-3

5 - What are your results for cybersecurity effectiveness, including intrusion attempts versus incidents?

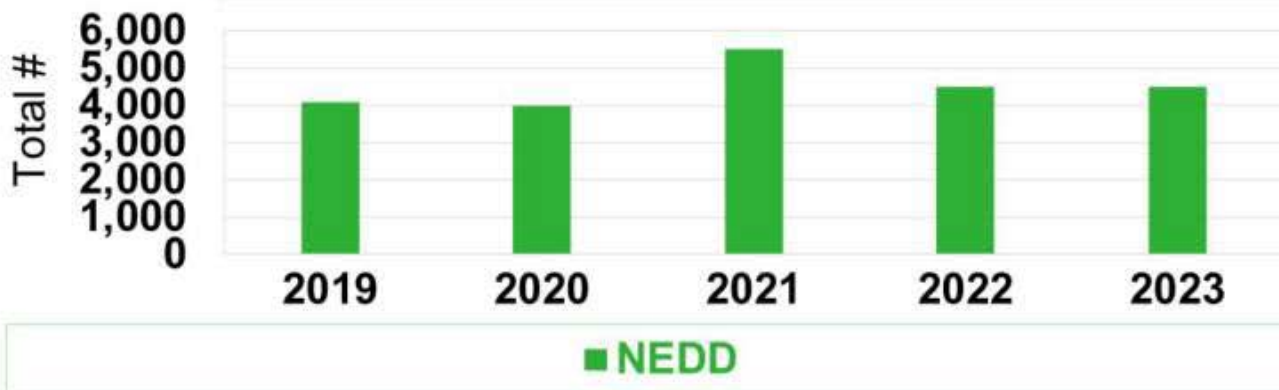
NEDD has a very effective cybersecurity system.

The number of intrusion attempts is shown in Figure OQ5-1.

Figure OQ5-2 shows that there have been zero successful attempts.

FIGURE OQ5-1 Intrusion Attempts

Collectively, to date, we have blocked 15,320 IP addresses as bad actors since January 2021.



Sources: NEDD IT Department

OQ5-1

FIGURE OQ5-2 Incidents (Successful Attempts)



Source: NEDD IT Department

OQ5-2

Operational Continuity

1 - Briefly describe and/or depict your key processes used for the following:

- 1. risk management,**
- 2. continuity of operations, and**
- 3. emergency preparedness.**

In 2016 we contracted with Advizex, a firm that specializes in disaster planning to help develop our disaster recovery plan. The plan covered all types of disasters, including pandemics. Our business Preparedness Plan is shown in Figure OCQ1-1 and described in our book, OCQ1-2.

We had specific component plans that could be combined and put into action as appropriate for each disaster. The components had four basic elements: (1) incident detection notification and evacuation. (2) initial assessment by incident recovery team. For instance, we had a pandemic recovery team already assigned before the COVID-19 crisis struck. (3) Recovery locations and recovery of business operations. (4) Return to site and normal operations.

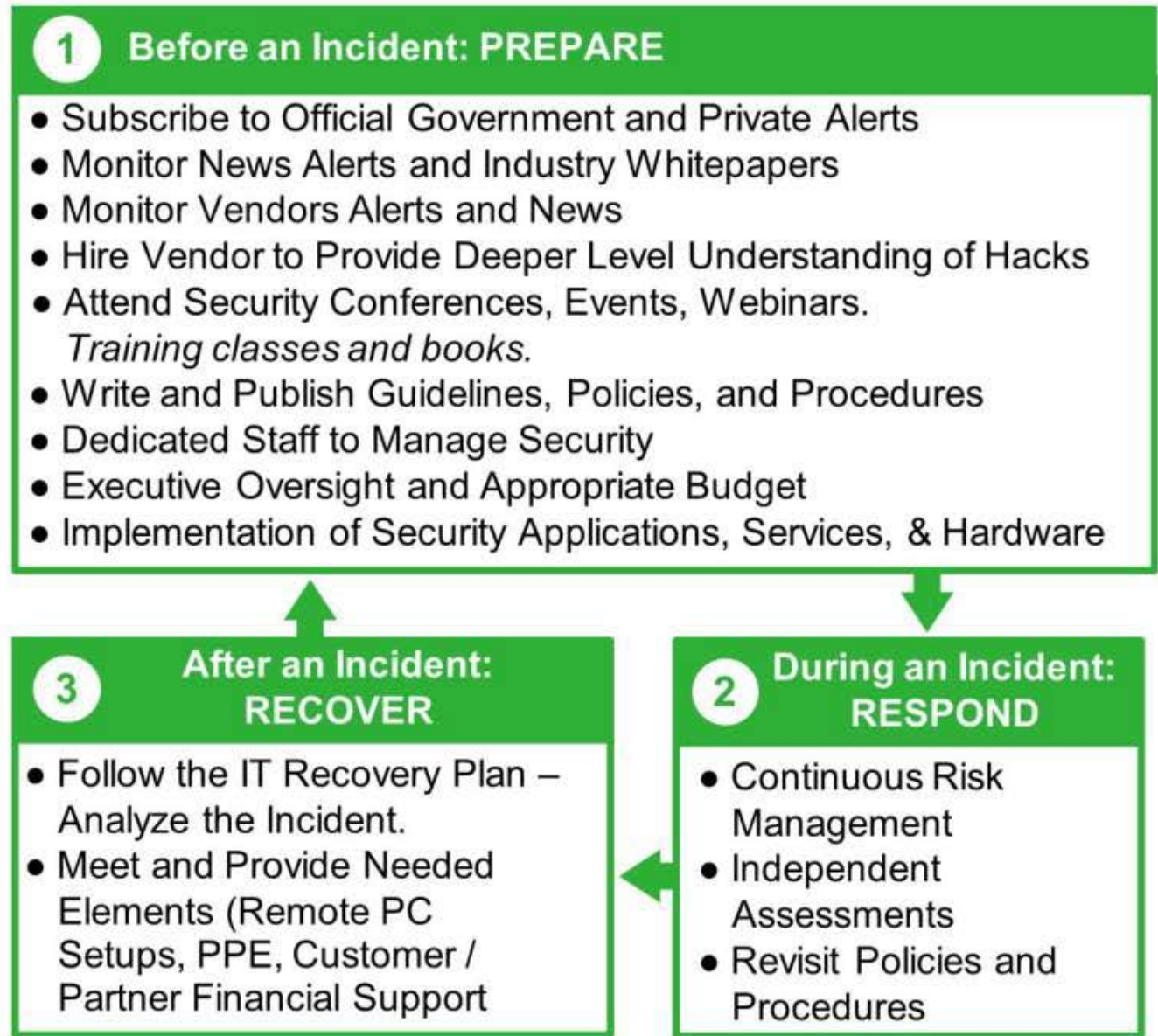
This led us to plan and budget for a substantial technology upgrade of our phone system as we recognized that our automatic call distribution system needed to support representatives working from home as well as those in the office. The automated call answering system distributes calls in order of receipt, measures the speed of answering and other quality indicators, and supports its performance standards that are required.

Another effort that emerged from our disaster recovery plan was that we purchased 500 high quality blue surgical masks for our staff to use during a pandemic. All of these plans and actions added to what many experts call our resiliency.

NEDD systems are documented and tested annually to ensure that backup systems and processes are working as expected and can be brought online within expected time tolerances. Continuous data backups are performed and replicated to ensure that no data get lost. Data backups are replicated to tape and stored at an offsite storage facility, providing triple redundancy.

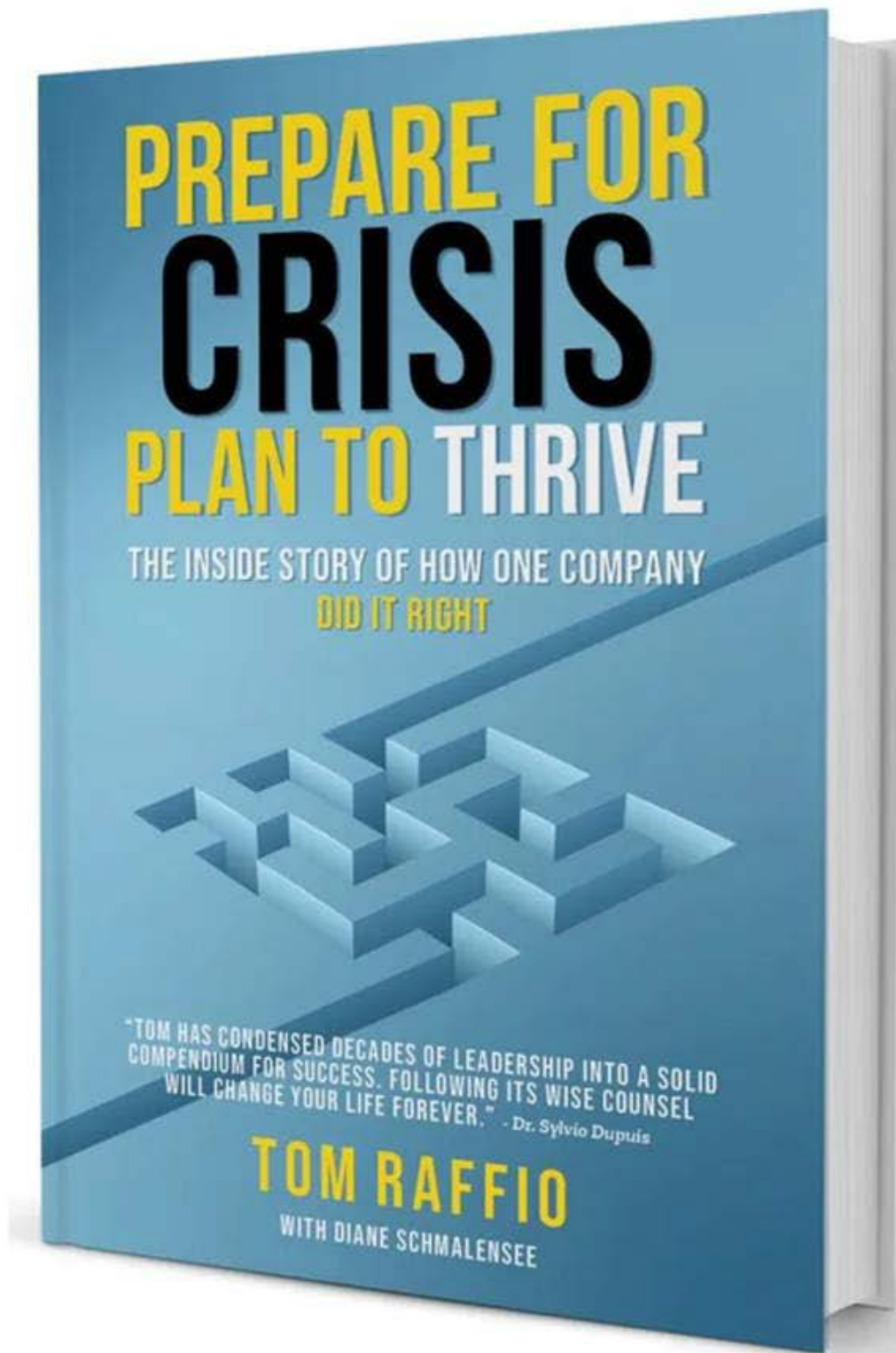
NEDD implements and maintains backup diesel generators to ensure power is always available NEDD has contracted with a business continuity provider to supply remote offices (via tractor trailer trucks) if the facilities become inaccessible.

FIGURE OCQ1-1 Preparedness Program



OCQ1-1

FIGURE OCQ1-2 NEDD CEO's Book



OCQ1-2

FIGURE OCQ1-3 Tom's Communications Supporting Resiliency During COVID
(March 2020 – October 2021) Communicate, Communicate, Communicate

Who	How	Frequency/# of Communications	Message
Employees	Emails	Daily (March 2020) until 2023, then weekly. Over 400 for first 18 months.	Reassurance of job security, transparency on work issues, create sense of family
	Team Power Newsletter	Monthly	Humor, news, personal connections, taking care of self
	All Colleagues Meetings	Monthly or as possible – Webex/Zoom	Two-way communication, personal connections, reassurance, tips
	Parent support group meetings via Zoom	24 bi-weekly meetings	Help parents manage caring for selves and children while working from home
	Tom walking around office	Many times/week	Demonstrate confidence and caring
Dentists	Emails	Daily (March 2020) then weekly or as needed	Plans to keep them functioning – extra payment schedules and amounts to help them survive. Total \$7 million.
	NEDD staff hand delivers protection gear to offices	Intense schedule in beginning when PPE most needed – 113,000 masks, 9,000 gowns, 3200 boxes of gloves delivered	113,000 masks, 9,000 gowns, 3200 boxes of gloves to keep them safe
	Incisor newsletter	Monthly	Pandemic and NEDD news
Customers / Subscribers	Emails	Weekly, then less often	
	Oral Health Update newsletter	Sent March 19	Safety of dental care, encouraging them to seek dental care
	Personal letters to employers and subscribers	At least once – more for larger employers who also got calls	Forgiving a month's premium for over 900,000 subscribers - \$19 million total cost
Boards	Emails	Daily to begin	Plans to keep NEDD operating and all stakeholders healthy
	Webex/Zoom	Weekly to begin then monthly for regular board meetings	Financial security of NEDD and securing approval to keep stakeholders afloat financially – Gave \$27 million to stakeholders, primarily customers (\$19 million) and dentists (\$7 million)
Communities / Non-Profits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails • Oral Health newsletter • Grin newsletter for kids • Social Media • Op Eds by Tom 	Periodic	Reassuring NEDD would continue to support them, made grants to nonprofits, delivered 50,000 dental kits for kids in need, encourage all to practice good oral care, be visible and steady presence
Replies	Letters and emails from dentists, customers, communities, board members, and employees	On-going during pandemic	Received thousands of communications of thanks for financial support and consistent focus on mental and physical health. See Prepare for Crisis. Plan to Thrive for examples.

OCQ1-3

2 - What are the results for the effectiveness of your risk management plan, including the following:

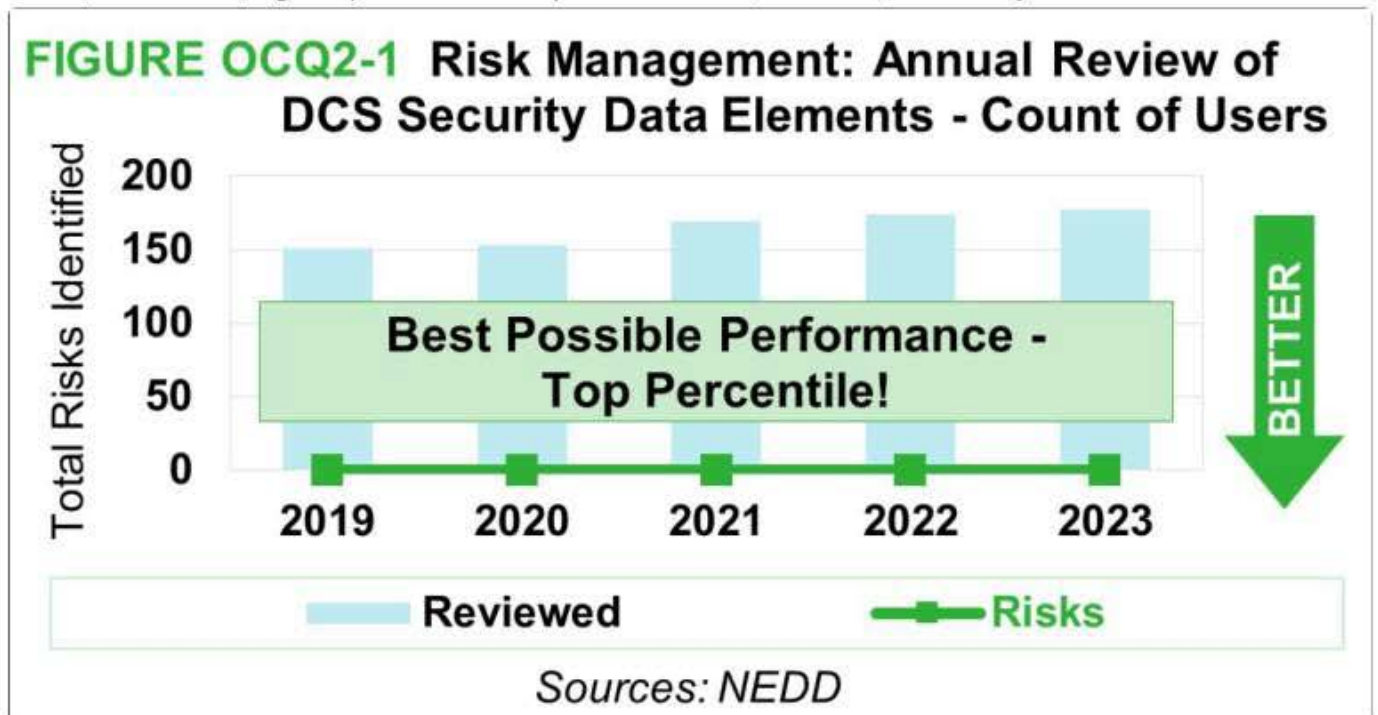
- 1. number of risks identified versus number of risks mitigated,
- 2. cost of losses, and
- 3. cost savings of risks averted and risks mitigated?

Figure OCQ2-1 and QCQ2-2 demonstrates the effectiveness of our risk management process DCS Security Data Elements for both the count of users and the count of roles.

Our Guarantee of Service Excellence (GOSESM) is the core of our risk management plan. It specifically defines risks that must be mitigated to provide our customers with Service Excellence. We measure the number of risks identified and mitigated as well as the cost of losses as shown in Figure OCQ2-3 that shows the detail month by month for 2023. The total cost of losses for 2023 was \$1,245.08.

Figure SQ2-1 shows the improvement over 5 years and the extremely low risks that we call incidents. Six NEDD has sustained Sigma performance for 6 of 7 key processes.

The main risks are summarized in our Guarantee of Service Excellence shown in Figure OPQ1-1 (Organizational Profile, Question #1, Figure 1). GOSESM is unique to NEDD and, as a result, no industry benchmarks are available.



OCQ2-1

FIGURE OCQ2-2 Risk Management: Annual Review of DCS Security Data Elements - Count of Roles



Sources: NEDD

OCQ2-2

FIGURE OCQ2-3 GOSESM Payments – Costs of Risks

GOSE - 2023 YEAR TO DATE Requests and Payments														
GUARANTEE	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	YR TO DATE	GRAND TOTALS 2022
SMOOTH #1 IMPLEMENTATION	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	4	3
#2 CUSTOMER SERVICE	\$0.00	\$440.08	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$183.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$623.08	\$9,977.35
#3 QUICK CLAIMS	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
INAPPROPRIATE #4 BILLING	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$50.00
#5 ID CARDS	\$0.00	\$400.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$400.00	\$25.00
#6 BOOKLETS & GOBS	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
MARKETING #7 CONTACTS	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
#8 MYTHICAL	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$125.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$225.00	\$150.00
MONTHLY TOTALS	\$0.00	\$840.08	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$125.00	\$0.00	\$183.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		
Total Monthly Requests	0	3	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	7 requests	2022 Total
Total Number of Requests 2023 Year To Date = 7														
GRAND TOTAL YEAR TO DATE 2023													\$1,248.08	\$10,202.35

Source: NEDD Customer Service

OCQ2-3

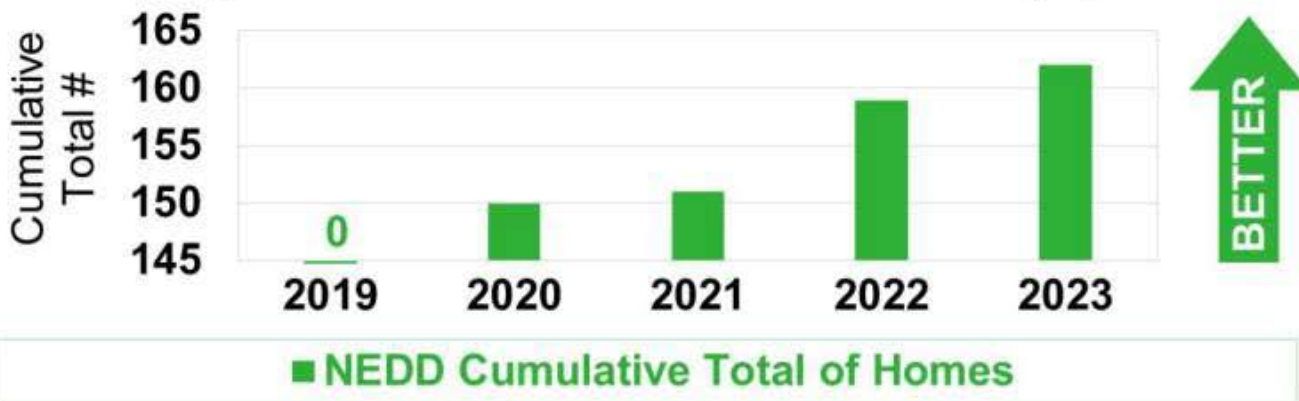
3 - What are the results for the testing of your continuity of operations plan?

NEDD regularly test the continuity of our operations plans to help assure operational continuity. One of the most important factors contributing to NEDD's continuity of operations during a disruption is our ability to continue to support our insured. Our systems are effective in switching our call center from our offices to our employees' homes. Figure OCQ3-1 shows how in 2020 we were able to cover 150 of our 200 employees' homes. This allowed continuity of operations even during the pandemic. It was a great help to have our continuity plans and disaster recovery plans already in place which includes the possibility of a pandemic. When COVID19 hit, NEDD rapidly implemented the plans.

Figure OCQ3-2 summarizes our analysis of fire drill results for issues identified. This demonstrates the effectiveness of our fire prevention processes.

Figure ODQ3-3 demonstrates the superior performance of in the improvement of our full-scale disaster recovery tests.

FIGURE OCQ3-1 Emergency Response Testing: COVID Deployment of Workers & Provision of Equipment



Source: NEDD

OCQ3-1

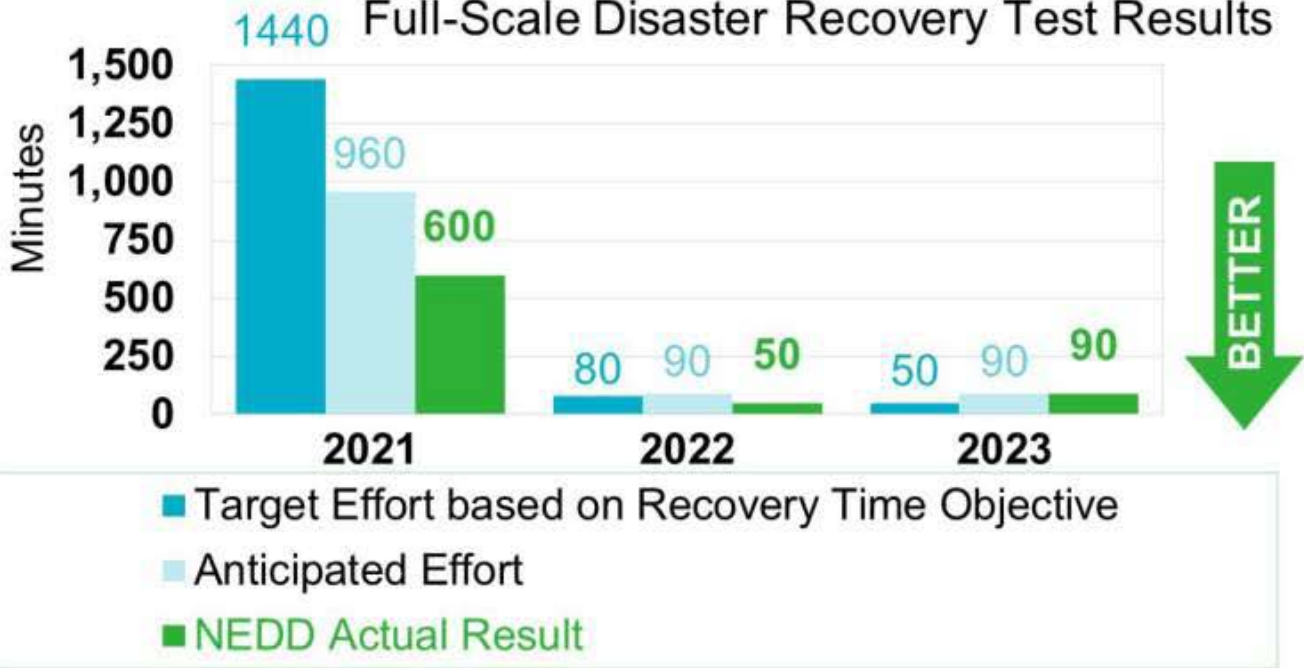
FIGURE OCQ3-2 Safety Drills: Annual Fire Drill Issues



Source: NEDD Corporate Services

OCQ3-2

FIGURE OCQ3-3 Test Results for Ability to Recover:
Full-Scale Disaster Recovery Test Results



Source: NEDD. Started tracking in 2021.

OCQ3-3

4 - What are the results for the testing of your emergency preparedness plans (e.g., time to evacuate your facility, emergency response time, recovery time)?

Figure OCQ4-1 shows that disaster recovery drills are completed yearly. The Service Organization Control is an independent auditor who validates the conduct of the drills as planned. A SOC 1 must be issued by a CPA firm that specializes in auditing IT security and business process controls. Our auditing firm is Baker Newman Noyes.

Figure OCQ4-2 shows the results of the annual fire drill and Figure OCQ4-3 shows the time to evacuate each drill. 100% of the fire drills have been completed as planned, and that represents a top percentile performance in terms of evacuation times for the buildings. There is no relevant comparison because each building in our industry is unique.

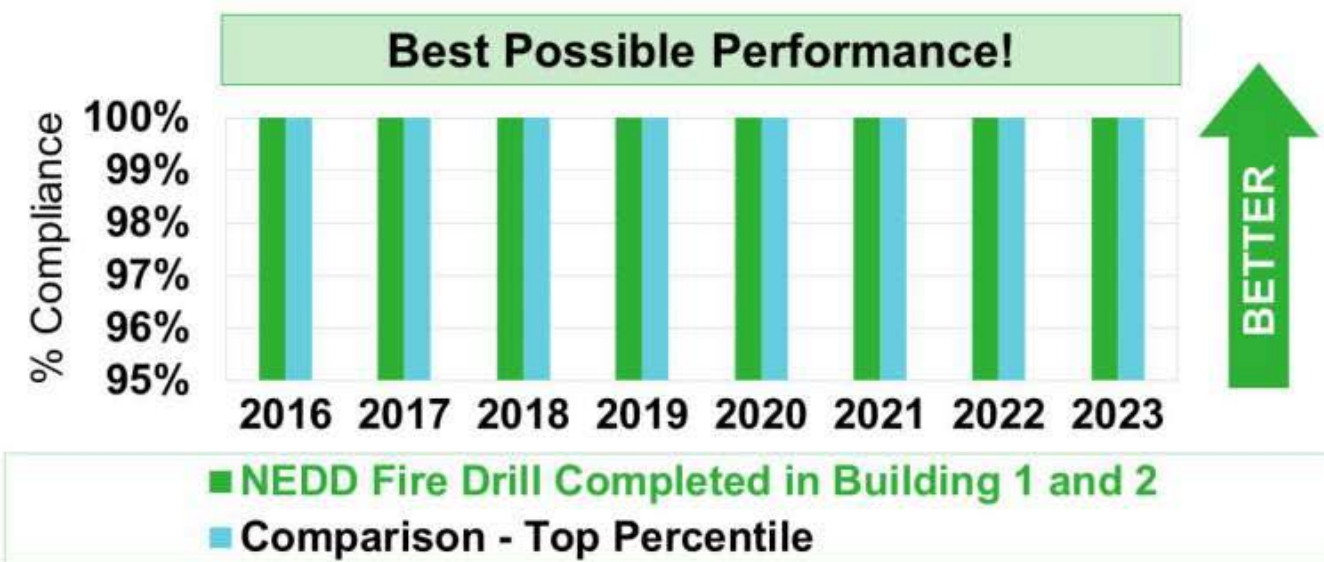
FIGURE OCQ4-1 Disaster Recovery Drill: Percent of Drills That Are Completed As Planned By An Outside Source



Source: Drills completed yearly and validated by SOC1 and SOC Audits performed by independent auditor.
 SOC = Service Organization Control

OCQ4-1

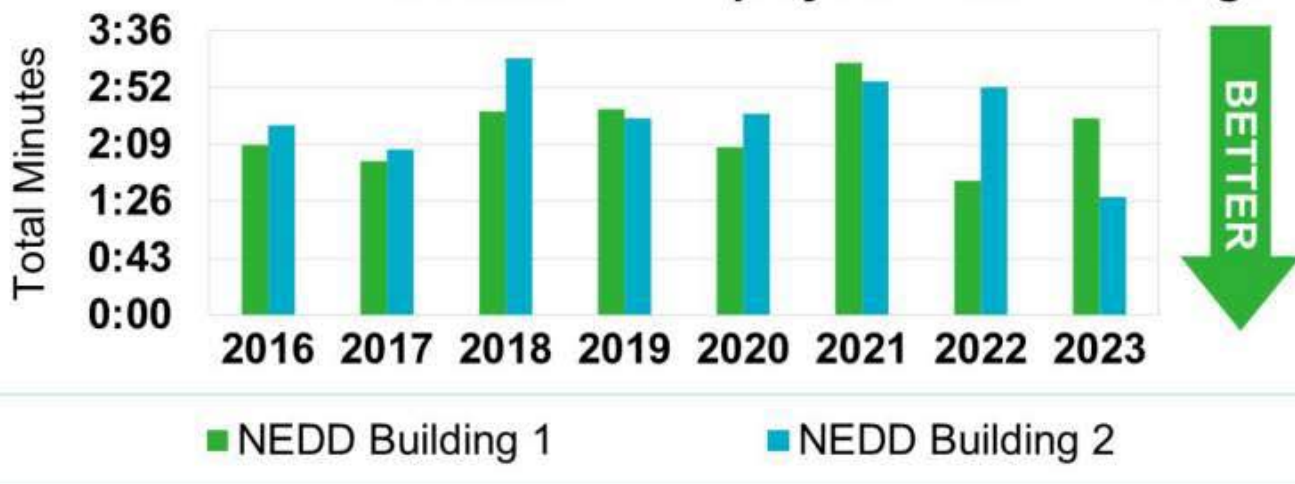
FIGURE OCQ4-2 Safety Drills: Annual Fire Drill Completed



Source: NEDD Corporate Services

OCQ4-2

FIGURE OCQ4-3 Safety Drills: Annual Fire Drill Time to Evacuate All Employees From Buildings



Source: NEDD Corporate Services

OCQ4-3

Workforce

Note: Results presented below should include discrete data for key workforce segments, where available.

1 - Briefly describe your key processes used for the following:

1. workforce engagement,
2. workforce development and job skills training, and
3. ensuring workplace health and safety.

One of NEDD's three core competencies is a highly engaged workforce. Our process for workforce engagement focuses on the drivers of engagement, which are identified in our employee engagement survey. These drivers are further validated through our Best Places to Work awards and surveys (Figure OPQ4-1), and through Senior Leaders' two-way communication forums (Fig LGQ1-3). Our workforce performs at a Six Sigma level (Fig OQ2-1).

Workforce Development is critical to our success (process shown in Fig WQ1-3). The amount spent on training in 2023 was \$102,858.

We evaluate the effectiveness of our learning and development by correlating the participation in training with the desired operational outcomes we are seeking to influence. For example, the Dental Team Training has a direct positive impact on how the CSRs communicate with our callers. This contributed to the CSR meeting their individual call goals: 5.6% of total call volume answered and call tracking, 90-100% of all calls noted in the claims adjudication management system. This contributes to the department meeting our SMART goals (Average Speed of Answer (Fig OQ3-1), call abandon rate (AOS), and first call resolution (Fig OQ3-2).

As part of our commitment to workplace health, NEDD offers several programs to assist our employees in maintaining healthy lifestyles (Fig WQ1-2). Our employees view NEDD benefits as a significant contributor to recruiting and retaining a talented workforce. We provide a safe operating environment for our workforce and other people in our workplace through ongoing safety training. In an office environment, our exposure to many safety challenges is limited. However, I.S. has instructions on how to set up home PC equipment and lift heavy items. In addition, the Safety and Wellness Committee conducts complete building safety checks.

During the pandemic, the Front Desk staff advised visitors of our COVID protocols and completed the COVID questionnaire with visitors who were not vaccinated.

FIGURE WQ1-1 Workforce Profile

Workforce Segments		Results (Figure)
Key Drivers of Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly Engaged Workforce Recommend NEDD for Employment High Performance Senior Leader Communication Reward Right Behaviors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WQ4-2 WQ4-3 WQ3-1 LGQ2-1 AOS
Gender	Female	54%
	Male	46%
	<i>Note: 50% at the Director and VP level are female</i>	
Tenure	< 1 Year	10%
	1-3 Years	15%
	4-10 Years	26%
	11-20 Years	30%
	21-35 Years	17%
	36 + Years	2%
	Part Time	6%
	Full Time	94%

* Not all data are segmented this way

WQ1-1

FIGURE WQ1-2 Workforce Health, Security, Accessibility

Program	Measure	Goal	Result (Figure)
Workforce Health: Access to health and wellness activities to assure our colleagues physical and mental wellbeing; i.e. Employee Assistance Program, wellness and financial program, onsite fitness centers and personal trainer, free health / Telehealth mental health services	Walk / Run Events	175	WQ7-1
Workforce Security: Comply with hiring practices regarding background checks, on campus lighting, key fob access to buildings (doors lock at 5 pm)	Background Checks	100%	SQ4-3
	Safety	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OCQ4-1 • OCQ4-2 • OCQ4-3 • WQ6-1 • WQ6-2
Workforce Accessibility: Job descriptions and facilities ADA compliant, ergonomic workspaces, elevator / street level access to building, workspace aids as needed	ADA	100%	WQ7-2
	OSHA	100%	LGQ4-2

WQ1-2

FIGURE WQ1-3**Workforce Development and Job Skills Training Process**

WQ1-3

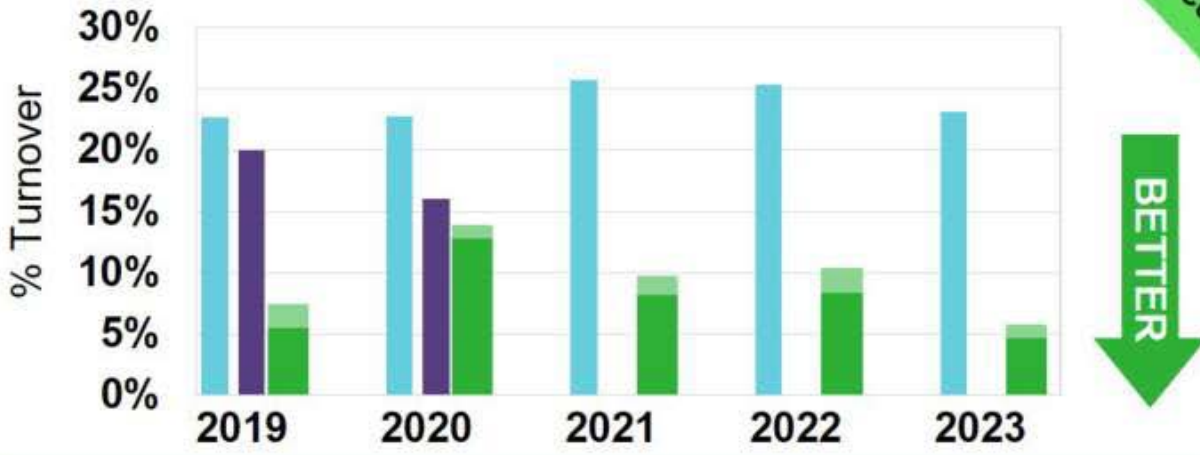
2 - What are your results for turnover, retention, and absenteeism?

In Figure WQ2-1 employee turnover is segmented for senior leaders and staff. When compared with a relevant industry national average and a similar Baldrige Award recipient, NEDD demonstrates superior performance. A limitation of the comparative data is the lack of current data from the Baldrige Award recipient.

In Figure WQ2-2 NEDD demonstrates superior performance for employee retention compared to a relevant comparison from the Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS) for the past 5 years.

With highly engaged employees, absenteeism is not an issue at NEDD. Absenteeism isn't a key workforce performance indicator. Between vacation and paid time off (PTO), virtually all absences are planned. In fact, when COVID hit, NEDD voluntarily increased the amount of PTO for employees who needed it to prevent a decline in their earnings. Figure WQ2-3 shows the unplanned absences that caused a work disruption. NEDD demonstrates superior performance.

FIGURE WQ2-1 Employee Turnover

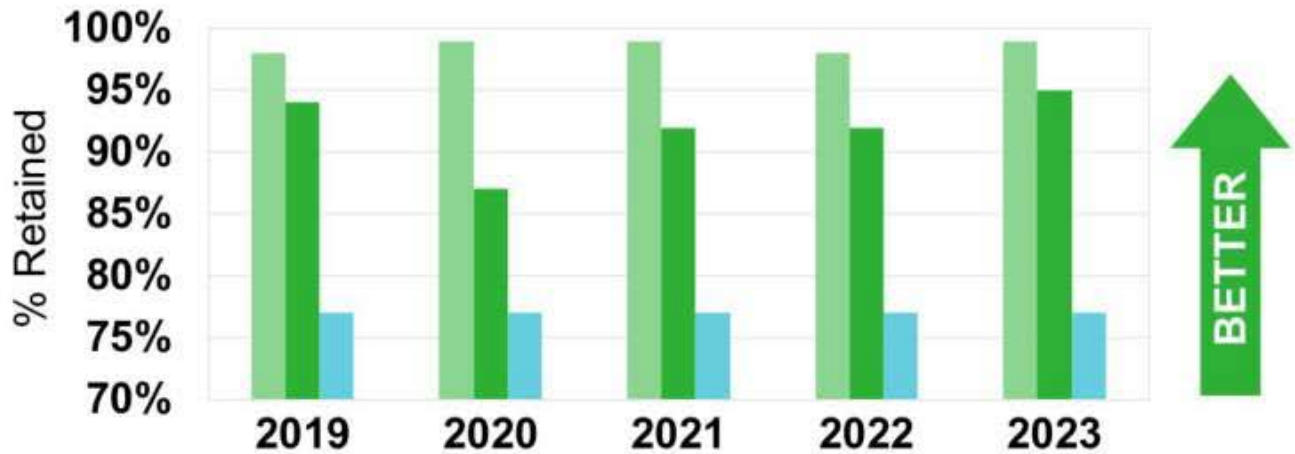


- Industry National Average
- 2020 Baldrige Recipient B (only 2019-2020 available)
- NEDD Staff
- NEDD Senior Leaders

Sources: NEDD (percent leaving company not due to retirement, illness, nonwork options), JOLTS (Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey), and Elevations Credit Union.

WQ2-1

FIGURE WQ2-2 Employee Retention



- NEDD Senior Leaders
- NEDD Staff
- National Average

Sources: NEDD Human Resources, Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS)

WQ2-2

FIGURE WQ2-3 Employee Absenteeism



Source: NEDD Human Resources

WQ2-3

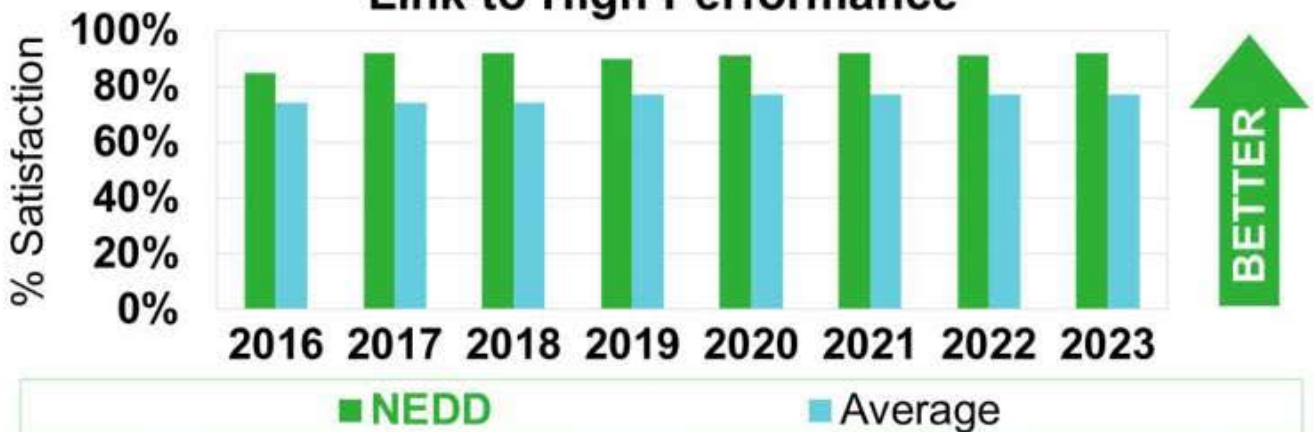
3 - What are your results for workforce satisfaction and dissatisfaction?

An important measure of a highly engaged workforce is the ability of our staff to see the link between their jobs to high performance. This measures employees' perception of their performing meaningful work. In Figure WQ3-1, NEDD's scores demonstrate superior performance that is higher than the other organizations participating in the *Business New Hampshire Magazine* employee engagement survey.

In Figure WQ3-2, we see NEDD's performance for the last seven years outperforms the other organizations in the *Business New Hampshire Magazine* survey with our colleagues planning to stay with NEDD more than five years. When we analyzed this data, we realized that some of our employees were planning to retire and that was keeping the data results a little bit lower.

To measure employee dissatisfaction the key performance measure is unforeseen staff resignations as shown in Figure WQ3-3. For example, in 2023 there were 6 resignations out of 200 employees. No relevant comparisons were available.

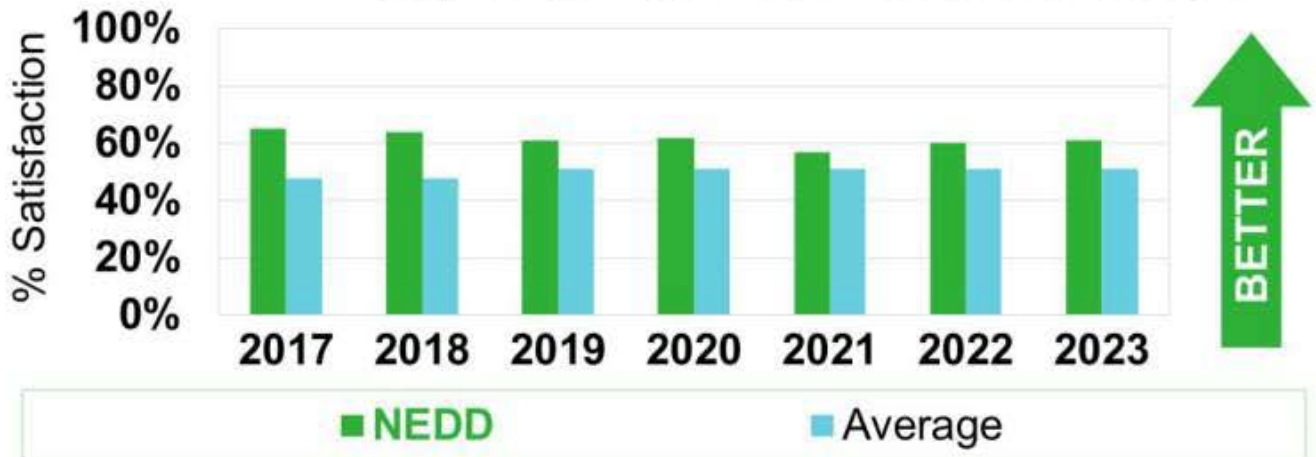
FIGURE WQ3-1 Employee Engagement Survey: Link to High Performance



Source: Average represents all NH companies who have completed the *Best Companies to Work For - Business NH Magazine*.

WQ3-1

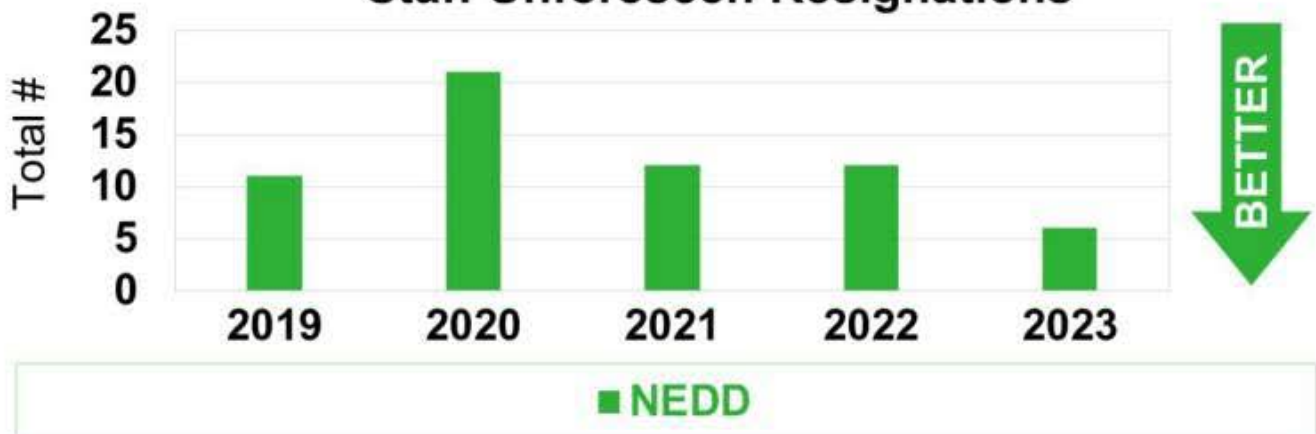
FIGURE WQ3-2 Employee Engagement Survey: Plan to Stay with NEDD More Than Five Years



Source: Average represents all NH companies who completed the Best Companies to Work For - Business NH Magazine. 2016 not available. Decrease represents workforce approaching retirement.

WQ3-2

FIGURE WQ3-3 Employee Dissatisfaction: Staff Unforeseen Resignations



Source: NEDD Human Resources

WQ3-3

4 - What are your results for workforce engagement?

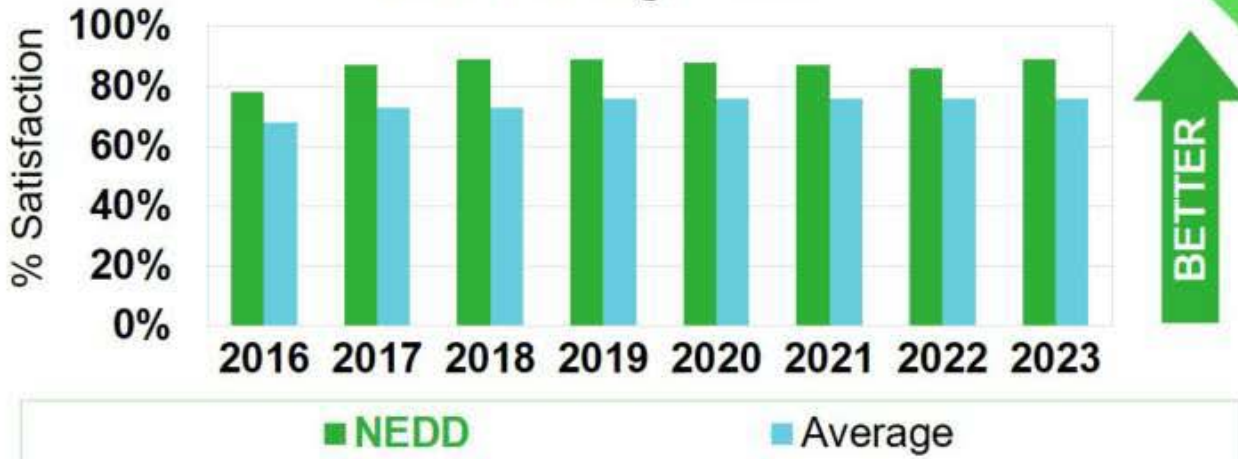
Figure WQ4-1 provides an overview of the average scores in the *Business New Hampshire Magazine* survey. For the most part, over the last eight years the average of the other organizations has been around 76% whereas NEDD's average has been around 87%. This is 11 percentage points higher, which demonstrates superior performance for the past 8 years. **This has been a key driver in being named one of the best places to work for the last eight years in a row.** (Figure OPQ4-1)

Figure WQ4-2 shows that our colleagues rate themselves as highly engaged, averaging around 80% versus the other companies and the *Business New Hampshire Magazine* survey averaging around 64%, again demonstrating superior performance for the past 8 years.

Figure WQ4-3 shows that almost 80% of NEDD employees would definitely recommend employment here, and we consistently demonstrate superior performance when compared to the average of the *Business New Hampshire Magazine*, where the average is around 51%.

Tom's Corner

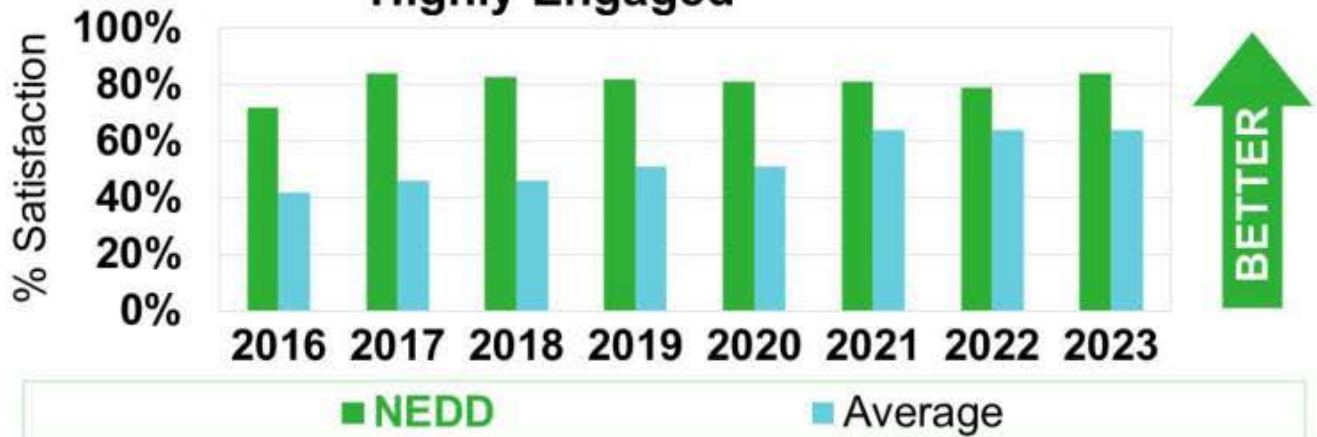
FIGURE WQ4-1 Employee Engagement Survey: Overall Average Score



Source: Average represents all NH companies who have completed the Best Companies to Work For - Business NH Magazine.

WQ4-1

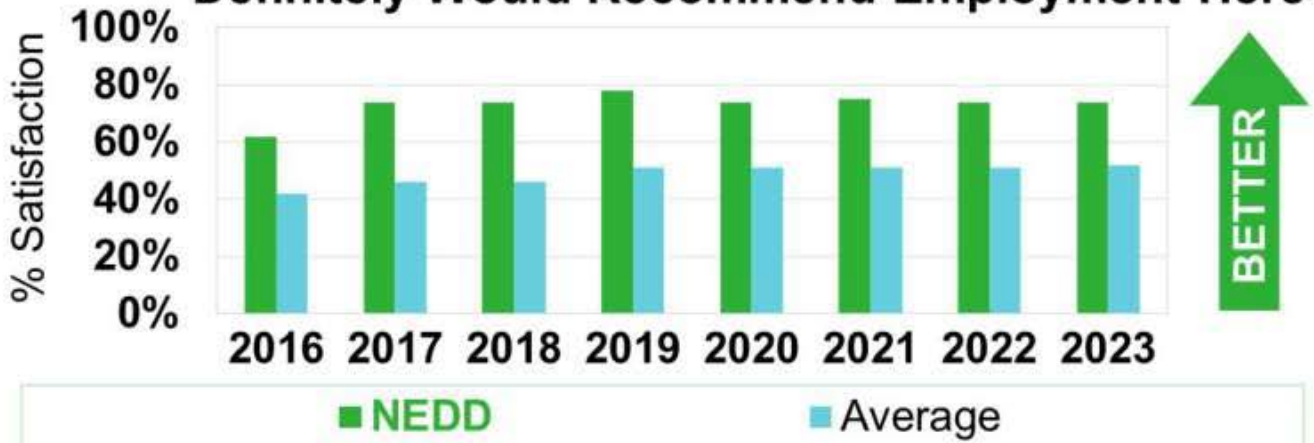
FIGURE WQ4-2 Employee Engagement Survey: Highly Engaged



Source: Average represents all NH companies who have completed the Best Companies to Work For - Business NH Magazine.

WQ4-2

FIGURE WQ4-3 Employee Engagement Survey: Definitely Would Recommend Employment Here



Source: Average represents all NH companies who have completed the Best Companies to Work For - Business NH Magazine.

WQ4-3

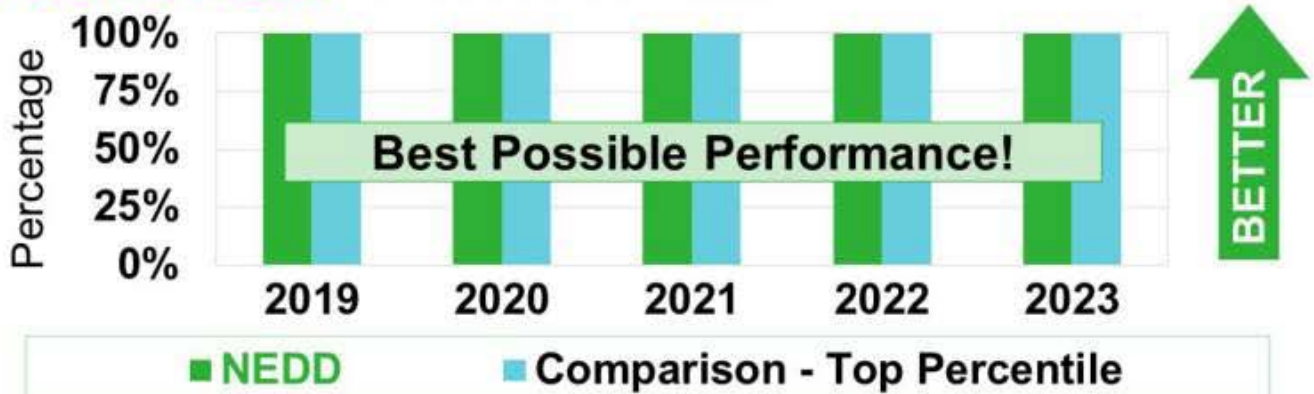
5 - What are your results for workforce and leadership development, including job skills training?

Figure WQ5-1 shows succession plans are 100% complete for all key positions for the past five years for all of the senior leaders. With best possible performance, there are no relevant comparisons that would be useful in setting higher goals.

An important part is preparing staff for future jobs, reflected by 100% completion of individual development plans (IDPs) which demonstrate superior performance as shown in Figure WQ5-2. These Individual Development Plans (IDPs) include sections on training that is needed plus information on what the individual's desire for future jobs is. It also involves helping them get prepared for that.

HIPAA and other compliance is critical to NEDD's success. Figure WQ5-3 shows that the compliance training is complete and the fact that there has only been one HIPAA breach in the last 5 years also demonstrates superior performance.

FIGURE WQ5-1 Succession Plans

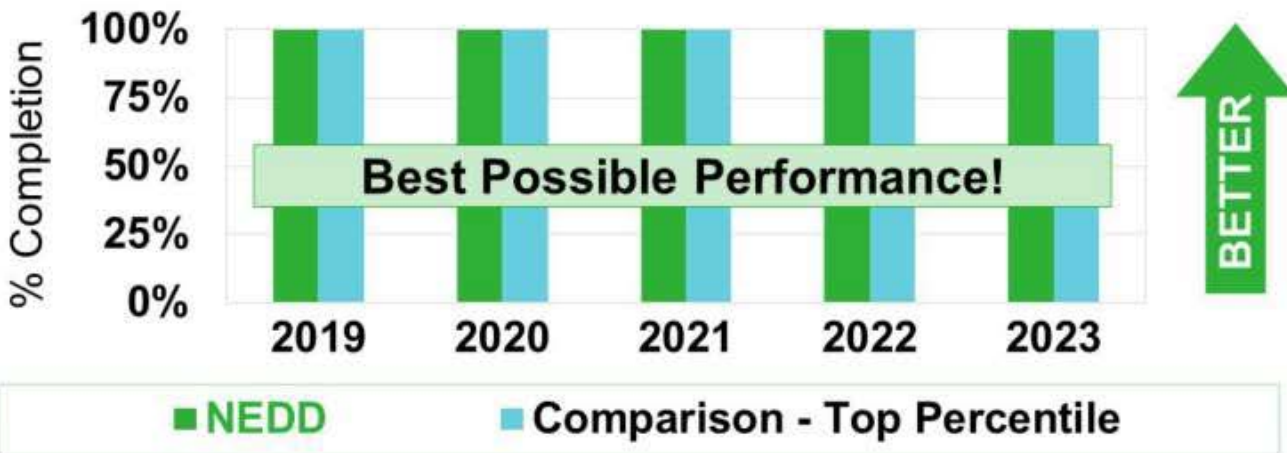


Source: NEDD Human Resources.

This is the percent of key positions covered by succession plans.

WQ5-1

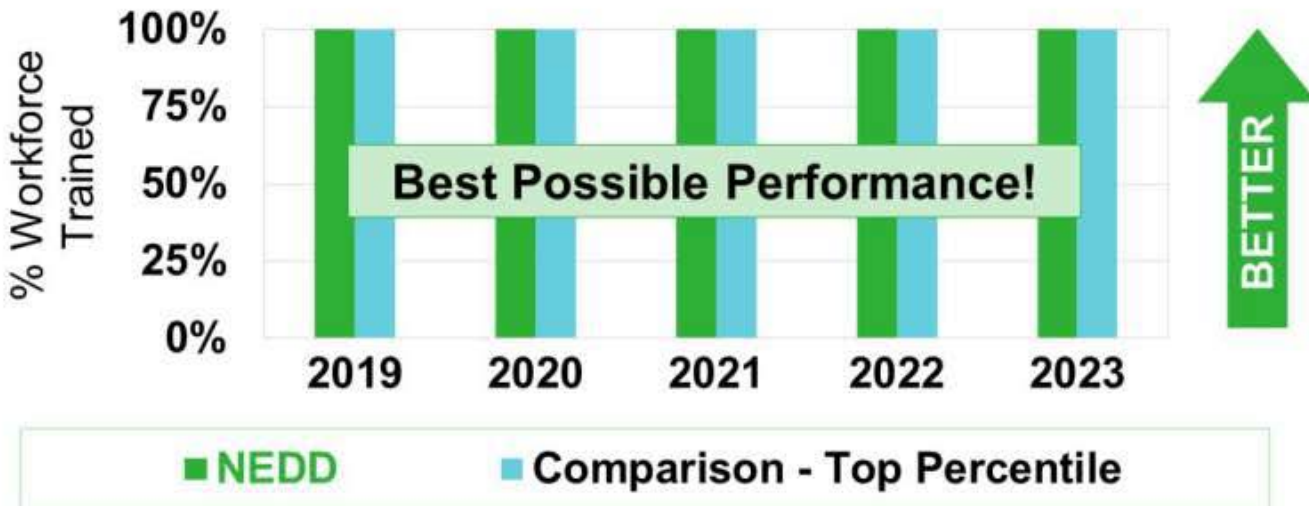
FIGURE WQ5-2 Individual Development Plans Completed



Source: NEDD

WQ5-2

FIGURE WQ5-3 Compliance Training



Source: NEDD. Includes Job Skills Training.

WQ5-3

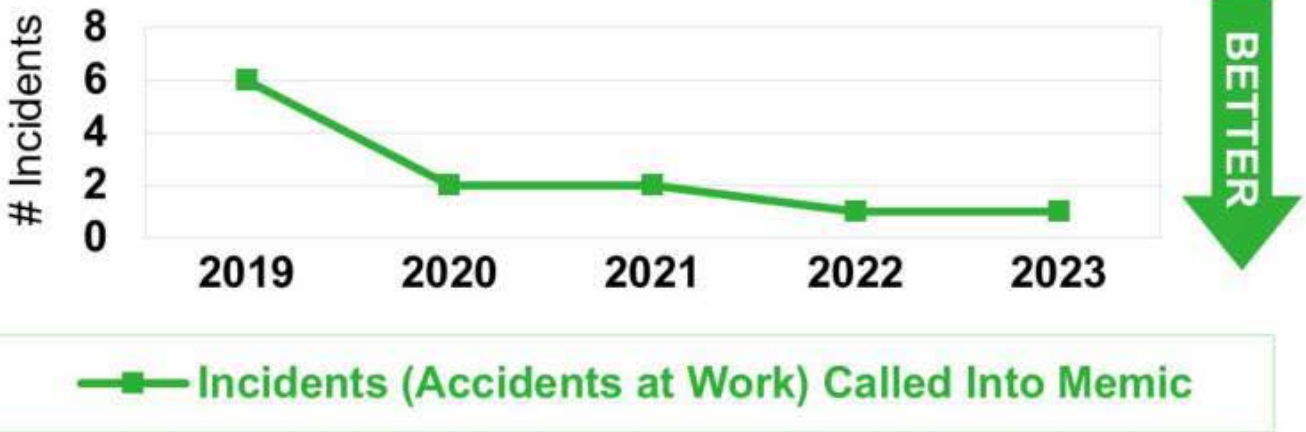
6 - What are your results for significant safety-related incidents, including Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) reportable incidents?

NEDD is a very safe place to work. Figure WQ6-1 demonstrates superior performance in both a favorable trend and an exceptionally low number of workers compensation incidents for the past five years. This is near best possible performance. No relevant comparison is available.

Figure WQ6-2 shows that there have been 0 lost time accidents in the last five years. This demonstrates superior performance as it is the best possible performance and puts NEDD at the top percentile.

NEDD's impressive safety record is a result of 100% of the safety training plans being completed as shown in Figure WQ6-3. Again, this is best possible performance and represents top percentile performance for the industry.

FIGURE WQ6-1 Workers' Compensation: Incidents



Source: Maine Employers' Mutual Insurance Company (Memic)

WQ6-1

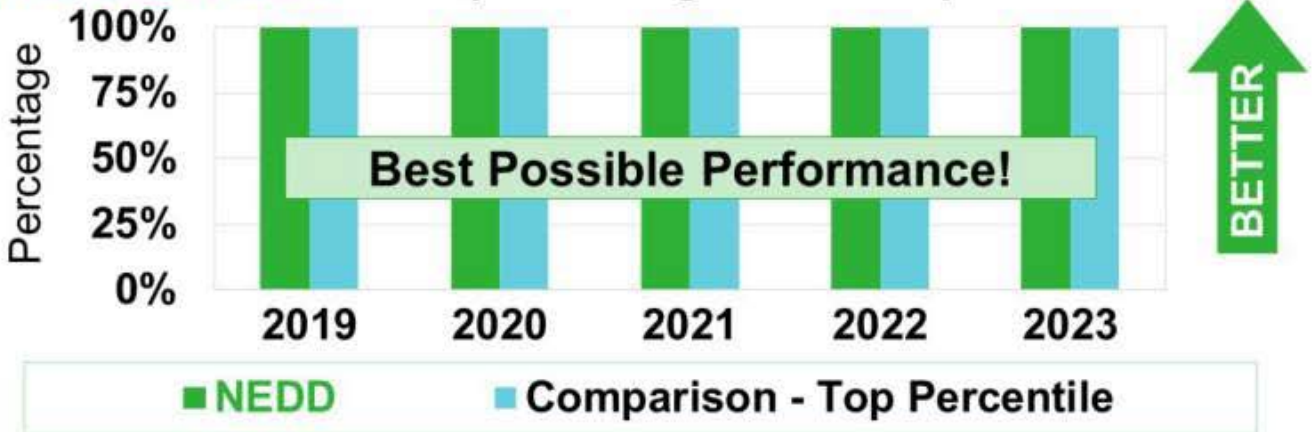
FIGURE WQ6-2 Workers' Compensation: Lost Time



Source: Maine Employers' Mutual Insurance Company (Memic)

WQ6-2

FIGURE WQ6-3 Safety Training Plan Completed



Source: NEDD Human Resources

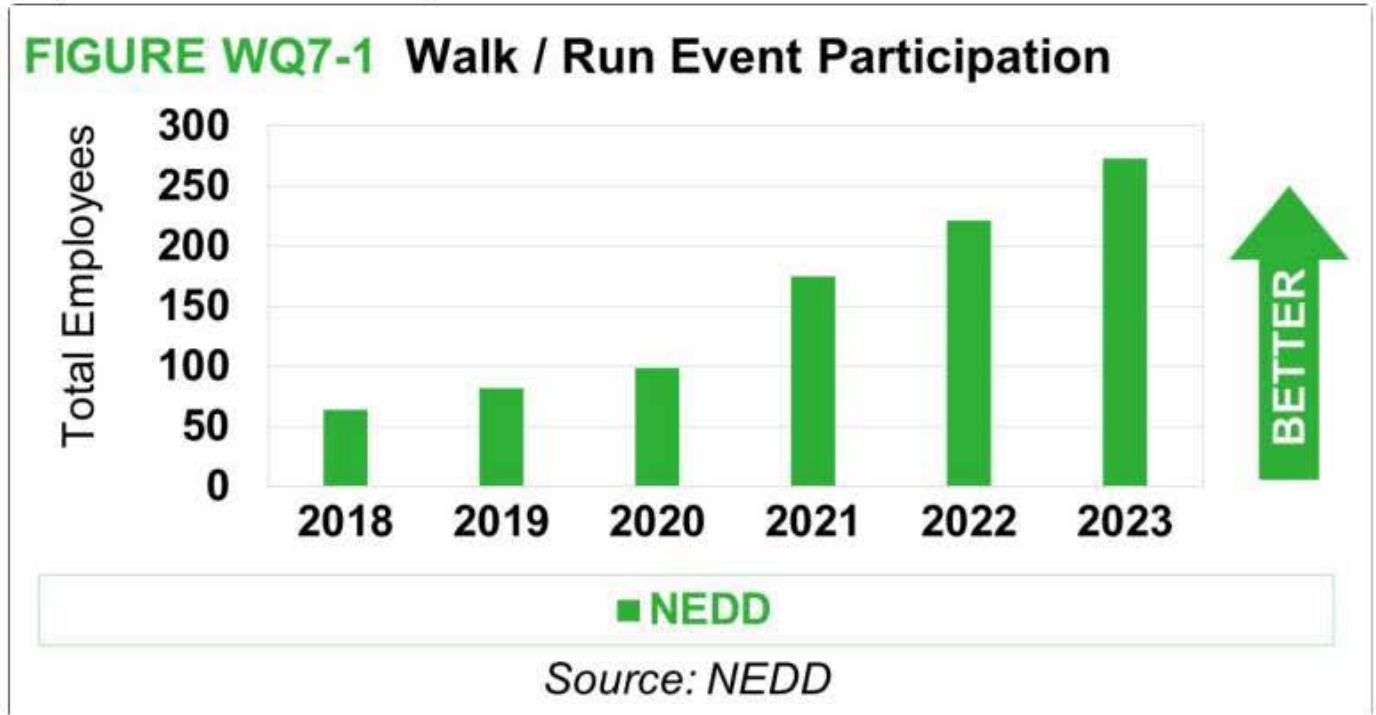
WQ6-3

7 - What are your results for additional indicators of workplace health and safety (e.g., results of safety audits, near-miss tracking)?

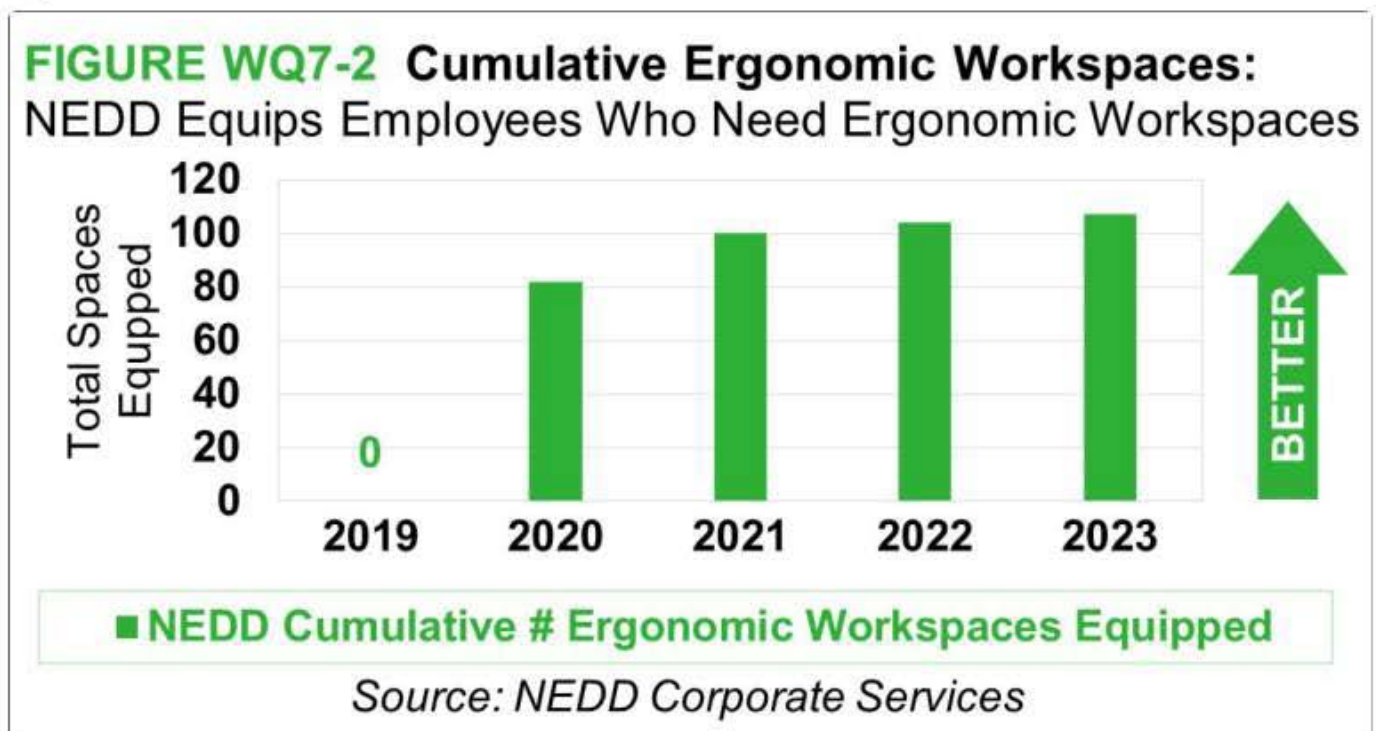
One indicator of workplace health and safety in Figure WQ7-1 shows that NEDD is an increasingly active participant in various walk events. Keeping our workforce physically fit is important. No relevant comparisons are available.

Figure WQ7-2 shows the increased coverage of ergonomic workspace for those who need them. These activities help keep the workspace healthy and safe by preventing workplace injuries such as carpal tunnel syndrome.

Because NEDD has a very safe working environment quarterly workplace safety audits rarely show issues. Figure WQ7-3 shows one issue in the past 5 years. This is superior performance and confirmed by low number of workers' compensation incidents shown in Figure WQ6-1.

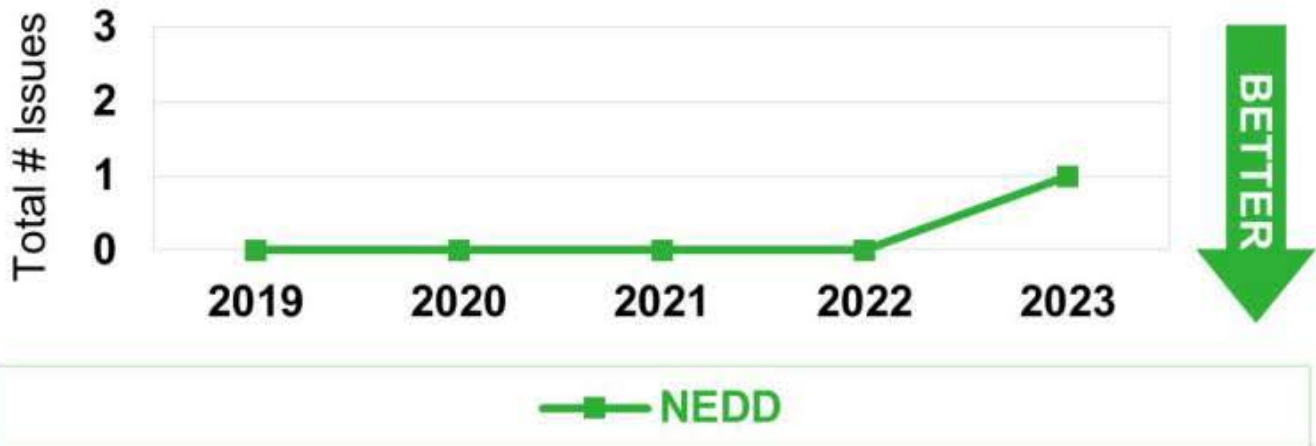


WQ7-1



WQ7-2

FIGURE WQ7-3 Workplace Safety Audit Results



Source: NEDD. 2023: The first floor bathroom will be adding a new system to allow the handicap button to open quicker. Quarterly Safety inspections are done on both buildings.

WQ7-3

Customers and Markets

1 - Briefly describe your key processes used for the following:

1. customer listening,
2. customer engagement, and
3. customer support.

Our listening methods vary across the customer life cycle. We listen to the Employer Group segment initially in meetings, by phone, letter, and email. As we progress in the relationship, we also listen via the web portal. We start with a strong relationship and continue to listen by phone, email, and meetings. (Fig CMQ-3).

We seek immediate and actionable feedback from customers on the quality of products, customer support, and transactions through multiple methods. (Fig CMQ1-1).

NEDD retains an amazing 98% of our customers annually, making us the top in the country where average group insurance retention rate is closer to 87%. We conduct business with Employers and Consumers with contracts, documents (benefit booklet, Outline of Coverage, ID Cards), by telephone, email, letter, and website. Our key means of support are a Customer Service toll-free number, Integrated Voice Response (IVR) Unit, website with "contact us" email link, and letter/email.

The communication methods don't vary by customer groups or market segments. We have learned to give the customer the choice of how they want to communicate with us: telephone, email, letter, IVR, website, and in-person meetings in our Concord, NH office.

Processes for engaging customers are shown in Fig CMQ1-2.

Our Strategic Plan, SMART goals, and corporate initiatives identify our key, high customer support requirements (excellent customer service, quick and accurate claims processing, access to network dentists), which we almost always meet.

We deploy the requirements into the depts/teams who complete the support processes: HR, Marketing and Sales, Technology, Claims Edit, Customer Service, and into cross-functional team: GOSESM, DUST, IPS Technical, Activities Committee, Business Continuity, Business Value Rating, eConnections, Group Life Cycle, Safety and Wellness, and *Team Power*.


The customer support methods don't vary by customer groups. More information about our customer engagement and support are shown in Fig CMQ1-2.

FIGURE CMQ1-1 Consumer Listening Methods & Purposes

Method of Communication	Customer Segment	Purpose
Customer Advisory Group (CAG)	Employer Groups	Listen to feedback regarding dental plan, benefits, HOW®, legislative activity, the competition.
Professional Advisory Committee (PAC)	Consumers	Listen to feedback on fee schedules, claim submissions, dental benefits, HOW®, legislative activity.
Customer Service toll-free telephone service	Consumers	Answer questions about eligibility, benefits, and claim/explanation of benefits (EOB). Receive feedback about our plans and participating dentist network.
Social Media – Facebook, LinkedIn	Consumers & Employer Groups	Respond to feedback from consumers on our dental plans and community involvement.
Letter	Consumers	Respond to and resolve consumer questions.
Email	Consumers	Respond to and resolve consumer inquiries.
Website – Patients Portal	Consumers	Provide detailed benefit and claim information and a link to contact us with inquiries and feedback about the dental plan. Drive engagement.
Website – Group Portal	Employer Groups	Provide methods to maintain enrollments, change consumer data, run reports, review eligibility and benefits. Drive engagement.

CMQ1-1

FIGURE CMQ1-2 Customer Engagement and Support

Method of Communication	Customer Segment	Topic of Communication
Sales and Account Management Outreach	Employers	Sell, enroll, and provide ongoing service to our customers.
Employer Satisfaction Survey	Employers	Gather feedback on their dental plan and suggestions for improvement. Drive engagement.
Subscriber (Customer) Satisfaction Survey	Employer Groups Consumers	Gather feedback on their dental plan and suggestions for improvement. Drive engagement.
HOW[®] program / PreViser[®] 	Consumers	Communicating our differentiated value proposition: evidence-based, patient-centered preventive dental services for patients with elevated risk.
Email	Employers	Provide information about their dental plan and open communications with the Sales and Account Management Team.
E-newsletter Smile Coach	Customers	Provide oral health information, fun activities, and drive engagement.
Annual Report	Employers and Consumers	Share the goals, metrics, mission, vision, value, and community action. Drive engagement.
Letters to Consumers	Consumers	Thank you to consumers who compliment an employee for exceptional service.
Dental Team Training	Employers and Consumers	Educate dentist on fees, procedure code changes, website use, claim submissions, and new benefit designs, and the HOW [®] program.
Group and Broker Newsletters	Employers	Provide oral health information and NEDD updates. Drive engagement.
Incisor Newsletter	Consumers	Provide claims submission training, updated procedure codes, and NEDD updates. Drive engagement.
Risk Assessment Activity Report	Consumers	To improve use of the HOW [®] risk assessment tool to deliver more HOW [®] benefits to their patients.



the toothbrush represents a breakthrough change or innovation

FIGURE CMQ1-3 Voice of the Customer Across the Continuum of the Customer Experience



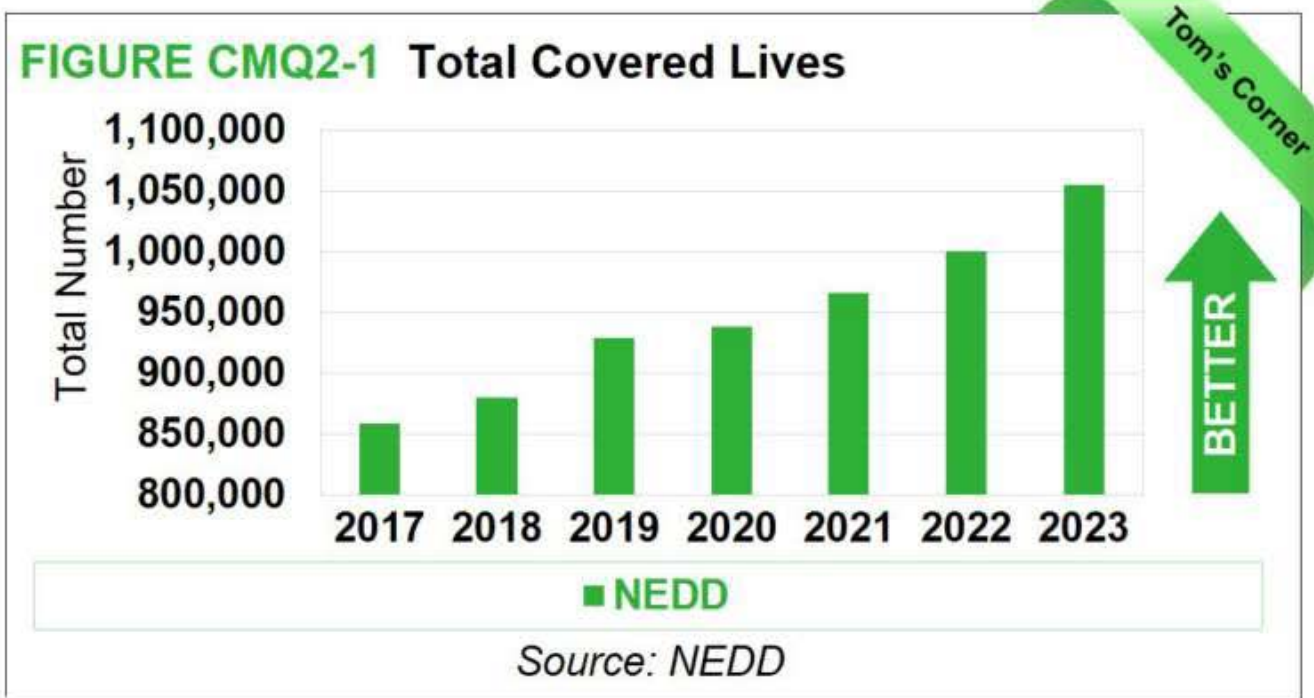
CMQ1-3.

2 - What are your results for market size and market share, by business unit or product/service, as appropriate?

One of the most important goals for NEDD is increasing the number of covered lives. Figure CMQ2-1 shows the last seven years; however, NEDD's long-term success is more apparent when looking at 1996 when there were only 275,000 lives covered and now it is well over a million as shown in Figure FQ1-2. This is superior performance to any other dental insurance company in our markets. It is a Tom's Corner measure.

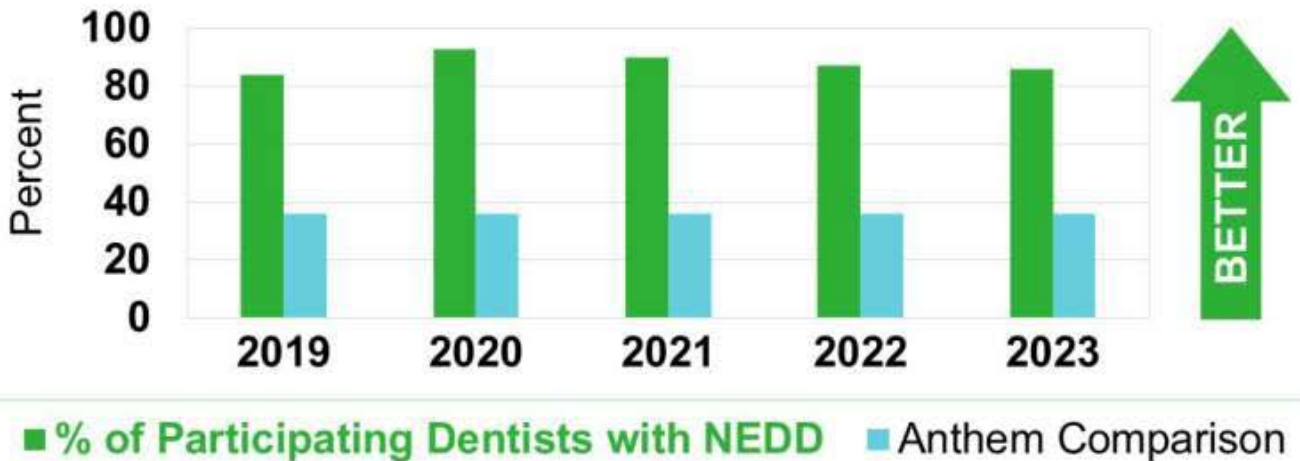
NEDD has an exceptional percentage of dentists in the area that participate with us. This is well over 85%, and this demonstrates superior performance with our competitor, Anthem, which is the largest competitor with 26% of the dentists. (Figure CMQ2-2)

Figure CMQ2-3 shows the market share by state for the past 5 years. NEDD has pretty much saturated the market place. This is one of the drivers to expand Medicaid in New Hampshire. But the primary motivation is from our informal mission that everyone deserves a healthy smile. Best performance in the 3 states.



CMQ2-1

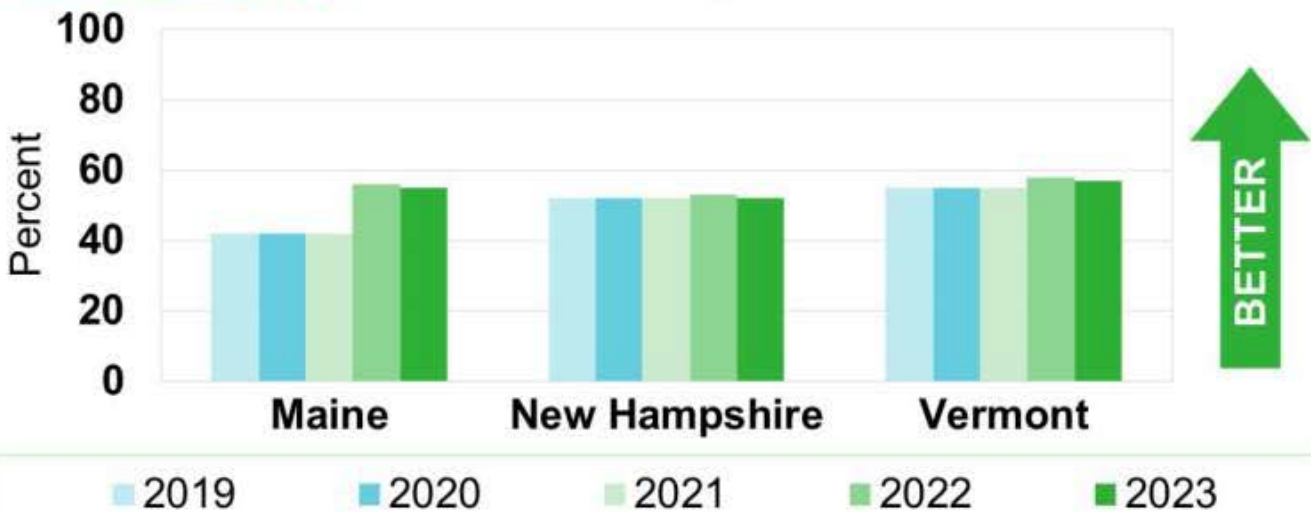
FIGURE CMQ2-2 % of Dentists in Tri-State Service Area Participating with NEDD



Source: NEDD, Anthem

CMQ2-2

FIGURE CMQ2-3 Market Share by State



Source: NEDD

CMQ2-3

3 - What are your results for your customer loyalty, including likelihood to recommend your organization, by key customer segments?

Note: For health care organizations, as appropriate: Include your results for Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) or CAHPS scores.

One of the most important measures of customer loyalty is the likelihood to recommend NEDD. Figure CMQ3-1 measures customer willingness to recommend on a 5-point scale. We wanted to compare NEDD's performance using the Net Promoter Score (NPS) methodology. However, since the NPS is based on an 11-point-scale, we had to transform the data to have a useful comparison. The formula used is [definitely + probably] – [probably not + definitely not]. Refer to Figure LGQ3-2 for the Employer Group satisfaction measuring their likelihood to renew with NPS ratings.

As shown in Figure CMQ3-2, these calculations show that NEDD is around 80, which compares favorably to Apple whose NPS is 70 and to Amazon whose is 73. ConsumerGauge.com writes that 70 or higher is world class.

CMQ3-3 shows the Employer Group Retention rate. This measure is very important because they contribute 95% to NEDD's revenue. When compared to the insurance average renewal rate, NEDD demonstrates consistently superior performance.

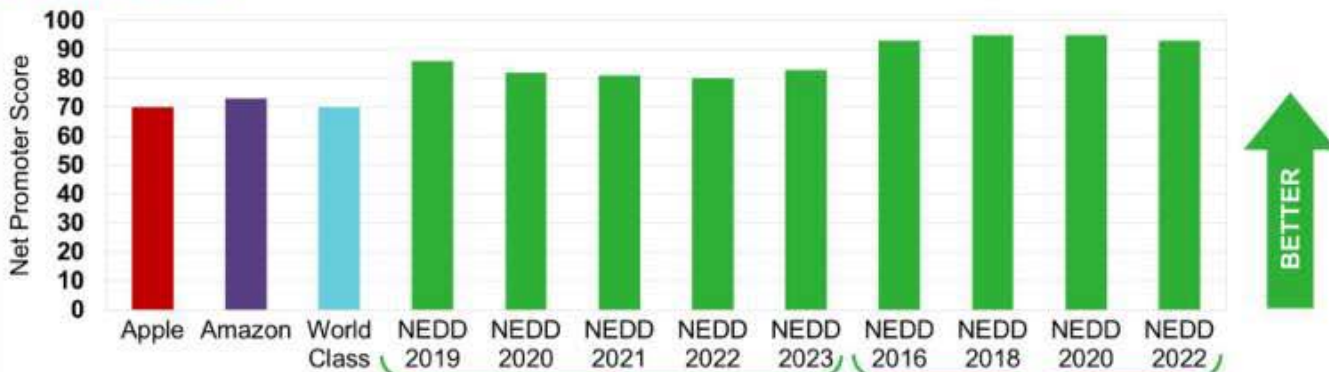
FIGURE CMQ3-1 Consumer Satisfaction: Willing to Recommend NEDD

Year	Definitely	Probably	Unsure	Probably Not	Definitely Not	NPS
2019	55%	34%	8%	2%	1%	86
2020	51%	35%	10%	2%	2%	82
2021	47%	39%	9%	3%	2%	81
2022	52%	34%	8%	3%	3%	80
2023	55%	32%	9%	2%	2%	83

Source: Annual Satisfaction Survey.

CMQ3-1

FIGURE CMQ3-2 Net Promoter Score - NEDD's 5-Point Satisfaction Rating



Sources: NEDD, Apple, Amazon, ConsumerGauge.com; most recent NPS are shown.

Consumer Willing to Recommend NEDD (Figure CMQ3-1)

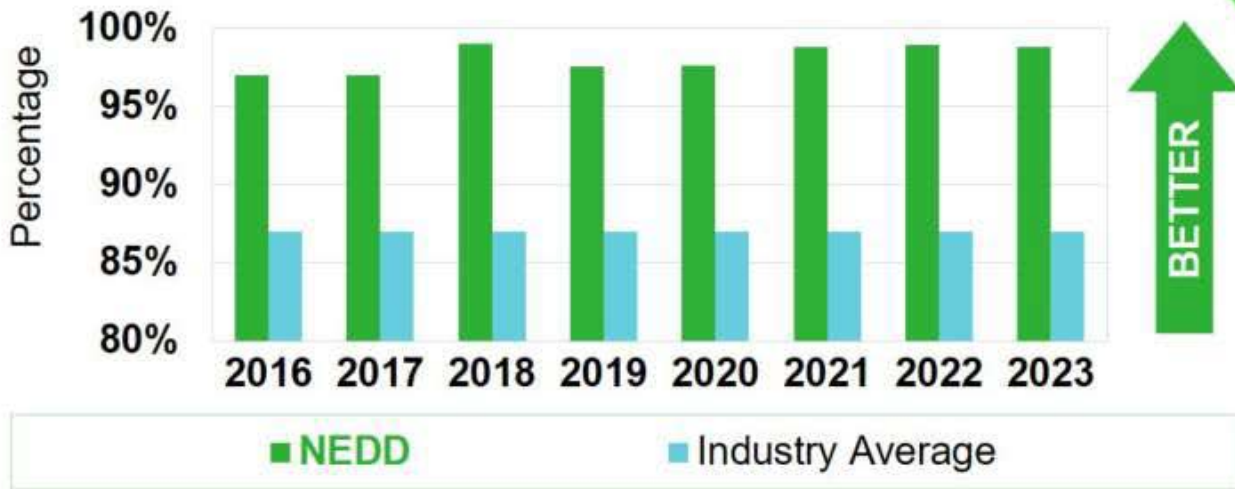
Employer-Group Likelihood to Renew with NEDD (Figure LGQ3-2)

Why and How We Calculate NPS: We have stayed with our 5-point labeled rating scale instead of the 11 point NPS rating scale because we have used ours for over 20 years and can track changes. We use a formula that others use to calculate NPS where 1-2 ratings are detractors, a 3 rating is neutral, and 4-5 ratings are promoters.

CMQ3-2

Tom's Corner

FIGURE CMQ3-3 Employer-Group Retention Rate:
% of Employers Who Renewed Their Dental Plans with NEDD



Sources: NEDD Marketing and Sales, annual sales and account retention reports. Comparison is against the industry average.

CMQ3-3

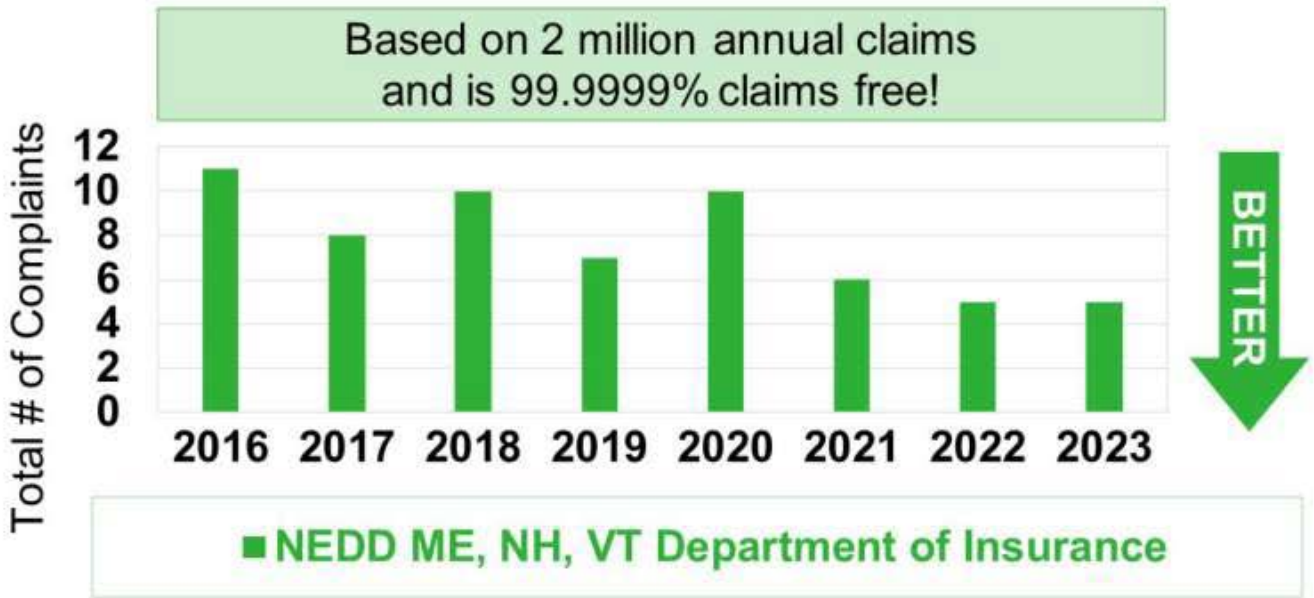
4 - What are your results for customer complaints, by key customer segments, if available?

Figure CMQ4-1 shows the number of complaints received by the 3 state Departments of Insurance. In an 8-year period, the all-time high was 11 complaints in 2016 and 5 in 2023. To put this in perspective, each year there have been about 2,000,000 billable dental procedures. This is another example of Six Sigma level performance.

Another measure of customer complaints can be inferred from the dollars of GOSESM payments to Employer Groups. Figure CMQ4-2 shows that the most ever paid in a year was \$15,000 and in 2023 it was \$1,248. The comparison to the 2023 total revenue of \$482,531,334 clearly demonstrates superior performance.

In Figure CMQ4-3 is GOSESM payments to employer groups for inappropriate billing by a participating dentist. The guarantee is that our network dentist will not bill the subscriber for the treatment covered by their plan. In eight years the most paid out in a year was \$750, and in 2023 it was zero dollars.

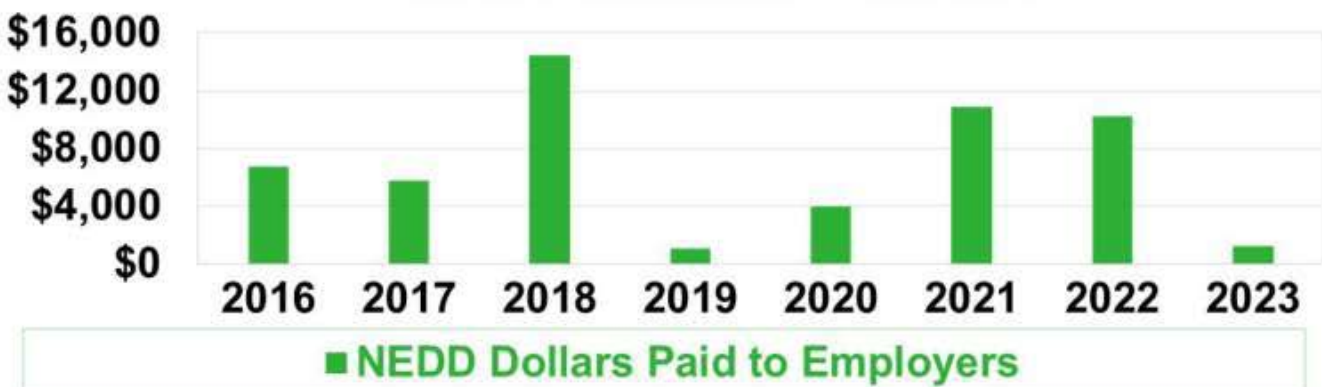
FIGURE CMQ4-1 States' Department of Insurance Complaints Received



Source: ME, NH, and VT Department of Insurance. The complaints increased with the beginning of the Affordable Care Act and direct to consumer plans.

CMQ4-1

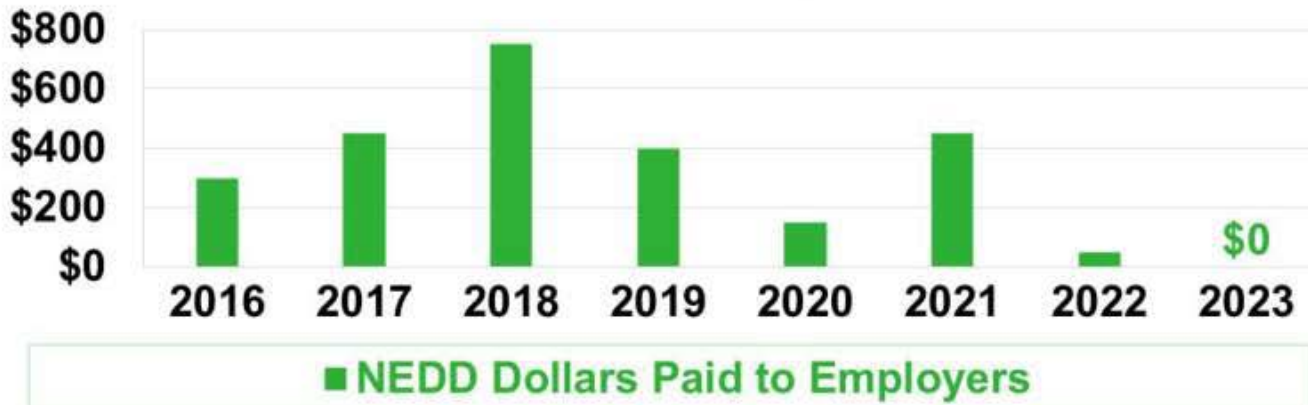
FIGURE CMQ4-2 GOSESM Payments: Dollars Paid to Employer-Groups When Guarantee of Service ExcellenceSM Not Met



Source: NEDD GOSESM Team. We back our internal guarantees by making a monetary investment payment to our Employers. We appreciate the opportunity to make the investment payment and improve our Employer-customer-focused-value process.

CMQ4-2

FIGURE CMQ4-3 GOSESM Payments for No Inappropriate Billing by Participating Dentists: Dollars Paid to Employer-Groups When No Inappropriate Billing Guarantee Not Met



Source: NEDD GOSESM Team. We back our internal guarantees that our network dentist will not bill the subscriber for treatment covered by their plan; this amount is the investment payment to Employers.

CMQ4-3

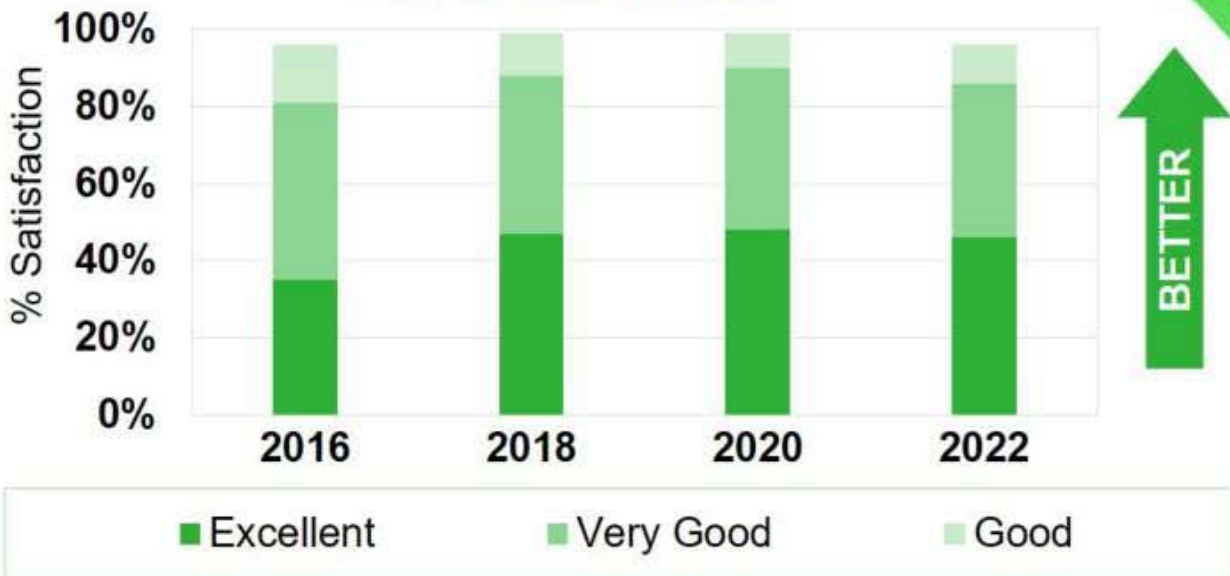
5 - What are your results for customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction, by key customer segments?

Figure CMQ5-1 shows that Employer Group overall satisfaction is superior performance at 96% over the last four survey periods. Surveys are conducted every two years so in this case we only have four data points. This is one of the measures on *Tom's Corner*.

Figure CMQ5-2 is a measure of individual overall customer satisfaction and measures the respondents rating NEDD good to excellent.

Figure CMQ5-3 shows the number of Employer Groups that did not renew each year out of the total 8,000 Employer Groups that are insured. This also confirms our 98% annual renewal of Employer Groups' dental insurance coverage. This is the highest dental insurance renewal rate in New Hampshire, Vermont and Maine.

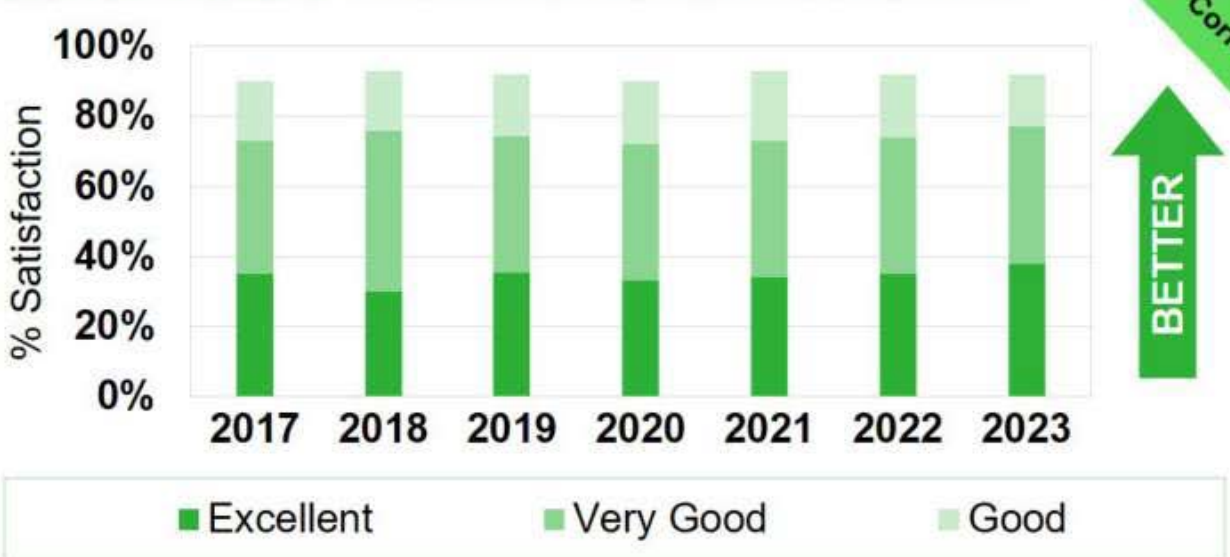
FIGURE CMQ5-1 Employer-Group Overall Satisfaction



Source: Satisfaction Survey. Survey done every other year.

CMQ5-1

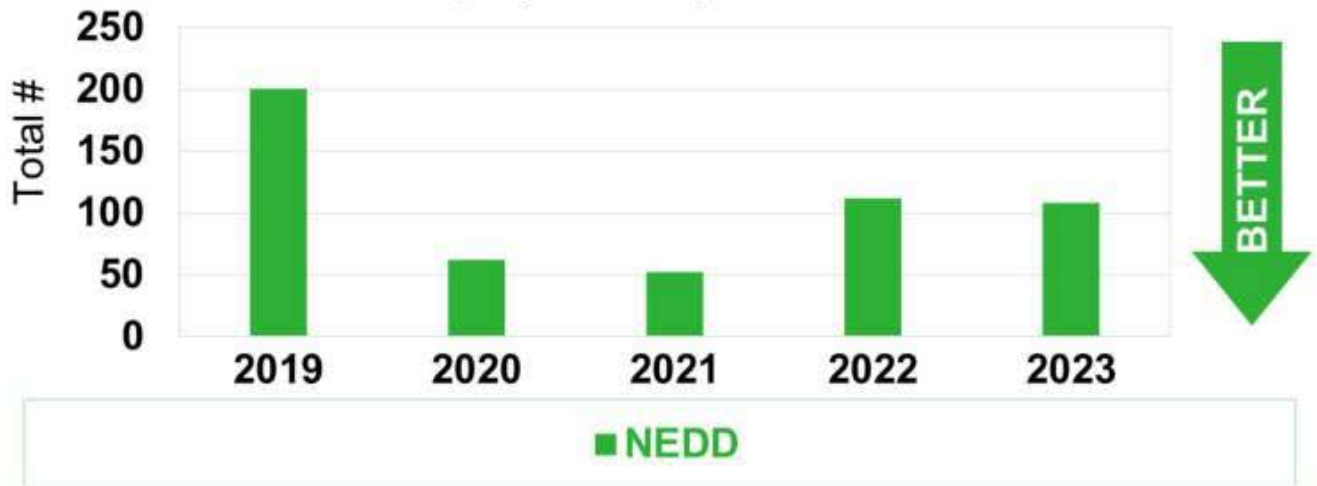
FIGURE CMQ5-2 Consumer Overall Satisfaction



Source: Annual Satisfaction Survey.

CMQ5-2

FIGURE CMQ5-3 Employer-Group Dissatisfaction: Employer-Groups That Did Not Renew



Source: NEDD. Average Total Number of Employee Groups is 8,000.

CMQ5-3:

Community Engagement

1 - Briefly describe your key processes for community engagement and societal contributions. Be sure to include your processes for the following:

- 1. listening and engaging with your key communities, and**
- 2. supporting your key communities.**

Our key community support process is shown in Fig CEQ1-1. Our key communities, Fig CEQ1-2, are primarily the three states where we operate: ME, NH, and VT. In keeping with our vision and informal purpose, we particularly focus on the underserved and underinsured populations. We look for ways to support our dental providers. Organizations may reach out to us for help through conversations with the SLT at community events. Applications are evaluated by the NEDD Foundation Advisory Committee (FAC). Applications of \$2,000 or less are considered throughout the year by FAC. The FAC reviews and provides recommendations for applications of \$2,000 or more to the NEDD Foundation BOD for approval twice a year. Strategic philanthropy requests, over \$100,000 require BOD approval.

Another area of community support is our Veterans Dental Program in New Hampshire (AOS). In 2015 we learned that Veterans seeking dental care find it difficult to navigate the VA's (Veterans Administration) qualifications to get access to dental care. We launched a program in 2016 where we pay for veterans' dental care in NH, which sometimes includes providing transportation. Since 2016, this has amounted to nearly \$550,000 in NH. We established a similar program in ME in 2021, paying out \$39,000 to Maine Veterans.

Our SLs contribute to improving our key communities, leading by example. They encourage the workforce to join them in participating in walks/road races, community events, and nonprofit organizations' BODs (Figure CEQ2-1). The SLT encourages, supports, and recognizes the volunteer community service of its employees through the Employee Community Involvement Grant ("ECIG") and Volunteer Involvement Pays ("VIP") programs. The ECIG program grants up to \$5,000 each year, in increments of \$200 per applicant to nonprofit organizations with which employees are involved. The VIP program permits qualifying employees to use up to 7½ hours paid time per year to volunteer for nonprofit organizations.

FIGURE CEQ1-1 Community Support Process



CEQ1-1

FIGURE CEQ1-2 Support of Key Communities

Community	Approach to Support and Strengthen	Participants
Non-Profit Organization Fundraising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsor fundraising run/walk • United Way Fundraising • Easter Seals Fundraising • Memorial Golf Tournament • Memorial Races (Frank Donovan) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All SLs & Workforce • Workforce • Workforce • Workforce • Workforce
Non-Profit Organization Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various Boards supported by 36 employees • Friendly Kitchen • Operation Santa • Capitol Region Food Drive • Veterans Dental Program-NH (Paid treatment to dentists) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLT, Directors & Managers, and employees • Workforce • Workforce • Workforce & SLT • SLT (Dr. Couret)
NPO In Kind Sponsorship	Many use NEDD conference rooms at no cost; free use of soccer field	SLT, Directors & Managers
NEDD Foundation Advisory Committee	Up to \$1000 per year to applications related to NEDD's MVV	SLT

CEQ1-2

FIGURE CEQ1-3 Oral Health Disparities Funding

The University of Vermont Larner College of Medicine Area Health Education Centers

\$320,000 Loan Repayment

Vermont State Dental Society

\$89,000 Dentist Recruitment

\$30,000 Dental Auxiliary Recruitment

Funds Administered by the Finance Authority of Maine

\$447,500 Delta Dental Plan of Maine
and Maine Community Foundation

Tufts University School of Dental Medicine

\$1,600,000 Dental Scholarship Endowment

University of New England

\$2,700,000 Dental School and Expansions

\$1,430,000 Loan Repayment Program

\$155,000 Dentist Scholarships

\$138,000 Dental Hygiene Scholarships

\$4,423,000 Total Dental Related Support (2001-2021)

\$11,332,500 Total Oral Health Disparities Funding

CEQ1-3

2 - What are your results for engaging and building relationships with your key communities? Be sure to include results for the following:

1. the number and type of engagements,
2. the frequency of each engagement type (how often the engagement happens), and
3. the length of time of engagements.

NEDD partners with many local organizations to help improve dental health and quality of life in the three states we serve. NEDD employees also serve on several community boards. Figure CEQ2-1 shows the number of employees participating in leadership positions on community boards; total number of organizations involved; and total hours. A normal working year (50 weeks of 40 hours) equals 2000 hours, so the contributions in the community are more than two equivalent years.

Figure CEQ2-2 shows community support foundation dollars. These are awards that include community rural health programs in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. In 2023, \$1,335,000 was distributed and the eight-year total is \$4,583,000.

It is important to attract dentists to rural areas that are underserved and to make sure that we have at least two dentists within 20 miles of every insured. The NEDD foundation over the past eight years has invested over \$2,000,000 paying off dentists' college loans (Figure CEQ2-3).

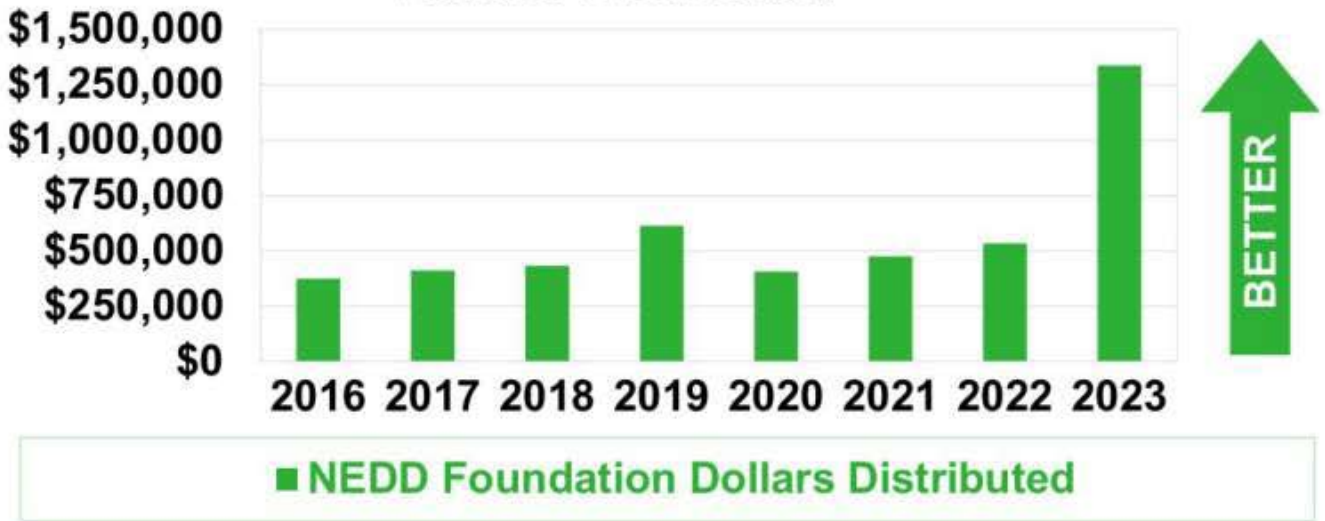
FIGURE CEQ2-1 Community Board Participation

Year	Total # of Employees Participating in Community Boards	Total # of Organizations Involved	Total # of Hours Participating in Community Boards
2016	21	62	2080
2017	32	77	2393
2018	36	86	3427
2019	45	94	3179
2020	41	83	4038
2021	36	91	4466
2022	34	80	3691
2023	33	81	2908

Source: NEDD External Affairs

CEQ2-1

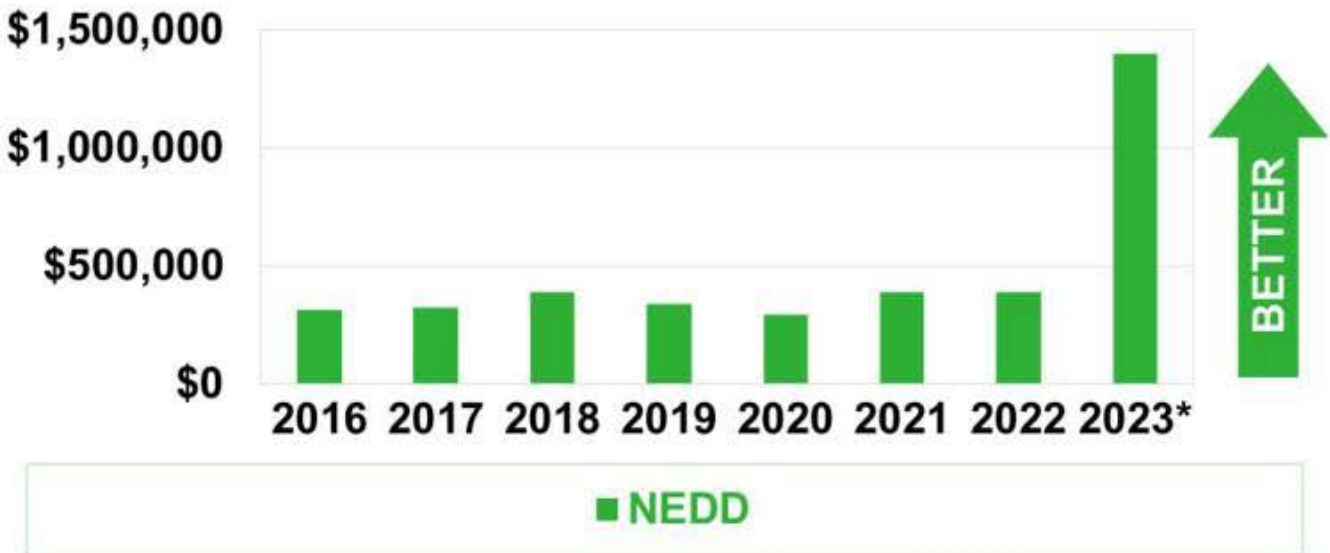
FIGURE CEQ2-2 NEDD Foundation Awards Dollars Distributed



Source: NEDD External Affairs. Foundation Mission Support. Distributed Awards include Community Oral Health Programs. Not reflective of Member Companies, Businesses, Individuals' donations.

CEQ2-2

FIGURE CEQ2-3 Student Loan Repayment for Dentists Dollars Distributed



Source: NEDD External Affairs. The amount of money that went to pay off dentist's college loans in the community.

*2023 increase due to the buy back, new loan repayment program with Bi-State Primary Care.

CEQ2-3

3 - What are your results for societal contributions?

Note: See below for some examples of societal contributions:

- reduced energy consumption

- use of renewable energy resources and recycled water
- reduction of your carbon footprint
- waste reduction and utilization
- alternative approaches to conserving resources (e.g., increased virtual meetings)
- global use of enlightened labor practices; and
- donations of goods or services to promote housing, community health, and food security.

NEDD has demonstrated our **resilience** through the COVID-19 relief efforts in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. Figure CEQ3-1 shows a timeline and \$27 million in community and relief efforts across the providers, community, employees, producers, brokers, and customers.

Figure CEQ3-2 shows the recycling events in cumulative total pounds collected annually for the past eight years. More examples available on site (AOS)

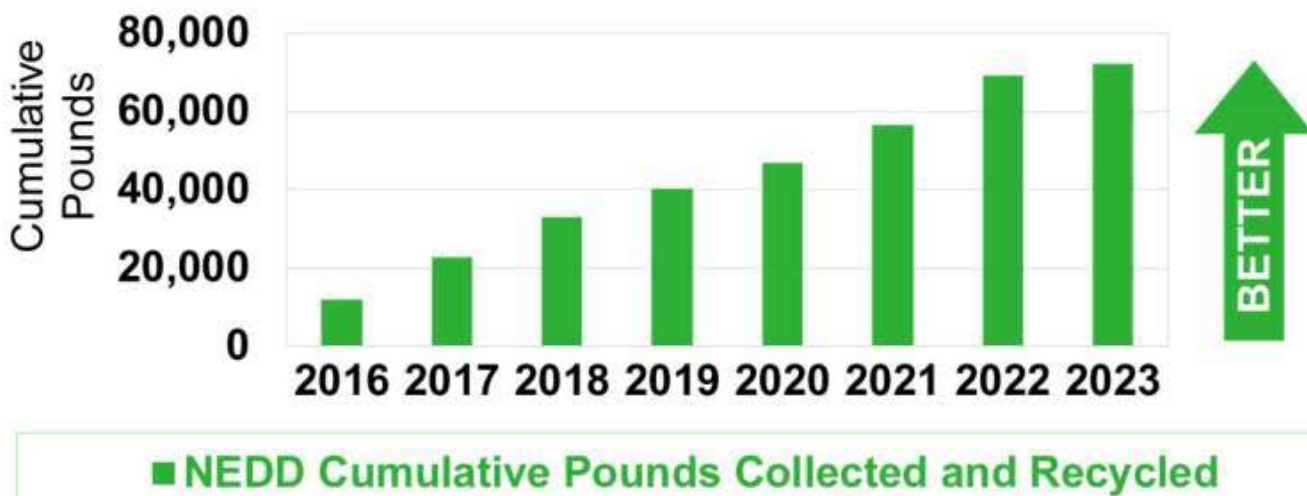
Figure CEQ3-3 shows NEDD's philanthropic foundation provides the opportunity for improving community oral health in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. Over the past eight years over \$13,515,311 has been distributed. We are not able to find evidence of a competitor doing nearly as much in our markets.

FIGURE CEQ3-1 NEDD and NEDD Foundation COVID-19 Relief Efforts in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont



CEQ3-1

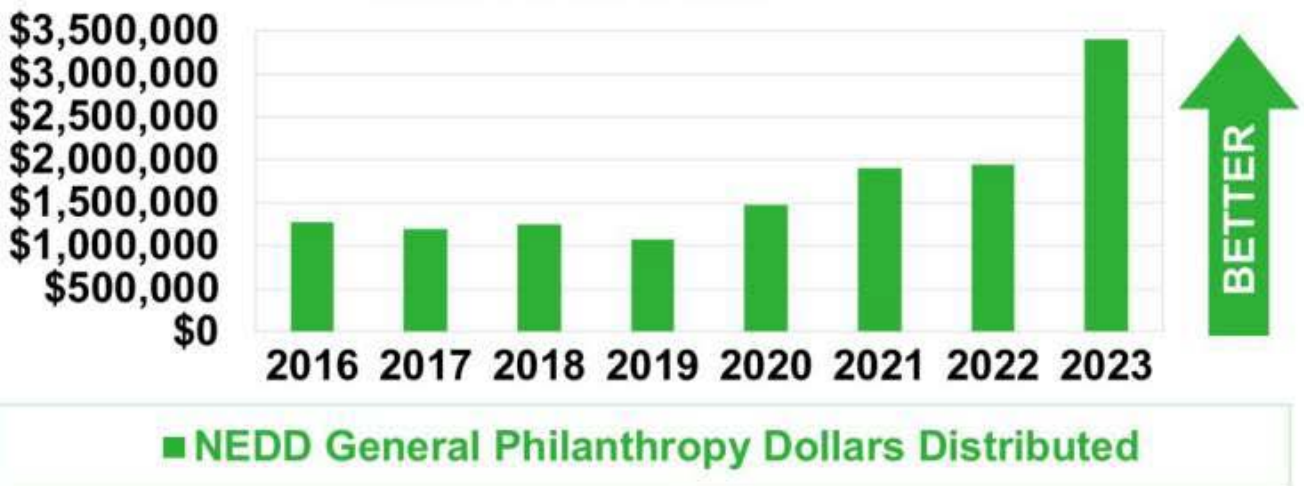
FIGURE CEQ3-2 Recycling Collection Events



Source: NEDD

CEQ3-2

FIGURE CEQ3-3 Community Support General Philanthropy Dollars Distributed



Source: NEDD External Affairs.
Road races, galas, making strides, etc.

CEQ3-3

Finance

1 - Briefly describe your key processes used for managing your organization’s finances to ensure the following:

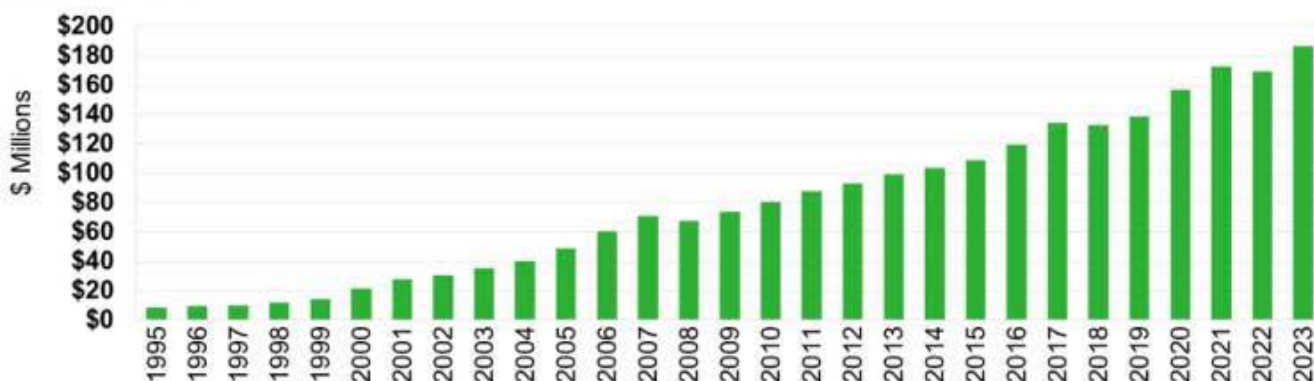
1. financial viability, and
2. access to capital during disruptions.

One of our main strategic goals is to have at least one million customers covered out of the total eligible in the tri-state area of about 1.6 million. NEDD’s long-term success is apparent when looking at 1996 when there were only 275,000 lives covered and now it is well over a million as shown in Figure FQ1-2. This is over 60% of those eligible and is ambitious but motivating. As a not-for-profit organization, our goal is not to make huge profits but to have a balanced budget and to be able to add enough to our reserves to act as a cushion in times of crisis and to allow us to pursue our strategic objectives. About 90% of our costs are what we pay our dentists, so we have a responsibility to keep our administrative costs to about 10% of revenue which we have accomplished successfully over time. (Figure FQ2-3).

NEDD’s financial viability is supported by the employees removing waste from our key processes and fool proofing them. Whenever a GOSESSM payment is made, the employees at all levels work to identify and fix the cause to prevent the underlying problem from ever happening again. As a cumulative result of these long-term efforts, 6 of the 7 the key processes operate as a better than Six Sigma level. The other process performs at 4.5 Sigma. (Figure SQ2-1).

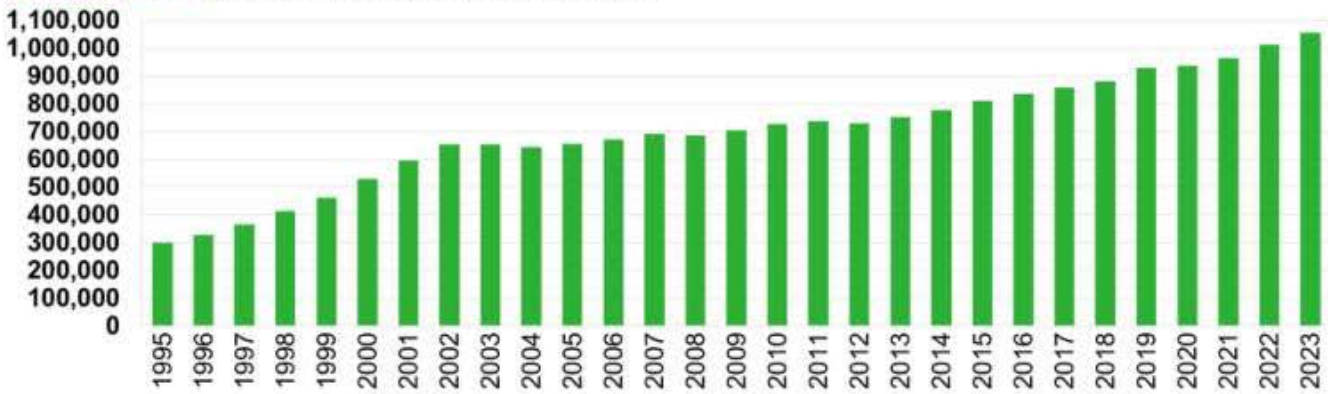
Access to capital during disruptions is assured by NEDD’s Reserve Surplus (Fig FQ1-1). For a not-for-profit reserves are grown by managing the difference between revenue and expenses. The Reserve/Surplus is \$186,313,898 vs. \$8,573,838 when Tom Raffio started in 1995 as CEO. NEDD manages our reserves near the upper limit allowed by each of the three state insurance commissioners. Our reserves allowed NEDD the financial strength during the COVID-19 response to rapidly pivot to provide our dentists with masks and personal protective equipment.

FIGURE FQ1-1 NEDD Financial Reserves since 1995



FQ1-1

FIGURE FQ1-2 NEDD Covered Lives since 1995



FQ1-2

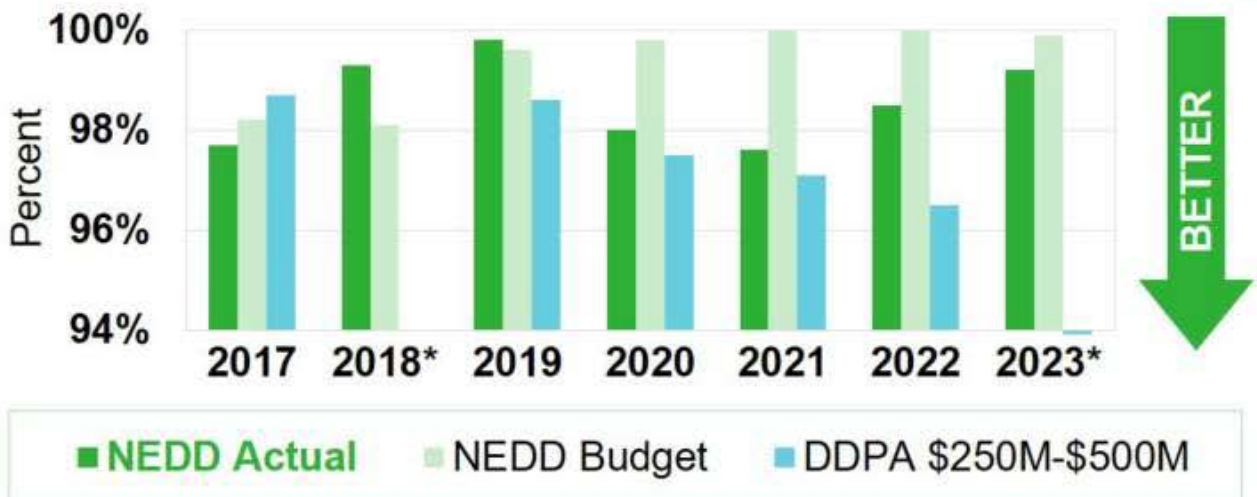
2 - What are your results for financial viability (e.g., liquidity, days cash on hand/reserves, credit or bond rating)?

The important financial measures for NEDD include the combined ratio, and FQ2-1 shows the total expenses divided by total revenues excluding investment income. The comparative data are from the DDPA and demonstrates superior performance over the past 7 years.

Figure FQ1-1 shows the long-term success in growing reserves from \$573,838 in 1995 to over \$1,800,000 in 2023. Figure FQ2-2 shows that for the past 7 years NEDD has surpassed the internal level of surplus excellence. This result is unique to NEDD, and a relevant comparison is not available.

Another important financial measure is controlling total administrative costs as a percent of total revenue, shown in Figure FQ2-3. There are comparisons to the Delta Dental Professional Association. The figure demonstrates 7 years of favorable performance in controlling administrative costs. Almost 90% of our costs are payments to dentists so controlling administrative costs allows NEDD to increase our financial reserves.

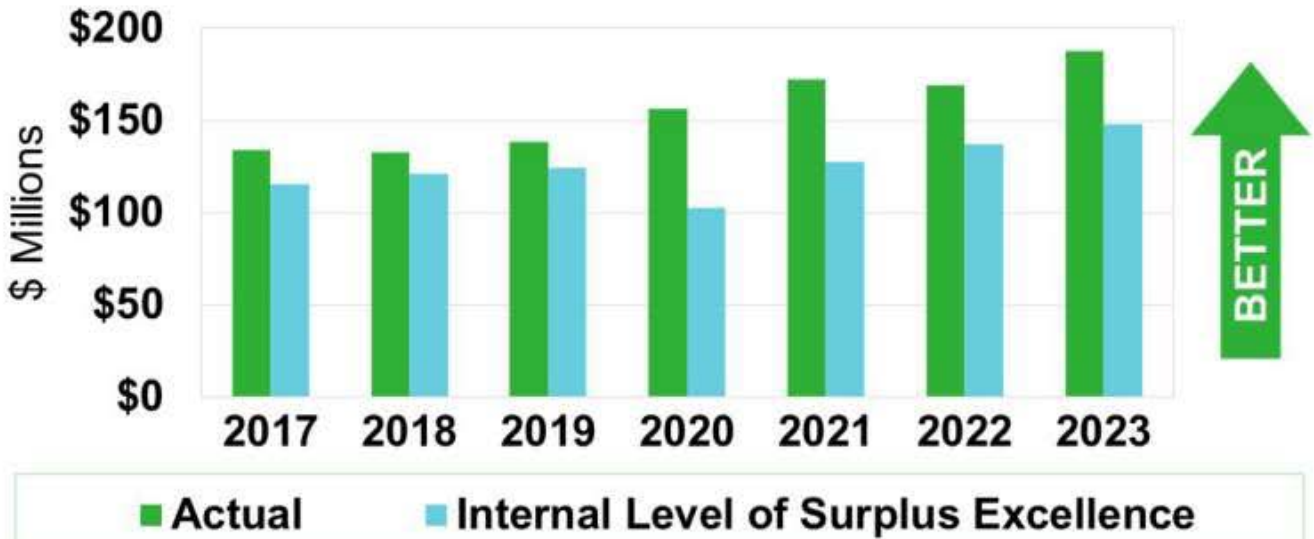
FIGURE FQ2-1 Combined Ratio Percent:
Total Claims Paid Plus Administrative Costs
Divided By Total Revenue



Source: NEDD Finance Department, Delta Dental Plans Association.
*2018, 2023 DDPA data not available. Excluding Investment Income.

FQ2-1

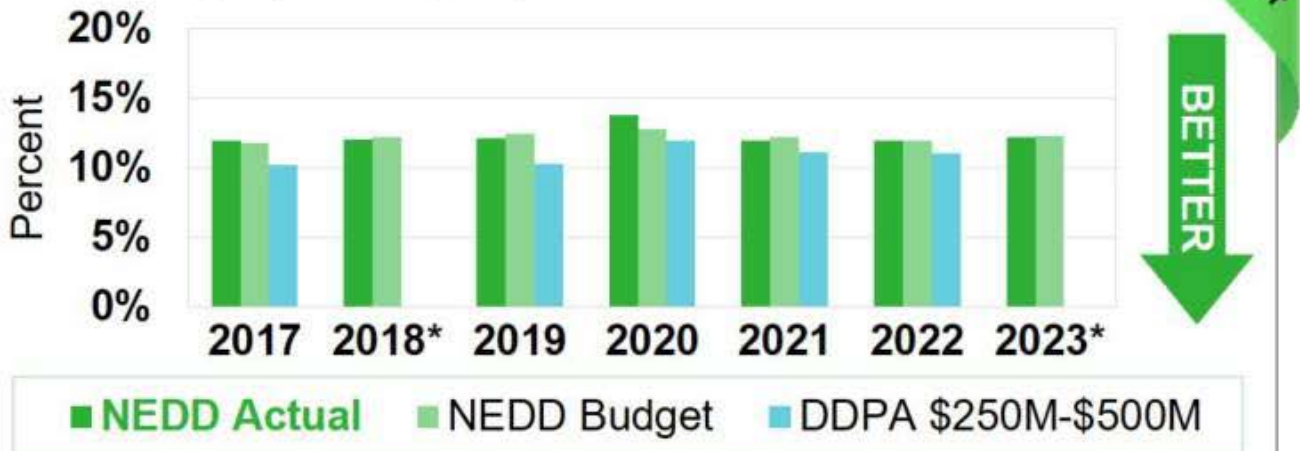
FIGURE FQ2-2 Financial Reserves



Source: NEDD Finance Department

FQ2-2

FIGURE FQ2-3 Total Administrative Costs %: Controlling Operating Expense to Total Revenue



Source: NEDD Finance Department. *2018 and 2023 DDPA data not available. Excludes unusual onetime "strategic initiative."

FQ2-3

3 - What are your results for financial performance (e.g., revenues, operating margin, performance to budget) by organization units, as appropriate?

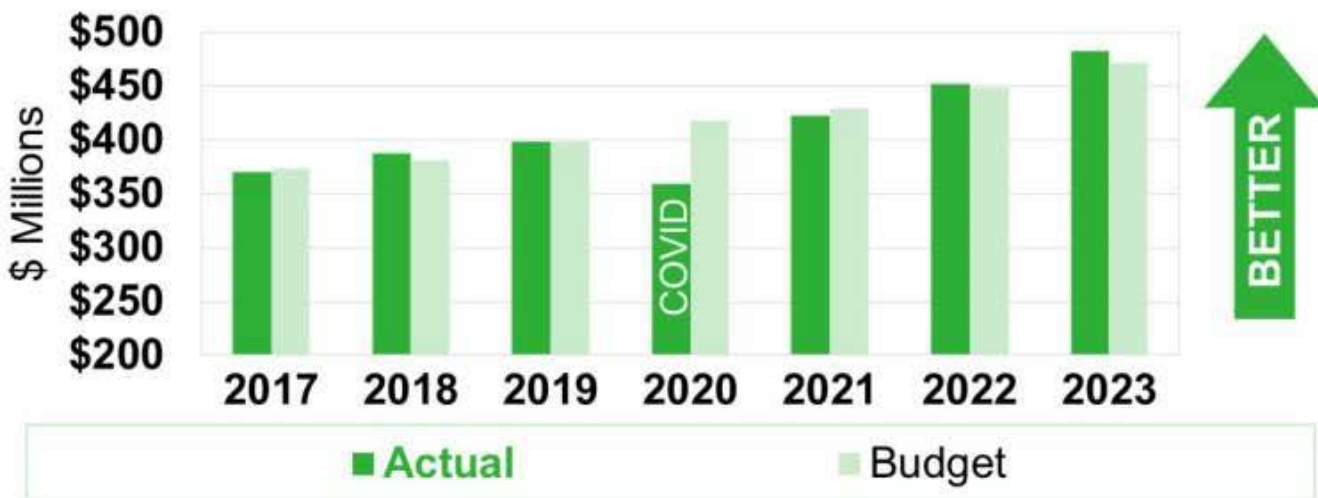
The growth in gross revenue is shown in Figure FQ3-1 for the past 7 years. The long-term success is even more dramatic when compared to \$57.5 million in 1995 and \$475 million in 2023. In 2020 the revenue performance to budget was less because NEDD did not collect premiums but continued coverage. FQ1-1 shows the growth in revenue since 1995.

Figure FQ3-2 shows that GOSESM payments are about .002% of revenue. That is not a typo; it is 2 thousandths of a percent; demonstrating superior performance over the past 7 years.

FQ3-3 demonstrates superior performance to budget. Most of the variance between actual and the budget is in the neighborhood of \$10 million and on a budget basis of almost \$500 million, this is within 25 percent for the past 6

years.

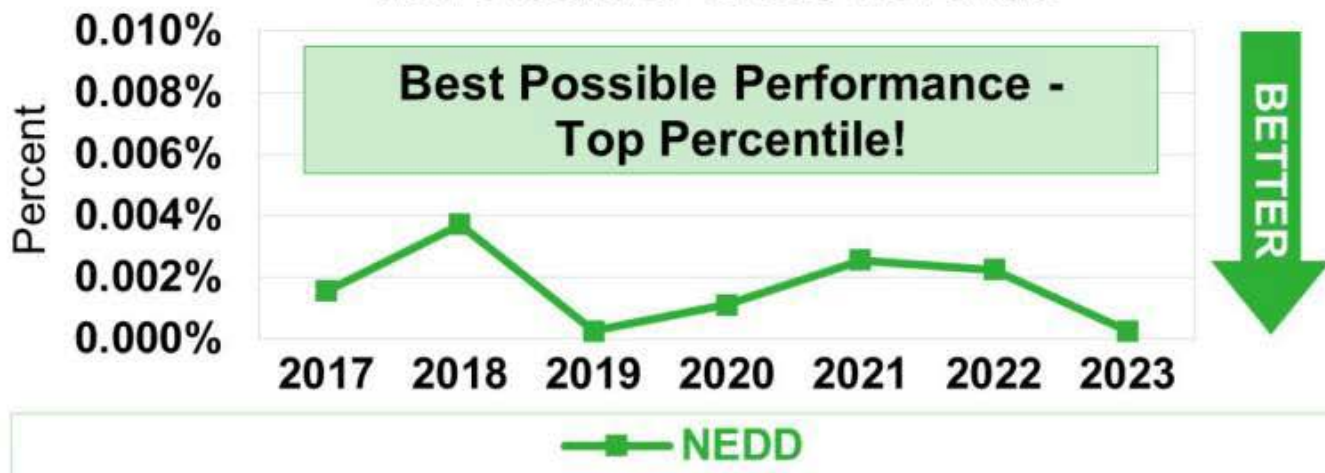
FIGURE FQ3-1 Gross Revenue



Source: NEDD Finance Department. *During the COVID-19 pandemic, NEDD did not collect premiums but continued coverage.

FQ3-1

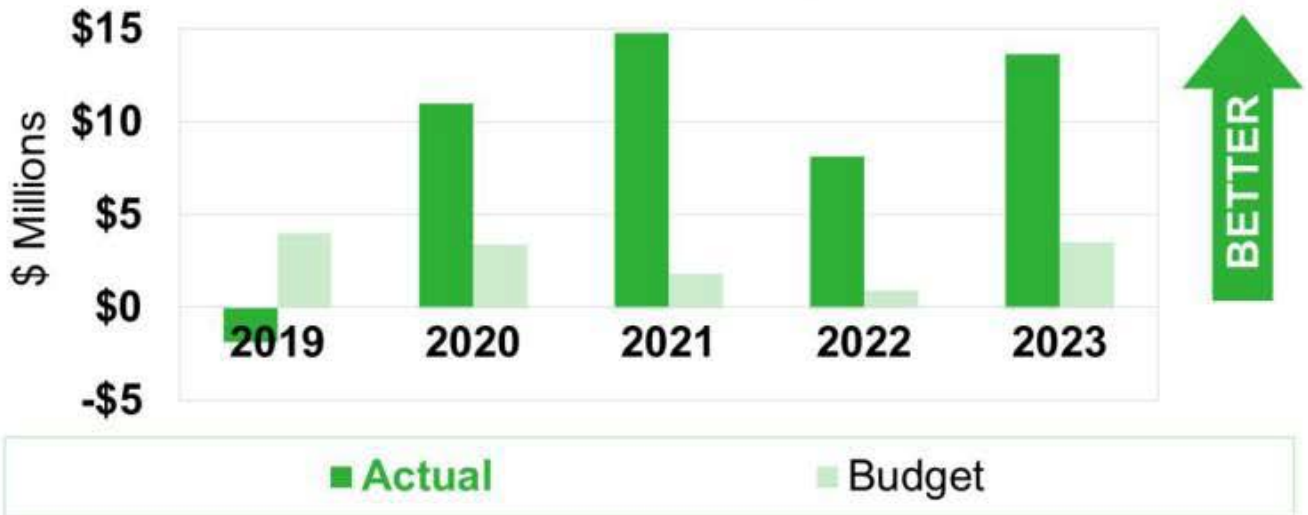
FIGURE FQ3-2 GOSESM Payments as Percent of Gross Revenue



Source: NEDD Marketing and Sales; NEDD Finance Department

FQ3-2

FIGURE FQ3-3 Performance to Budget



Source: NEDD Finance Department.

FQ3-3

Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

1 - Provide brief definitions of terms and acronyms used in your responses to the criteria questions. The glossary should be pasted into the text box. Glossaries larger than 20000 characters will need to be uploaded as an image. A maximum of three images is permitted. If uploading an image of your glossary, please enter "n/a" in the text box to activate the image upload icon.

Note: Acceptable examples of a glossary entry are:

PES: Performance Evaluation System

SPP: strategic planning process

AC: All Colleagues

ACA: Affordable Care Act

ADA: American Dental Association

AD&D: Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance

AOS: Available on Site

ASA: Average Speed of Answer

ASO: Administrative Services Only Program

BA: Business Analyst

BBB: Better Business Bureau

BIPOC: Black, Indigenous, (and) People of Color

BN&N: Baker Newman & Noyes

BOD: Board of Directors

BVR: Business Value Rating

CAG: Customer Advisory Group

CAM: Claims Adjudication Management System

CC: Core Competencies

CDC: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

CE: Claims Edit

CEO: Chief Executive Officer

COB: Coordination of Benefits

COVID-19: Coronavirus Disease 2019

CR: Consultant Review

CS: Customer Satisfaction

csONE™: csONE Benefit Solutions

CSR: Customer Service Representatives

DCS: Dental Claims System

DDPA: Delta Dental Plans Association

DDPME: Delta Dental Plans Maine

DDPNH: Delta Dental Plans New Hampshire

DDPVT: Delta Dental Plans Vermont

DEI: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

DEIJ: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice

DPD: Dental Plan Description

DTP: Drop to Pay

DUST: Dental USA Team

E-: Electronic

EBPP: Electronic Bill Presentment and Payment

ECIG: Employee Community Involvement Grant

EDI: Electronic Data Interchange

EFT: Electronic Funds Transfer

EOB: Explanation of Benefits

EPA: Environmental Protection Agency

ERA: Electronic Remittance Advice

FAC: Foundation Advisory Committee

FAIR: FAIR Health Inc.

FSA: Flexible Spending Account

GAP: Gap Analysis

GM: Group Maintenance

GOSESM: Guarantee Of Service ExcellenceSM

HIPAA: Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act

HMO: Health Maintenance Organization

HOW[®]: Health *through* Oral Wellness[®]

HR: Human Resources

HVAC: Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning

I.S.: Information Systems
IAF: Individual and Family
ID: Identification
IPS: Internal Processing Statement
IRS: Internal Revenue Service
IT: Information Technology
IVR: Interactive Voice Response Unit
KSA: Knowledge, Skills and Abilities
LED: light-emitting diode
LNH: Leadership New Hampshire
LRP: Long Range Planning
MAC: Maximum Allowable Charge
ME: Maine
MPGS: Martins Point Generations Advantage
MS: Microsoft
MVV: Mission, Vision, and Values
NADP: National Associations of Dental Plans
NEDA: New England Dental Administrators, LLC
NEDDWeb: NEDD's internal website
NEDD: **Northeast Delta Dental**
NERR: **Northeast Record Retention**
NH: New Hampshire
NHHEAF: New Hampshire Higher Education Assistance Foundation
NIST: National Institute of Standards and Technology
NPO: Non-Profit Organization
NPS: Net Promoter Score
OOC: Outline of Coverage
OPS: Operations
OSHA: Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PAC: Professional Advisory Committee
Par: Participating Dentist
PC: Personal Computer
PDCA: Plan, Do, Check, Act
PHI: Protected Health Information
PIP: Performance Improvement Plan
PPE: Personal Protective Equipment
PPO: Preferred Provider Organization
PR: Professional Relations
PreViser[®]: PreViser Corporation
PRS: Professional Relations Specialist
PS: Provider Services
QA: Quality Assurance
QOC: Quality of Care
R&D: Research and Development
RA: Reporting Automation
RCT: Root Canal Treatment
RSA: Revised Statutes Annotated
RTH: Red Tree Holdings, Inc.
S & W: Safety and Wellness
SA: Strategic Advantage
SC: Strategic Challenge
SEO: Search Engine Optimization
SL: Senior Leaders
SLT: Senior Leadership Team
SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-bound
SOC: Service Organization Control
SPP: Strategic Planning Process
SVP: Senior Vice President
SWOT: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
Tri-State: Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont
TWC: Together We Can
UNH: University of New Hampshire
URL: Uniform Resource Locator, web address
VIP: Volunteer Involvement Pays
VOC: Voice of the Customer
VP: Vice President
VT: Vermont
YTD: Year to Date

Release and Ethics Statements

Release Statement

- ✓ I understand that *
 - this application will be reviewed by members of the Board of Examiners.
 - if my organization is selected for a site visit, my organization will host the site visit,
 - facilitate an open and unbiased examination, and
 - pay reasonable costs associated with the award evaluation
- ✓ If selected to receive an award, my organization will share nonproprietary information on its successful performance excellence strategies with other U.S. organizations. *

Ethics Statement

- ✓ I state and attest that *
 - I have reviewed the information provided by my organization in this award application package.
 - To the best of my knowledge, this package contains no untrue statement of a material fact and omits no material fact that I am legally permitted to disclose and that affects my organization's ethical and legal practices. This includes but is not limited to sanctions and ethical breaches.
- ✓ I understand that after I submit the application, I will not be able to update it. *

Date: * 4/10/2024 1:45:35 PM ET

Signature: * Robert Kleiner

Leadership and Governance

At Northeast Dental, our leadership and governance processes reflect and address the evaluation factors through a comprehensive and strategic approach:

1. **Systematic:** Our leadership and governance processes are regular and repeated, ensuring consistency and reliability. For instance, succession planning is systematically integrated at various levels, from the Board of Directors (BOD) planning for the CEO to the CEO and leaders developing plans for other leadership roles. These plans are reviewed annually to identify successors, initiate knowledge transfer, and provide proactive mentoring. Our SMART goals are also systematically deployed and reviewed across the organization, ensuring alignment and focus (Figures LGQ1-1, LGQ1-2).
2. **Deployed to Key Stakeholders:** These processes are effectively deployed to all key stakeholders, including employees, leadership, and the Board of Directors. Succession plans are communicated across departments, ensuring that all leaders understand the company's direction. SMART goals are deployed across every division, department, and colleague, ensuring that each employee knows their role and how it aligns with the corporate goals. Communication forums, such as monthly "all colleagues" meetings, ensure that strategic initiatives and important information are shared transparently with all employees.
3. **Evaluated:** We regularly evaluate our leadership and governance processes through various feedback mechanisms and performance metrics. Succession plans are evaluated

by leadership and the BOD, ensuring they remain effective and relevant. Employee goals are reviewed monthly, quarterly, and annually as part of the performance review process, ensuring alignment with corporate objectives. Feedback from communication forums helps us refine and improve our processes.

4. **Improved Based on Evaluation:** Based on evaluation results, we make necessary improvements to enhance our processes. For instance, the frequency of "All Colleagues" meetings was increased from quarterly to monthly based on employee and leadership feedback, improving communication in a remote work environment. Succession plans are updated annually to address training needs and learning opportunities for individuals, ensuring they are well-prepared for future roles.
5. **Innovation:** Innovation is actively fostered within our leadership and governance processes. We create new value for staff and leader development by sending employees to leadership training classes outside the company and forming community partnerships for various leadership endeavors. Our approach to training goes beyond job skills, emphasizing holistic development. We train our employees for leadership roles on community nonprofits. Additionally, our GOSE program and committee serve as innovative tools for quality assurance and continuous improvement in the dental insurance space.
6. **Aligned with Organizational Needs and Integrated with Related Processes:** All our processes are aligned with our organizational needs as described in our Organizational Profile. Succession planning, SMART goal deployment, and communication forums are integrated with our strategic planning and operational processes, ensuring a cohesive and aligned approach. This alignment and integration contribute to our exceptional

performance and ensure that our leadership and governance systems support the overall organizational goals.

By focusing on these factors, Northeast Dental demonstrates a structured, innovative, and transparent approach to leadership and governance, ensuring continuous improvement and alignment with our strategic objectives.

Strategic Planning and Execution

At Northeast Delta Dental, our strategic planning and execution processes reflect and address the evaluation factors through a comprehensive and strategic approach:

1. **Systematic:** Our Strategic Planning Process (SPP) is systematic and commences annually with a Long-Range Planning (LRP) Strategic Conference in June (Figure SQ1-1). This conference identifies strategic opportunities and philanthropic initiatives for the upcoming year. By July/August, we rigorously assess R&D budget requirements in preparation for November Budget Meetings, culminating in final approvals at December state board meetings. This process is repeated each year to ensure our goals are aligned with our strategic direction.
2. **Deployed to Key Stakeholders:** The strategic planning process is effectively deployed to all key stakeholders, including employees, leadership, and the Board of Directors. Employee engagement is pivotal throughout our SPP process, facilitated by monthly All Colleagues meetings where feedback and evaluation shape our strategic direction. Action plans are deployed across teams and communicated comprehensively through departmental and All-Colleagues meetings. Committee minutes and agendas are available on NEDDWeb, our internal intranet site, ensuring that all employees are informed.

3. **Evaluated:** We consistently evaluate our strategic planning and execution processes through various feedback mechanisms and performance metrics. Monthly reviews of SMART goals in Tom's Corner communications and All Colleagues meetings ensure continual progress towards strategic objectives. Rigorous vetting by the Tri-State Long Range Planning Committee and ongoing Board Leadership teleconferences ensure alignment with organizational needs and regulatory requirements.
4. **Improved Based on Evaluation:** Based on evaluation results, we make necessary improvements to enhance our processes. Feedback from employees and leadership during All Colleagues meetings helps refine and improve our strategic initiatives. Annual reviews and potential adjustments of fee structures for participating dentists sustain our financial health and operational agility, ensuring that our processes remain effective and relevant.
5. **Innovation:** Innovation is actively fostered within our strategic planning and execution processes. During the pandemic, we provided relief payments to dental offices in the form of direct payments above and beyond the payments they would receive for claims, showing our commitment to our community partners. Grants vetted through our External Affairs Department or NEDD Foundation Board safeguard financial stability and enhance strategic impact. Our approach to strategic planning and execution goes beyond traditional methods, emphasizing innovative solutions to meet our organizational needs and community commitments.
6. **Aligned with Organizational Needs and Integrated with Related Processes:** All our processes are aligned with our organizational needs as described in our Organizational Profile. Financial prudence guides resource allocation, balancing current obligations with

proactive reserves building to mitigate unforeseen challenges. Our strategic planning and execution processes are integrated with related functions, such as R&D budgeting and community engagement initiatives, ensuring a cohesive and aligned approach. This alignment and integration contribute to our exceptional performance and ensure that our strategic initiatives support the overall organizational goals.

By focusing on these factors, Northeast Delta Dental demonstrates a structured, innovative, and community-centric approach to strategic planning and execution, ensuring continuous improvement and alignment with our strategic objectives.

Operations, Specifically Design and Delivery of Products/Services

At Northeast Delta Dental, our processes for the design and delivery of products and services are meticulously structured to ensure alignment with our organizational goals and the needs of our stakeholders. Here's how we address the key evaluation factors:

1. **Systematic:** Our processes are regular and repeated, adhering to structured protocols. For instance, the Customer Service, Claims Processing, Enrollment, and Dental Provider Networks are managed through established frameworks that promote consistency and reliability. Continuous process improvements are guided by our GOSE program and committee, ensuring that our operations consistently meet high-quality standards and operate efficiently at a high Sigma level (Figure OQ2-1).
2. **Deployed to Key Stakeholders:** These processes are effectively deployed to key stakeholders, including customers, employees, and partners. Our listening methods (Figure CMQ1-1) facilitate comprehensive customer research, ensuring our services align with customer needs and preferences. Additionally, our participating dentists and other suppliers are integrated into our supply chain strategy, emphasizing their crucial role in service delivery (Figure OQ1-2).

3. **Evaluated:** We consistently evaluate our processes through various feedback mechanisms and performance metrics. Our GOSE results provide critical insights into process effectiveness, and regular committee meetings review and assess our guarantees to groups. This evaluation framework allows us to monitor and ensure the quality and efficiency of our services continuously.
4. **Improved Based on Evaluation:** Based on evaluation results, we implement necessary improvements to enhance our processes. The GOSE program acts as a feedback loop, informing our staff about the importance of quality and driving continuous improvement initiatives. This iterative approach ensures that our services evolve to meet changing demands and maintain high standards.
5. **Innovation:** Innovation is a cornerstone of our approach, actively fostered through our Innovation Management System (Figure OQ1-3). Our Strategic Planning Process (SPP) encourages the identification and assessment of strategic opportunities and intelligent risks. We welcome innovative ideas from colleagues, customers, partners, and suppliers, subjecting them to rigorous evaluation and resource allocation. For instance, our GOSE committee serves as a unique and powerful innovation in the dental insurance space, promoting quality awareness and continuous improvement.
6. **Aligned with Organizational Needs and Integrated with Related Processes:** All our processes are aligned with our organizational needs as described in our Organizational Profile. We ensure integration with related processes, such as our strategic planning and supply chain management, to create a cohesive operational framework. Our strategic alignment and comprehensive approach to process management contribute to overall

organizational success, ensuring that our services meet the expectations of all stakeholders.

By focusing on these factors, Northeast Dental demonstrates a structured, innovative, and customer-centric approach to the design and delivery of our products and services, ensuring continuous improvement and alignment with our organizational goals.

Operational Continuity, Specifically Continuity of Operations Planning

At Northeast Dental, our processes for continuity of operations are designed to ensure systematic, reliable, and effective responses to disruptions. These processes are carefully developed, deployed, evaluated, improved, innovative, and aligned with our organizational needs, addressing the following evaluation factors:

1. **Systematic:** Our Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP) is systematic and involves regular and repeated processes. In 2016, we partnered with Advizex, a disaster planning firm, to develop a comprehensive disaster recovery plan that includes various types of disasters, including pandemics. The plan, detailed in Figure OCQ1-1 and described in OCQ1-2, consists of four basic elements: incident detection notification and evacuation, initial assessment by the incident recovery team, recovery locations and recovery of business operations, and return to site and normal operations. These systematic components ensure that our response is organized and consistent across different scenarios.
2. **Deployed to Key Stakeholders:** Our COOP processes are deployed to all key stakeholders to ensure preparedness and a coordinated response. Specific component plans are assigned to relevant teams, such as the pandemic recovery team, which was

already in place before the COVID-19 crisis. Additionally, our disaster recovery plan includes clear communication protocols for incident detection, notification, and evacuation, ensuring that all stakeholders are informed and can act accordingly. Training and regular updates ensure that employees understand their roles and responsibilities in maintaining operational continuity.

3. **Evaluated:** We rigorously evaluate our COOP processes through regular testing and assessments. Our systems are documented and tested annually to ensure that backup systems and processes function as expected and can be activated within designated time frames. Continuous data backups are performed and replicated to prevent data loss, and the effectiveness of these backups is regularly reviewed. By evaluating these processes, we ensure that they remain effective and can be relied upon in the event of a disruption.
4. **Improved Based on Evaluation:** Based on our evaluations, we make continuous improvements to our COOP processes. For example, the need for a substantial technology upgrade of our phone system was identified, leading to an enhanced automated call distribution system that supports both remote and in-office representatives. Feedback from annual testing and real-life incidents is used to refine our plans and ensure that they remain relevant and effective. Our disaster recovery plan is a living document that evolves based on these evaluations.
5. **Innovation:** Innovation is a key component of our COOP. We proactively planned and budgeted for technology upgrades, such as the enhanced phone system and automatic call answering system, which distributes calls in order of receipt, measures performance, and supports quality standards. Additionally, we purchased high-quality blue surgical masks for staff use during a pandemic, demonstrating foresight and preparedness. Our approach

to disaster recovery is characterized by innovative solutions that enhance our resilience and operational continuity.

6. **Aligned with Organizational Needs and Integrated with Related Processes:** Our COOP processes are aligned with our organizational needs and integrated with related processes, as described in our Organizational Profile. Ensuring operational continuity supports our mission to provide uninterrupted services to our community. Our comprehensive disaster recovery plan is integrated with our overall business preparedness strategy, including technology upgrades, data backups, and power supply continuity through backup diesel generators. Furthermore, our partnership with a business continuity provider ensures that remote offices can be quickly established if our facilities become inaccessible.

By addressing these evaluation factors, Northeast Dental demonstrates a robust and resilient approach to continuity of operations, ensuring that we can maintain service delivery and support our stakeholders during any disruption.

Workforce, Specifically Workforce

Engagement

At Northeast Delta Dental (NEDD), our processes for workforce engagement are designed to systematically ensure a highly engaged, productive, and satisfied workforce. Here's how these processes reflect and address the six evaluation factors:

1. **Systematic:** Our workforce engagement processes are highly systematic and structured. We conduct annual employee engagement surveys to identify and focus on key drivers of engagement. These drivers are validated through Best Places to Work awards and surveys, and further supported by senior leaders' two-way communication forums (Figure LGQ1-3). Workforce development, a critical component of our engagement strategy, follows a systematic process shown in Figure WQ1-3. We also conduct regular training and safety checks, ensuring continuous and consistent attention to workforce engagement.
2. **Deployed to Key Stakeholders:** Workforce engagement processes are deployed across all levels of the organization. Training programs are available to all employees, with \$102,858 spent on training in 2023 alone. Engagement survey results and subsequent actions are communicated to all staff, and individual development plans (IDPs) are

created for every employee, ensuring personal and professional growth. Communication forums, such as monthly All Colleagues meetings, ensure that everyone is informed and engaged with the company's strategic direction and operational goals.

3. **Evaluated:** We regularly evaluate the effectiveness of our workforce engagement initiatives. The impact of training programs is measured by correlating participation with desired operational outcomes, such as call handling efficiency and adherence to SMART goals (Figures OQ3-1 and OQ3-2). Employee turnover and retention rates are closely monitored (Figures WQ2-1 and WQ2-2), and employee engagement is measured through surveys, demonstrating superior performance compared to industry benchmarks (Figures WQ3-1, WQ3-2, and WQ4-1).
4. **Improved Based on Evaluation:** Continuous improvement is a cornerstone of our engagement strategy. Insights from engagement surveys and performance evaluations lead to enhancements in training programs, communication strategies, and benefits offerings. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, we increased Paid Time Off (PTO) to support employees, demonstrating our commitment to their well-being. Regular analysis and feedback loops ensure that our engagement practices are continually refined and enhanced to meet evolving needs.
5. **Innovation:** Innovation in workforce engagement is evident through our comprehensive training programs, wellness initiatives, and the use of technology to support remote work. For example, the implementation of an advanced phone system to support remote customer service representatives showcases our innovative approach to maintaining high engagement and performance. Additionally, our participation in community events and

ergonomic workspace improvements further exemplify our commitment to innovative engagement strategies.

6. **Aligned with Organizational Needs and Integrated with Related Processes:** Our workforce engagement processes are closely aligned with our organizational needs and integrated with related processes, as described in our Organizational Profile. Engaged employees are crucial to achieving our strategic goals, and our engagement initiatives are designed to support this alignment. For example, individual goals and development plans are linked to organizational SMART goals, ensuring that every employee understands how their role contributes to the company's success. Our safety and wellness programs also align with our commitment to providing a healthy and safe work environment, further integrating engagement with organizational objectives.

Through these systematic, deployed, evaluated, improved, innovative, and aligned processes, NEDD ensures that our workforce remains highly engaged, motivated, and capable of delivering exceptional performance, ultimately contributing to our organizational success and resilience.

Customers and Markets, Specifically Customer Engagement

At Northeast Delta Dental (NEDD), our customer engagement processes are meticulously crafted to ensure meaningful, consistent interactions that foster strong relationships and high satisfaction levels among our customers. Here's how these processes reflect and address the six evaluation factors:

1. **Systematic:** At Northeast Delta Dental (NEDD), our customer engagement processes are highly systematic, ensuring regular and repeated interactions throughout the customer life cycle. Initial listening methods for the Employer Group segment include meetings, phone calls, letters, and emails. As the relationship progresses, web portal interactions are incorporated. These methods ensure continuous and consistent engagement, demonstrated by a robust framework detailed.
2. **Deployed to Key Stakeholders:** Our engagement processes are uniformly deployed across all customer groups and market segments, providing customers with a choice of communication methods such as telephone, email, letter, IVR, website, and in-person

meetings. Deployment is anchored in our Strategic Plan, SMART goals, and corporate initiatives, integrating key support functions across HR, Marketing and Sales, Technology, Claims Edit, and Customer Service, as well as cross-functional teams (GOSE, DeltaUSA Team(DUST), IPS Technical(Internal Policy Statements) , etc.).

3. **Evaluated:** The effectiveness of our customer engagement is rigorously evaluated through immediate and actionable feedback mechanisms on product quality, customer support, and transaction efficiency, as shown in Figure CMQ1-1. We employ the Net Promoter Score (NPS) methodology to gauge customer loyalty, and our data indicate superior performance with a 98% annual customer retention rate, significantly higher than the industry average of 87% (Figures CMQ3-1, CMQ5-1, CMQ5-2).
4. **Improved Based on Evaluation:** Our processes for customer engagement are continuously improved based on evaluation outcomes. For instance, transforming satisfaction data into the NPS format has allowed us to make meaningful comparisons and drive targeted improvements. Analysis of retention and complaint data, such as those in Figures CMQ4-1 and CMQ4-2, informs strategic adjustments to enhance overall customer satisfaction and loyalty.
5. **Innovation:** We demonstrate innovation in our customer engagement through the deployment of a web portal for ongoing interactions and an advanced Integrated Voice Response (IVR) system that offers versatile support options. Additionally, our ability to offer customers their preferred communication method showcases our innovative approach to meeting diverse customer needs. Our comprehensive use of data analytics for process improvement further underscores our commitment to innovation.

6. **Aligned with Organizational Needs:** Our customer engagement processes are meticulously aligned with NEDD's organizational needs as described in our Strategic Plan. We ensure that key customer support requirements, such as excellent customer service, prompt and accurate claims processing, and access to network dentists, are consistently met. This alignment is further integrated with corporate initiatives and departmental functions, supporting our overarching goals of increasing covered lives and maintaining high market share and customer satisfaction (Figures CMQ1-2, CMQ2-1).

By systematically deploying, evaluating, and continuously improving our customer engagement processes, and ensuring alignment with our organizational goals, NEDD remains committed to delivering exceptional service and sustaining high levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Community Engagement

At Northeast Delta Dental (NEDD), our engagement with key communities is a fundamental part of our operations, reflecting our commitment to the underserved and underinsured populations in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. Here's how our processes for engaging with these key communities address the six evaluation factors for the Baldrige application:

1. **Systematic:** Our community engagement processes are structured and recurring, as depicted in Figure CEQ1-1. We systematically evaluate community support applications through the NEDD Foundation Advisory Committee (FAC), which considers applications of \$2,000 or less throughout the year, and those requiring more significant funding are reviewed biannually. This ensures a regular and methodical approach to community support.
2. **Deployed to Key Stakeholders:** These processes are deployed directly to the key communities we serve—primarily the three states of ME, NH, and VT. Our Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and employees actively participate in community events and sit on boards of nonprofit organizations, ensuring direct and impactful engagement with community stakeholders (Figure CEQ2-1).
3. **Evaluated:** Our community engagement efforts are evaluated by the FAC, with larger strategic philanthropy requests reviewed by the NEDD Foundation Board of Directors (BOD). This allows us to assess the effectiveness and impact of our support, ensuring that

resources are allocated to initiatives that align with our organizational goals and community needs.

4. **Improved Based on Evaluation:** Improvements to our community engagement processes are made based on the outcomes of these evaluations. For example, after identifying a need among veterans for easier access to dental care, we launched specific programs in NH and ME to address these challenges, providing both financial support and transportation for veterans needing dental services.
5. **Innovation:** Our innovative approaches in community engagement include the Veterans Dental Program, which directly addresses the unique needs of veterans struggling to navigate the VA system. The Employee Community Involvement Grant (ECIG) and Volunteer Involvement Pays (VIP) programs also reflect innovative practices by incentivizing and supporting employee involvement in community service.
6. **Aligned with Organizational Needs and Integrated with Related Processes:** Our community engagement initiatives are closely aligned with our organizational needs as described in our Organizational Profile and integrated with broader strategic goals. By supporting dental health and overall quality of life in the communities we serve, these initiatives contribute to our mission of improving oral health. The significant financial contributions to community health programs and COVID-19 relief efforts, as detailed in Figures CEQ2-2 and CEQ3-1, demonstrate our commitment to these goals.

These processes not only support our vision and informal purpose of focusing on the underserved but also enhance our presence and impact in the communities, thereby reinforcing NEDD's role as a leader in corporate responsibility and community service. This structured, impactful

approach to community engagement ensures that we remain aligned with our strategic objectives while fostering significant, positive change in the regions we serve.

FINANCE

At Northeast Delta Dental (NEDD), our processes for ensuring financial viability and maintaining access to capital during disruptions are robust and strategically developed. Here's how these processes address the six evaluation factors for the Baldrige application:

1. **Systematic:** Our financial management processes are regular and repeated, aiming to maintain a balanced budget and build sufficient reserves. This systematic approach is crucial in managing costs effectively and ensuring financial stability. We maintain our administrative costs at approximately 10% of revenue, consistently achieving this target over time, as demonstrated in Figure FQ2-3. This disciplined financial management enables us to sustain operations and invest in strategic objectives, even during crises.
2. **Deployed to Key Stakeholders:** These financial processes are deployed across the organization, ensuring that all departments contribute to cost-efficiency and the elimination of waste. This deployment involves every level of the organization, from front-line employees to senior management, each taking responsibility for maintaining operational efficiency and contributing to financial health, as reflected in the Sigma level performances of our key processes (Figure SQ2-1).
3. **Evaluated:** Our financial processes are regularly evaluated against internal targets and industry benchmarks, such as those provided by the Delta Dental Plans Association (DDPA). We monitor metrics like the combined ratio of total expenses to revenues (excluding investment income) and administrative costs as a percentage of total revenue,

ensuring they align with or exceed industry standards (Figures FQ1-1, FQ2-2, and FQ2-3).

4. **Improved Based on Evaluation:** Improvements are continually made based on the outcomes of our financial evaluations. For instance, any occurrence of a GOSE payment prompts a root-cause analysis to prevent future issues, enhancing financial management and operational efficiency. The consistent surplus growth and superior control over administrative costs result from these ongoing improvements and adaptations.
5. **Innovation:** NEDD shows innovation in financial management by exceeding typical reserve standards and employing a strategic approach to surplus growth, managing reserves near the upper limits allowed by state insurance commissioners. This innovative reserve management provided us the financial strength to support our dentists with necessary supplies during the COVID-19 pandemic, exemplifying proactive and responsive financial planning.
6. **Aligned with Organizational Needs and Integrated with Related Processes:** Our financial strategies are aligned with organizational needs and integrated with our broader operational processes. By maintaining strong financial health, we ensure that we can continue to support our strategic goal of expanding coverage while managing costs effectively. This alignment is crucial for our long-term goal to cover at least one million customers in the tri-state area, facilitating sustained growth and community support.

By systematically deploying, evaluating, and continuously improving these financial processes, and ensuring they are innovative and aligned with our organizational needs, NEDD upholds its financial viability and readiness to respond to disruptions effectively. This robust framework supports our mission and strategic objectives, contributing to our ongoing success and resilience.

