

SPECIAL EDITION



INSIDE

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an Audit

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IMPORTANT DEADLINES

CLAIMS must be
submitted electronically
starting July 15, 2009

PROVIDER EOBs
must be received
electronically starting
December 15, 2009

ALL CLAIMS MUST BE ELECTRONIC BY JULY 2009

Back in October 2007, we sent letters to inform you that paper claims will be prohibited by law starting July 15, 2009. Minnesota has passed a law that requires that certain health-related transactions from Minnesota providers, including dental claims, be submitted electronically. Two other transactions are also banned from paper form – provider remittance advice and eligibility inquiry. This law applies to all dentists licensed and practicing in Minnesota. If you do not comply by the due dates, you face monetary penalties.

Delta Dental of Minnesota was not an advocate of this legislation, but we must move forward toward compliance. Its proponents were primarily from the medical community, where electronic transactions are already the norm. Currently, fewer than half of our participating providers submit claims electronically, and we recognize the economic burden this law places on dentists throughout Minnesota.

New Requirements

The new law requires both providers and carriers to prepare for the following deadlines:

- **All claims, including pre-treatment estimates, must be submitted electronically starting July 15, 2009**

This means that you must start preparing now if you currently send paper claims. The claim transaction must be in the standard HIPAA format, called the 837D transaction. Changing to electronic claim submission involves buying hardware and software, training your staff, contracting with a clearinghouse, complying with the Minnesota Companion Guides for the transaction, and testing. We urge you to begin preparing now.

- **All provider remittance advice (known as provider EOBs) detailing claims adjudication must be sent electronically to providers starting December 15, 2009**

This means that you will no longer receive a paper EOB. (Patients will continue to receive paper EOBs.) Instead, you must be capable of receiving the electronic HIPAA remittance advice transaction (called the 835). Remittance advice is only sent when payment has already been made directly to the provider. Checks will remain the same and be sent on paper, not electronically.

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The law also prohibits eligibility inquiry on paper (must be electronic), but it does not prohibit inquiry by telephone. You may check eligibility on our Web site, through our IVR system or by calling Customer Service, just as you have done in the past.

Penalties Imposed By State

Civil penalties may be imposed by the Department of Health, and the amount is \$100 for each violation, but not to exceed \$25,000 for identical violations in a calendar year. The state will consider mitigating factors, but it is risky to assume that penalties can be avoided.

Transaction Companion Guides

All transactions must be conducted according to the Minnesota Companion Guides, as published on the AUC's Web site
<http://www.health.state.mn.us/auc/resources.html>. Clearinghouses that you contact should be prepared to follow these mandated guidelines.

Electronic Transactions Trigger HIPAA

By requiring that these transactions become electronic, this state law imposes an additional set of federal requirements on providers who are currently paper-based. As soon as a provider conducts an electronic transaction, full compliance with HIPAA privacy and security regulations is triggered. These HIPAA requirements are numerous and complex.

Other Resources

- Minnesota Statutes §62J.536 titled "Uniform Electronic Transactions and Implementation Guide Standards"
- Minnesota Administrative Uniformity Committee (AUC) Web site
<http://www.health.state.mn.us/auc/index.html>
- Federal Government's HIPAA Web site:
<http://aspe.hhs.gov/admsimp/>
- American Dental Association's HIPAA information:
<http://www.ada.org/prof/resources/topics/hipaa/index.asp>
- If you are an ADA member, you can purchase a HIPAA compliance kit at
https://siebel.ada.org/ecustomer_enu/start.swe?SWECmd=Start&SWEHo=siebel.ada.org
- Your local professional dental association

Delta Dental will continue to keep you updated on this important topic. Our Office Administrator Workshop in November will provide more information. In the interim, if you have any questions related to participation, we suggest you contact Professional Services at
(651) 406-5900 ext.4170 or
(800) 328-1188 ext. 4170.



CREDENTIALING TIPS AND REMINDERS

Our credentialing program assures Delta Dental of Minnesota subscribers that we engage in a thorough validation process before accepting member dentists. This means that consumers are more likely to choose a Delta Dental dentist because they can be sure that credentialing policies are in place and that dentists have met our high standards. Because we engage in a thorough credentialing process we are able to attract more purchasers and consumers, thus increasing a participating dentist's patient base.

In an effort to help speed up the credentialing process, we have placed credentialing and re-credentialing applications on our website, www.deltadentalmn.org. Dentists can find these applications by selecting Forms & Publications under the Dentist tab.

Below are some helpful tips for you to ensure that the credentialing process is quick and easy:

- Write legibly on the credentialing/re-credentialing application.
- Complete application accurately (i.e. correct spelling of name, date of birth, graduation date, etc.)
- Include current copies of supporting documents such as professional liability insurance declaration page, license, DEA, etc.
- Answer disclosure questions honestly and include a complete explanation to any "yes" answers.
- Utilize postage paid envelopes to return credentialing application and supporting documents to our credentialing staff in a timely manner.

ONLINE FEE FILING

Delta Dental of Minnesota (Delta Dental) has implemented a new option for dentists to use when filing their fees. Effective March 19, 2008, dentists are now able to file their fees via the internet. Simply go to www.deltadentalmn.org, under the Dentist tab, select Sign In. After you have signed in, the Dentist Connection page should bring you to the pre-filed fees option.

Submitting your pre-filed fees online is a quick and easy way to file your fees. You can file individually, or if there is more than one dentist under a Tax Identification Number (TIN) you can file for some or all of the dentists under that TIN. Remember to include the applicable Minnesota Care tax amount when entering your fees online.

Although pre-filed fees can be submitted at any time, they must be approved. For the process to be completed, you need to print the completed Fee Schedule and Signature Page, obtain the dentist signature(s) and mail the page to Delta Dental. Fees will become effective within one to two days from the time we receive both the submission and the completed Signature Page, or on a future date that you specify.

Remember, Delta Dental recommends that you submit your pre-filed fees once a year.

INCREASE IN UTILIZATION OF CROWN BUILD-UPS AND CHANGES IN UTILIZATION FOLLOWING AN AUDIT

Claim Data Results

This study utilized ten years (1997 - 2006) of claims data from an average of nearly 533,000 Minnesota commercial insured patients, ages between 21 and 65. This dental claim review has revealed an increase in the utilization of crown

build-ups in relationship to crowns, while demonstrating a stabilization of crown utilization.

During the ten-year period, crown utilization, in terms of number of crowns per

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100 patients, remained stable ranging from 20.2 to 20.9 with 20.8 in 1997 and 20.2 in 2006, down 3% in 10 years (Figure 1). The utilization of crown build-ups in relationship to crowns, measured as the percentage of crowns with build-ups, has steadily increased from 18.8% in 1997 to 24.1% in 2004, up 28.3% in 10 years (Figure 2). The utilization of crowns and crown build-ups are age-dependent: crowns utilization increased with age (Figure 3), while the utilization of crown build-ups in relationship to crowns decreased with age (Figure 4). For the three age cohorts in this claims review, the utilization of crown build-ups in relationship to crowns all showed increases with 23.7%, 18.8%, and 16.9% in 1997 increased to 32.7%, 24.4%, and 21.9% in 2006 for patients age 21 through 35, 36 through 50, and 51 through 65, respectively.

Audit Results

Also shown in Figures 1-2, are the utilization of crowns and crown build-ups of a clinic, which was audited by Delta Dental at the beginning of 2004. This clinic performed significantly more crowns compared to all other dentists, with a spike in 2003. This clinic also displayed higher utilization of crown build-ups in relationship to crowns during the seven-year period from 1997 through 2003. The audit of this clinic found this office performing crowns and build-ups routinely.

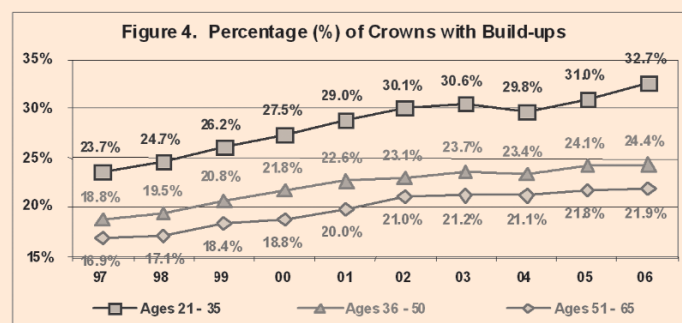
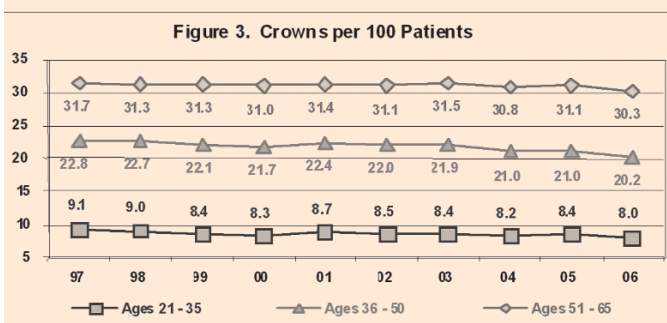
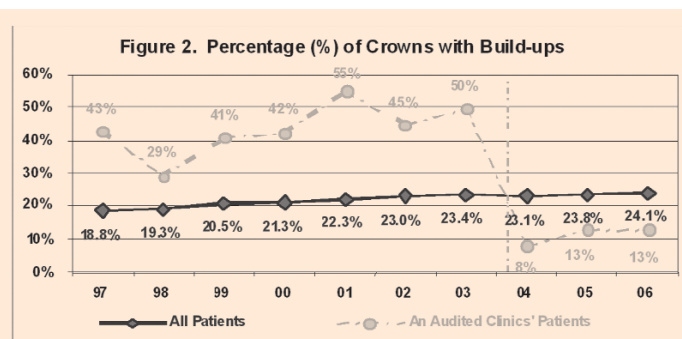
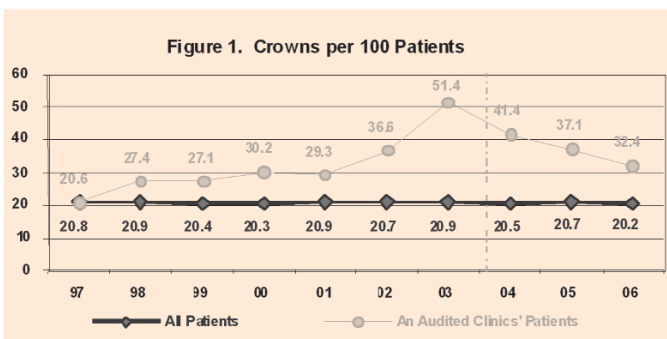
Further review of pre-operative radiographs, along with patient records, by Delta Dental's outside dental consultant, revealed in many cases no evidence of decay, lost tooth structure or endodontic therapy to support either the crown placement or the necessity for a crown build-up. Post-audit utilization of this clinic demonstrated a drastic decline in both crowns per 100 patients and the percentage of crowns performed with crown build-ups, as noted in Figure 1 and Figure 2.

Crown Build-Ups Defined

Coverage for crown build-ups is allowed under most Delta Dental plans when there is documentation of extensive loss of tooth structure from dental caries or fracture. In the April 2000 issue of the Journal of the American Dental Association, Dr. Gordon Christensen discussed crown build-ups.

Dr. Christensen stated that crown build-ups are appropriate if more than one-half of the coronal tooth structure is gone, and there is not a 2-3 mm collar of sound tooth structure remaining around the gingival portion of the tooth. He further acknowledged that while crown build-ups are often necessary, they are needed less than past years.

This study was conducted by Peilei Jiang (Ph.D., M.S., M.S.) Director, Oral Health Analytics and Karen Haarala (RDH) Manager, Compliance Audit and Investigation at Delta Dental of Minnesota.



METH & ORAL HEALTH: A GUIDE FOR DENTAL PROFESSIONALS

Today your office may face a public health challenge that no one could have predicted a decade ago—the devastating impact of methamphetamine (meth) use on a patient’s health and oral health. To address this issue, Hazelden Foundation, one of the nation’s most highly respected drug rehabilitation centers, collaborated with Delta Dental of Minnesota to create the informational guide, *Meth and Oral Health: A Guide for Dental Professionals*. Each office recently received this first-of-its-kind informational guide.

The guide offers information about methamphetamine, user profiles, and can assist public and dental health care professionals deal with the following questions:

- How can you talk to a patient who shows signs of meth use?
- What ethical obligations do you have to report a suspected meth user?
- What causes decay from meth use?
- How can you motivate patients who have decay due to meth or other drug use?
- How can you help an addicted patient find an appropriate drug and alcohol treatment facility?



For additional individual copies, the guide can be downloaded in its entirety at www.deltadentalmn.org, under Oral Health Information.

Check Back Soon...

The authors are currently developing two free PowerPoint presentations on meth mouth for community, public health and professional audiences. A script to frequently asked questions will accompany each presentation. These online presentations will be available later this summer at www.deltadentalmn.org.



PATIENT PRIVACY

Patient privacy continues to be very important, which includes protecting all patient data including the patient's Social Security number (SSN). A range of state laws restrict the use of SSN, which is why Delta Dental moved away from using a patient's SSN as a member ID number several years ago. We're now convinced that further restrictions are prudent to protect patients' SSN from inappropriate uses.

In the near future, Delta Dental of Minnesota will eliminate any reference to Social Security numbers in our provider EOBs. Once the date is established, you will be notified.

SAVE THE DATE!

Delta Dental of Minnesota's Educational Workshop will be held on Friday, November 7 at the National Sports Center in Blaine. The workshop will be held from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. and will focus on the connection between physical and oral health. We will be sending you more information this summer, including an RSVP.

Mark your calendars for November 7!

Special Edition is published for participating dentists. Article ideas and questions from readers are welcome. **Publisher:** Delta Dental of Minnesota. **Send questions or comments to:** Heather Hofmeister, Editor, Delta Dental of Minnesota, 3560 Delta Dental Drive, Eagan, MN 55122, E-mail: hhofmeister@deltadentalmn.org.

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