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TAMPA BAY Business Journal

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Delta Dental of Missouri buys Advantica EyeCare

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Delta Dental of Missouri has acquired **Advantica EyeCare**, in a deal expected to expand the health care options each organization can offer to its clients.

The purchase price was not disclosed in a release announcing the transaction.

Advantica, headquartered in Clearwater and headed by Richard Sanchez, president and chief executive officer, has annual revenue of more than \$46 million and provides vision benefits to 2.4 million members nationwide, the release said. The company was No. 4 on the *Tampa Bay Business Journal's* most recent Fast 50 list, based on 2008 revenue.

Effective Feb. 4, Advantica became a wholly owned subsidiary of Delta Dental of Missouri's **Essex Holding Co.**, the release said. Sanchez joined the senior management team of Essex, but there were no other management or staff changes. Advantica employs 90 people and has a network of 16,000 contracted eye care providers nationwide.

Delta Dental will begin offering group vision plan options in the spring, and Advantica EyeCare soon will begin offering dental health benefit options to its clients, the release said. David Haynes, president and chief executive officer of Delta Dental, cited research that suggests strong connections between regular preventive oral health and vision health exams.

Delta Dental, headquartered in St. Louis, is a nonprofit organization with more than \$400 million in revenue in 2009. It is a member of **Delta Dental Plans Association**, the largest dental benefits provider in the United States.

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