Solid Solutions for Today's Dental Practice

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Are You in Control of Your Practice Revenue?
By James V. Anderson, DMD, Founder and CEO of eAssist Dental Solutions

Dr. James Anderson
eAssist Dental Solutions
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Like many fellow dentists, the dental chair is my command post. It's where the action is and where I create the numbers that will pay the accounts payables, pay my team, and feed my family. Over the years I have had ups and downs with employee issues, including employee embezzlement and the loss of a great office manager, which turned the tables on my collections and caused the accounts receivables to skyrocket. Solving my own problems became the order of the day, when all I wanted to do was dentistry.

Times are changing in practice management, and the need to keep up demands time away from patients in the chair. The most momentous change I have witnessed among my peers is an awareness that **being a great dentist does not guarantee a profitable dental practice.** Of course, exceptional clinical skill is expected – but it also requires the contributions of a trusted team of skilled people both at the desk and in the clinical area, sound patient record documentation, current technology, and the input of outside experts such as financial investment professionals and practice management specialists.

As dentists move toward doing more services that cross over to the realm of "medical necessity", practices must be able to transition and move toward the future along with these changes. The biggest change in dental/medical billing came about on October 1, 2015 with the transition to ICD-10 codes. ICD-10 is a coding set designed to report a diagnosis. Every dental office now needs to learn diagnosis codes, as they are required on many types of dental claims, as well as on medical claims submitted by the dental office. ICD codes were previously used for medical claims only, but with the advent of combined medical and dental claims and the clinical evidence that supports the relationship of dental and medical conditions, it has evolved by necessity.

Codes describing fractured or infected teeth, atrophy and diseases of the jawbone, TMJ dysfunction, obstructive sleep apnea (OSA), sleep disorders, and other diagnoses can be used to show the medical necessity of treatment and help expand services offered in dental practices. The fact that dental offices are now being reimbursed by medical insurance for many recent technologies benefits all dentists. **For the benefits to improve your finances, you must have the knowledge to bill medical and dental services.**

The medical community's growing recognition of dentistry's vital role in solving sleep breathing problems has created a new necessity in billing medical insurance. Dentists' interest in the sleep sector grew significantly

because of the potential impact of oral appliance therapy (OAT) in treating sleep apnea and snoring. There are now practices devoted entirely to OSA and OAT.

The new dentist graduating today has far different expectations about technology than the dental student of 10, 20, or 30 years ago. Resistance to change will be the downfall of all who don't participate. This new perspective will most definitely influence procedures and technology adoption in the practice. Patients and providers place more value on the in-office experience than they have in the past because **the patient is more educated than ever before.** Patients now will search or "Google" not only you but the procedures, services and products that you recommend. You and your team must be ready with the answers.

Without the knowledge to capture revenue from medical billing, it slips out the door. Most dental office personnel do not have the training in medical billing to process claims for patients. The need for this skill has been on the horizon for many years, yet practices are not providing training in this area.

Some reasons for this lack of training include the investment in training and materials, and the learning curve involved in the process. Most offices that work on a schedule of clinical time with patients don't provide training during office hours to business staff. **It is logistically challenging and almost impossible to train in a busy practice atmosphere.**

In response to this need, dental billing services have opened their doors to help solve the problem. Most are local and finding someone reputable is now another human resource energy drain. National dental/medical billing firms have a larger pool of experienced billing experts and can service small solo practices, larger group practices and corporate entities.

As I mentioned in the beginning of this article, solving my own problems by taking the initiative to create a solution not just for myself but for all dentists who strive to keep what they have earned became an obsession. That is why, with the help of some dedicated people, we created eAssist Dental Billing, the largest national dental/medical insurance billing company in the USA (https://dentalbilling.com).

To solve the problems related to dental and medical insurance billing, such as verifying benefits, proper CDT, CPT and ICD-10 coding/documentation, necessary follow-up and claims appeals, do the following:

Outsource your medical/dental insurance billing to a reputable national company…

OR:

1. Train your business team/cross train the clinical team to bill dental and cross-over medical claims
2. Find training for your team online or in accredited local schools and pay for the training
3. Build a library of support materials and online help sources for your team to reference for coding and narratives

Want to discuss how outsourcing dental and medical insurance will improve your revenue flow and give you more time with your patients? Contact eAssist Dental Solutions today for more information. We are here to help you.

James V. Anderson DMD is a practicing dentist in Syracuse, Utah. He has built nine dental practices in the last decade and is the CEO/Founder of eAssist Dental Solutions, the largest national dental insurance billing company (www.dentalbilling.com) in the U.S.

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