

CONTENTS

Dedication xiii

Preface xv
Harry Dym and Orrett E. Ogle

Credentialing 469
Orrett E. Ogle

Credentialing is the administrative process for validating the qualifications of licensed professionals and appraising their background. It is used by hospitals and other health care facilities, educational institutions, and insurance companies to ensure the qualification of their clinicians and to grant privileges to provide specific services and perform different medical or dental procedures. This article familiarizes the reader with the credentialing process and the documentation that is needed to be credentialed by certain organizations.

Evaluating a Dental Practice for Purchase or Associateship 483
Robert J. Diecidue

Private dental practice can be achieved through either outright ownership or an associateship in conjunction with senior dentists; the decision depends on personal and professional objectives and goals. Once a decision is made, the time and effort required to identify an appropriate practice, negotiate the terms of purchase or associateship, and transition to the new practice can be daunting. This article reviews the process and provides an overview of the general steps involved in the evaluation of a dental practice for purchase or associateship. With appropriate knowledge and preparation, due diligence, and ethical and sensitive behavior, transitioning to private practice can be successful and lead to professional and personal fulfillment.

**Management and Marketing for the General Practice
Dental Office**

495

Earl Clarkson and Sanjeev Bhatia

This article reviews trends in the dental marketplace. Marketing is an essential element of dentistry. Communicating treatment options with patients is one aspect of marketing. Treatment planning helps patients understand the relationships between oral health, occlusion, temporomandibular joint function, and systemic health. Through marketing, dental practice owners inform patients of ever-changing treatment modalities. Understanding treatment options allows patients to make better, informed choices. More options leads to a higher level of care and more comprehensive dental treatment. Managing a practice requires tracking its financial health. Economic statistics measure the effect of management decisions that mark the direction of a dental practice.

Insurance Billing and Coding

507

Rebecca H. Napier, Lori S. Bruelheide, Eric T.K. Demann,
and Richard H. Haug

The purpose of this article is to highlight the importance of understanding various numeric and alpha-numeric codes for accurately billing dental and medically related services to private pay or third-party insurance carriers. In the United States, common dental terminology (CDT) codes are most commonly used by dentists to submit claims, whereas current procedural terminology (CPT) and International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision, Clinical Modification (ICD.9.CM) codes are more commonly used by physicians to bill for their services. The CPT and ICD.9.CM coding systems complement each other in that CPT codes provide the procedure and service information and ICD.9.CM codes provide the reason or rationale for a particular procedure or service. These codes are more commonly used for “medical necessity” determinations, and general dentists and specialists who routinely perform care, including trauma-related care, biopsies, and dental treatment as a result of or in anticipation of a cancer-related treatment, are likely to use these codes. Claim submissions for care provided can be completed electronically or by means of paper forms.

Basic Bookkeeping and Avoiding Theft

529

Ian M. Nelson

Bookkeeping practices in dental offices may be relatively simple, but care must be taken to prevent employee theft. Well-chosen accounting software and routine office practices may facilitate smooth operations. Systems of internal control should be established to safeguard the practice’s finances. The dental practitioner should be very involved in their practice’s accounting to maintain order, prevent theft, and keep costs under control.

Employee Relations

535

Eric T.K. Demann, Pamela S. Stein, Christine Levitt,
and Keith E. Shelton

This review highlights some of the more important employee relation aspects involved in starting, establishing, or expanding an existing dental practice. Despite a competitive compensation package, staff-related conflicts can sometimes hamper the progress of a dental practice. Such conflicts can be reduced by having policies and procedures in place for each employee that set expectations concerning the hours of operation, professional manner, dress code, job tasks, performance evaluations, disciplinary actions, and termination if violations occur. Understanding the legal requirements set by various governmental agencies such as OSHA can help ensure that the rights and well-being of every employee are protected.

Insurance Planning for Dentists and Dental Practices

549

Kenneth C. Thomalla and Jeffrey Wherry

There are a myriad of insurance products available for the dentist and his dental practice. Care must be taken to ensure that all risks have been reviewed and the appropriate risks covered with an insurance plan. Taking the time to solidify your base helps to ensure a strong financial plan for years to come.

Risk Management Techniques for the General Dentist and Specialist

563

Harry Dym

Malpractice litigation is part of everyday clinical practice and is an area of which all dentists need to be aware. With proper forethought and planning, this vexing issue can be controlled and made less anxiety producing. The astute clinician must be as diligent in risk-reduction management and strategies as he/she is in practicing excellent dentistry. This article discusses various preventive measures that can be used to help mitigate malpractice claims and preclude them from developing. Good patient communication, rapport, and excellent documentation are the keys to minimizing, and possibly eliminating future lawsuits.

Stress Management in the Difficult Patient Encounter

579

Stanley Bodner

Patient care and management can present a significant source of stress for the practicing dentist. This article presents the various facets and underpinnings of stress, followed by an overview of the physiologic phenomena attending the classic stress response, with an examination of the interplay between the psychologic components of stress and its influences on the development or exacerbation of somatic disorders. In addition, the characteristics that can be attributed to the patient and the practitioner that give

rise to difficult encounters are explored, with an eye toward proper professional management. Further, the motivations of select patient personae are examined, including discussions regarding the angry patient, the anxious or demanding patient, and the noncompliant and addicted patient. The article offers suggestions for management of such patients, with short- and long-term stress management techniques.

Preparing the Dental Office for Medical Emergencies

605

Harry Dym

Modern dental offices must be equipped to initiate prompt emergency care should the sudden need arise. With the elderly population in dental practices increasing, these emergencies will undoubtedly occur. This article discusses the basic emergency equipment the average dental office should possess to allow for an adequate initial response. It also discusses the policies and personnel needed for dealing with emergencies. Among the basic emergency equipment, an office should have syringes, an Ambu bag, a portable oxygen system, a sphygmomanometer (child and adult sizes), and an EKG/defibrillator. Emergency drugs that should be stocked include aromatic ammonia, aspirin, and nitroglycerine. The dentist should also develop a protocol and policy for his/her staff to follow when a medical emergency arise.

Infection Control in the Dental Office

609

Mark V. Thomas, Glenna Jarboe, and Robert Q. Frazer

The risk of infectious disease transmission is an inherent part of dental practice. Fortunately, such risks can be greatly reduced through modern infection control practices. Such practices include the use of various measures, including administrative, engineering, and work practice controls. Such measures should be codified in an office infection control plan, which should form the basis for the daily infection control activities of the staff. This article discusses some of the measures that should be taken to safeguard the health of dental healthcare workers and patients.

Regulatory Compliance in the Dental Office

629

Mark V. Thomas, Glenna Jarboe, and Robert Q. Frazer

Dentists in the private sector, as well as their academic counterparts, must comply with a variety of federal, state, and local regulations. The scope of this regulation ranges from specifying who may engage in the practice of dentistry to the disposition of extracted teeth. In this review, some requirements imposed by various regulatory agencies are described. Because of the importance of state and local oversight, each clinician must determine what state and local requirements exist for them. A number of states have enacted various regulations that are more stringent than the federal versions. It is necessary, therefore, to seek appropriate local counsel regarding applicable statutes and regulations.

Joint Commission of Accreditation of Healthcare Organization Accreditation for the Office-Based Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon	641
Orville Palmer and Phillip McIver	

Office-based surgery has become a vital component of the practice of oral and maxillofacial surgeons and periodontists. It has enabled these specialties to provide needed service to patients in an outpatient setting, including the option of intravenous sedation. It is the stance of this article to promote professional oversight and quality assurance through accreditation by the Joint Commission to maintain a standard in the delivery of office-based surgical services, thus upholding the integrity of the profession in the clinical setting.

Complying with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration: Guidelines for the Dental Office	653
Ricardo Boyce and Justin Mull	

This article outlines Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidelines for maintaining a safe dental practice workplace and covers requirements, such as education and protection for dental health care personnel. OSHA regulations aim to reduce exposure to blood-borne pathogens. Environmental infection control in dental offices and operatories is the goal of enforcement of OSHA codes of practice. Universal precautions reduce the risk for infectious disease. OSHA has a mandate to protect workers in the United States from potential workplace injuries. OSHA standards are available through online and print publications and owners of dental practices must meet OSHA standards for the workplace.

How to Implement a HIPAA Compliance Plan into a Practice	669
Edmund Wun and Harry Dym	

Under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996, all dental offices are required to formulate policies and procedures to ensure and secure patient privacy of health information. This article reviews the essential points of such a plan and makes recommendations for implementation.

Index	683
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