

# The Ultimate Office Planner

## Full Swing Into Summer With Two Great Promotions

By Teresa Duncan, M.S.

June is a busy month full of celebrations – graduation and Father’s Day are two prime opportunities to reach your patients. Remember Hallmark Card’s “Grads and Dads” campaign? You can create your own! Use your practice management software to search for children ages 17 and 18 and send them a gift card for pizza, movie rental, or even gas. Teens are always on the go so your effort will be appreciated!



For Father’s Day, consider holding a raffle! Create a form for your patients to nominate their “Best Dad Ever.” On the last working day before Father’s Day, choose up to three names and give them a call. Congratulate them on their nomination – they may not even know they were entered into the raffle! Ask them if they would mind a mention in your next newsletter as “Dr. Smith’s Super Dad Award Winner!”

Remember – it is fun to hold these promotions but the real reward is in letting your other patients know about them! ●

### Timely Topics For Your Office Newsletter

- Too-hot tea linked to increased risk of throat cancer (Source: OralCancerNews.org)
- Gamer Alert! Dental students design game for Wii (Source: University of Glasgow)
- Spotlight a Patient! Ask a loyal patient if they would like to be featured in your newsletter.

## Magic in Your Office

By Christine Taxin

How do we know if the first six months of our business was successful? Do we just continue the status quo, or do we measure where we want to go?



Gambling can be fun if you understand it is a game. Our business should never be a gamble. All employees should expect fair compensation as well as having the knowledge that their hard work helped the financial stability of their office.

Let’s begin to explore what can make our hard work turn into a profitable second part of the year. No gambling - just solid action for solid numbers.

- Set up goals for each provider. What number does every provider need to meet overhead and budget goals? Do the same for all assistants, and clinical team members.
- The biggest mistake most teams make is putting a number in the computer for a member to reach, and everyone thinks that is it. **DON’T CAP YOUR EXPECTATIONS!**
- The best way to accomplish the number is to have a team who knows what it takes for each clinical member to reach the number.
- Assign each team member a responsibility in helping the office reach its goals.

Your dental assistant is producing but are you tracking it? Assign an operator for your DA. If they are taking impressions, making temps, taking x-rays they are allowing the other clinical provider time to do another service.

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## Be Alert For New Insurance Contract Provisions

Specialty services such as implant surgery and neuromuscular treatment are typically listed as non-covered procedures in many insurance contracts. Financial coordinators typically prepare the patient for the added investment when the treatment plan is initially presented. The seasoned coordinator will be able to estimate the patient's cost accurately – a skill that makes both the coordinator and the office appear first-rate.

However a monkey wrench is being thrown into many insurance plans. A new Delta Dental provision is phasing into selected contracts and is expected to be universal by 2011. The new provision requires contracted doctors to reduce their fee to the Delta allowance for non-covered services. In other words, this scenario could happen in your office:

- Patient is quoted a fee of \$1600 for surgical placement of an implant
- Delta denies payment based on non-covered status of implant placement but states that the contract fee of \$1000 is the total chargeable amount.
- Office is required to write off a difference of \$600 even if the patient had already been informed of and agreed to the fee of \$1600.

Implant parts can run up to \$1000 alone and we haven't even talked about the office overhead average of 50-60%. And how do you price the skills that are required for implant surgeries and restorations? We could quote the Mastercard commercial and say "priceless" but we would price ourselves right out of business. You have to be able to calculate the cost of providing services or you will be out of business quickly.

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## When An Invoice Isn't Really An Invoice

An invoice appears on your desk and it says that your domain name is coming up for renewal. Pay \$50 now to keep it active. The name of the company sounds similar to the company you use – maybe they changed their statement format. You have a stack of bills to pay before 5pm so you write the check without giving it a second thought. A month later another bill for domain name renewal shows up – this time it is valid. So who is this other company and why did they send you a bill?

What just happened is called 'vendor' or "invoice" fraud. The thief sent an invoice with the hopes that the person paying the bill would not verify the charges. Two types of vendor fraud can affect the dental office. The fake invoice is one but imagine receiving a bill from your supply company for parts ordered and shipped elsewhere.

In 2007 several offices in Oregon fell victim to a fake implant company that sent out invoices for implant parts. This thief called several supply companies and placed orders for bone grafting material, implant parts and other supplies.

The companies shipped the materials. Why?

Continued on page 3.

### Think Differently - Bill Medically

Are you performing any procedures that can be billed to your patient's medical insurance? UOP will dedicate a bimonthly spotlight on medical billing. Begin now by making copies of your patients' medical cards so that you are ready to begin with this information.

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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	8 Review May's Numbers with Team	9	10	11	12	13
7	15	16	17	18	19	20
14 Flag Day	22	23	24	25	26	27
21 Father's Day Summer Begins	29	30				
28						

June is National Smiles Month  
Visit [www.oralhealthamerica.org](http://www.oralhealthamerica.org)  
For Promotional Ideas

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## Magic in Your Office (Cont. page 1)

For example: a hygiene assistant should be assigned all x-rays, which allows the hygienist more time for clinical. Now you have a set of x-rays, (ex: \$100.00) a quadrant of scaling, (ex: \$150.00) One crown prep (ex: \$900.00) and an impression for Invisalign (ex: \$500.00) being completed more efficiently. That's a production of \$1650 – not bad!

Use numbers - not gambling - to secure your practice for the next three months. ●

## Be Alert For New Insurance Contract Provisions (Cont. page 2)

Delta Dental expects that offices will make up for the cost differential with an increased flow of patients. Since these plans are structured to bring down the cost of dental services to the patient, the theory is that more patients will seek these services which will in turn increase the volume of patients to your offices for more services. Does this sound problematic to you? Time will tell if the patient volume truly makes up for the decrease in reimbursement and collectable fees.

If you participate with any insurance companies, it would be wise to review your contracts to see if and when these new provisions will apply. These contracts may restrict your fees which could significantly reduce your collections. You should make sure the costs and overhead associated with providing these procedures do not put you in the red. ●

It's not the hours you put in your work that count, it's work you put in the hours  
- Sam Ewing

## When An Invoice Isn't Really An Invoice (Cont. page 2)

The thief had all the relevant practice information: location, license number, and credit card information. The only difference was in the "ship to" address. In the end, the thief was caught when the doctors all reported suspicious activities. It was then that the supply companies realized their own losses.


Action Item: Verify your invoices, especially with new companies. Guard your credit card information and only supply it to trusted companies. ●

## Red Flags Rule: Protecting Patient Identities

May 1st marked the Federal Trade Commission deadline for the Red Flags Rules. These rules apply to businesses that extend credit to any client – in our case, patient. The American Dental Association (ADA) has lobbied to have dentists excluded from the regulations but to date has not been successful. However they have issued guidelines to help dental offices comply with the new rules.

The forms include:

- A sample Identity Theft Detection and Response Policy and Procedures
- Guide for Compliance with the New Red Flags Rule



The Red Flag Rules mandate that creditors have an established identity theft program in place. Businesses are expected to make a reasonable effort to identify, detect, and respond to any potential identity theft suspicions or actions.

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## Red Flags Rule: Protecting Patient Identities (Cont. page 3)

Once you review these forms and customize them for your office, you should then hold a team meeting. If you are not verifying identification by copying or scanning their license or picture identification, you should start now. both medical and dental. We also recommend copying or scanning their insurance cards – Final step: announce in a newsletter that you are compliant and actively protecting your patients' information. We'll keep you updated of any changes to this policy. ●

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Teresa Duncan, M.S. – Owner and President of Odyssey Man-

agement, Inc. With over 20 years of healthcare experience, Teresa addresses topics such as Insurance Coding, Fraud & Embezzlement and Practice Growth, particularly the use of blogs, newsletters and e-mail marketing to target today's internet-savvy patient. She is a Fellow and Educator for the Association of Dental Implant Auxiliaries. Her memberships include the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners, Academy of Comprehensive Aesthetics, and Academy of Dental Management Consultants.

Teresa received her Master's Degree in Healthcare Management. ●

Christine Taxin – Owner and Presi-

dent of Links 2 Success. Christine Taxin has over 20 years as a practice management professional. Her passion for communication, team training, and goal setting has helped practices meet their potential, and increase profitability. Her strengths include specialties in administrative systems, marketing, financial planning, medical/dental insurance cross code billing, and consulting. She has trained in management at LVI, is a proud member of Coach Training Alliance, Speakers Consulting Network and the Academy of Dental Management Consultants. ●

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