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CDT 2009/2010 UPDATE

Beginning January 2009, HIPAA requires dentists to use CDT 2009/2010 codes to represent dental procedures performed after January 1, 2009. Specifically, HIPAA requires all procedures for electronic claim submissions to use the code set that is current for the date of service. There are more than 30 new or revised codes in this latest update, and because documentation and compliance regulations are getting more stringent, accurate coding on dental claim forms is even more important.

Several dental practice management software programs have these updates already incorporated, so if you are a new user or subscribe to their support, it's likely that you're already using the revised coding. If you still need to update, there are several good options available to help you navigate these changes. From the ADA Catalog, you can purchase the 2009/2010 Current Dental Terminology book and the CDT Companion: Your Guide to Dental Coding (visit www.adacatalog.com or call 1-800-947-4746). Another option is 2009 Coding Guide for Dental Services available from PMIC (visit www.pmiconline.com or call 1-800-MED-SHOP).

Even if you are familiar with previous versions of CDT codes, it's worthwhile to review the new and revised codes to insure that the codes you use accurately support the procedures performed, ensure maximum compensation from patient benefit plans, and reduce or eliminate rejected claims.

SPRING CLEAN YOUR PRACTICE

Chances are that if you have been in practice for a few years, you have systems and procedures that have been in place for quite some time. Often, systems become out dated, and what worked well in the past may no longer be as relevant to your practice today. Similarly, routines and procedures may not be a good fit for your team members, your patients, or the dentistry you are currently performing.

Here are some key areas that benefit from a little fine-tuning in every practice-

- **Reception Room-** Consider that many patients visit their dentist at least twice per year. Small changes every few months send a message that the practice is up-to-date. Rearranging artwork, restyling floral arrangements, and replacing coffee-table books are easy and affordable ways to provide a fresh experience for your patients. Revisit your magazine selection to insure that it appeals to a variety of interests. A poor or limited selection of magazines can make a small delay feel like a lifetime. Also, do check your potted plants for dust and trash.
- **The Patients Perspective-** Though you've heard this a hundred times, it still holds true. Take a ride in your dental chairs and evaluate what your patients are staring at while you work your magic. Smearred dental lights, dust, peeling wall trim, crooked pictures, bug bodies in light covers, and ink marks can give an impression of untidiness. Don't forget the foot rest area of the dental chair, and the *bottom* of the arms on the doctor and assistants chairs, which we never see, but a patient may stare at for hours.
- **Maintenance-** Many times the dental equipment is serviced regularly while the facility equipment is forgotten. Filters on you're A/C, dryer, and drinking water may be overdue for a change. Hint- Create a dummy-patient in your software named "Maintenance" and schedule as needed. Provide details about the specific tasks to be done and even assign a team member this responsibility. This will appear on your patient schedule and keep these duties from slipping through the cracks.

- *Forms*- Are your consent and informational forms still relevant? A great way to tackle this is at a team meeting, giving each team member a few forms to review. Using up an old supply before replacing is understandable, but if a form has an old area code, former associates name, or lists a procedure it's no longer legal to perform it's time to replace them.
- *Safety*- Take a tour outside your office to make sure that the parking area is in good repair and that outdoor lighting is working properly. Check for loose boards, rugs or mats that may curl at the edges, areas that may become over saturated with water after a heavy rain and other hazards that are the proverbial accident waiting to happen.
- *Storage*- Evaluate your inventory system to eliminate expired items and reposition items that expire soon so that they are utilized first. Also, assess "smart storage" opportunities- make sure items used frequently are readily at hand, and try to avoid the need for step stools or heavy lifting when possible. Ask delivery personnel to place packages closest to their end location to make unpacking easier.

Consider asking team members to tackle these projects when the schedule creates unexpected free time. Having a plan to utilize "down time" can help reduce some of the stress of a slow economy, and you, your team and your patients will benefit from the results.

4 HOURS FREE CE CREDIT AVAILABLE ONLINE!! A BENEFIT TO YOUR COMMUNITY!!
ELECTRONIC CORE DISASTER LIFE SUPPORT COURSE

From the website of the American Dental Association...

The ADA has actively promoted the ability of dentists to participate in emergency response situations, based on each dentist's clinical skills and medical knowledge, and with additional targeted training. As a member of the National Disaster Life Support Education Consortium™ (NDLSEC™) we have participated with a national coalition of professional organizations, academic centers, medical centers, government partners and corporations to provide program content input in a variety of National Disaster Life Support™ courses that provide this additional training.

One of these courses, Core Disaster Life Support (CDLS®), is now available online for dentists interested in learning the core concepts of disaster management. This electronic CDLS® course will allow dentists to be more effective in the recognition and response to medical disasters which will allow them to better assist in a disaster. Four hours of continuing education credits are available following successful completion of the course. There is no charge for this course. Visit <http://www.ada.org/prof/prac/disaster/ecdls/index.asp> for more information.

COMPLIMENTARY CE EVENT COMING SOON!!
"3-D DIAGNOSTIC IMAGING" FEATURING DR. MICHAEL BLOCK

Doctors are invited to an evening dedicated to the newest technology in dental diagnostics, Cone Beam CT Imaging. Hosted at N'Tinis Restaurant in Mandeville, on Thursday, May 7th at 6:30pm, this event includes complimentary cocktails and full dinner, along with 1-hour free ACERP credit. Sponsored by **image-3d**, (our sister-company and the Northshore's only 3-D Imaging and Implant Planning Center) and Imaging Science International. Additional details are enclosed, please call (985) 674-5200 to secure your reservation.

BASIC LIFE SUPPORT FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS (CPR)

Need recertification? We can help! Healthcare providers are required to renew their status every two years, and it is our pleasure to make this process simple and convenient. Please call (985) 626-0111 for details.

We are committed to helping you achieve your practice vision for patient care and professional success. We welcome the opportunity to share our knowledge and experience in helping you grow your practice. Thank you for extending your trust and confidence.

Best Wishes,

Catherine A. Helbert, DDS