

Be the Translator for Your Patients

by Lynne Leggett

Have you ever received a phone call from a patient upset about the amount their insurance has paid on their claim? It may not seem fair, but our patients expect us to know about their insurance plans and what is covered. After all, aren't we the experts in understanding dental terminology? There are so many advantages to the practice that takes time to make sure patients understand their insurance benefits.

Why is it important to understand your patients' insurance benefits? As providers, you know the language insurance companies use. Some patients cannot afford the dental treatment they need without the benefit insurance provides. You have the opportunity to be the translator for patients so they understand what to expect financially. Understanding benefits and coverage can be a huge barrier to patients getting the treatment they need. Being able to explain their insurance benefits enables you to partner with them to make sure they understand their coverage and out-of-pocket expenses. No one likes financial surprises. Their human resources department may have chosen the plan for them, but what a great opportunity to show you care. By translating the verbiage, you gain their trust on the financial end.

Being the translator for your patients also allows you to offer advantages for them. Taking the time to advocate for your patients allows you the opportunity to make sure they use all their benefits. Your patients will understand you are there for them and want to help them navigate the financial aspect of getting the care they need. By taking this time, it also gives your practice a competitive advantage. Doing

this can be a time-consuming endeavor. However, when you make sure the patient is getting the most out of their benefits, the relationship you are building just gets stronger. Your concern will be discussed with others and become a fantastic referral source. Also, this helps your insurance coordinator feel they are a crucial member of your dental team. It is so rewarding to be able to tell your patients you have an insurance guru who will assist them in getting the most out of their benefits as possible.

Another tactic that is a win/win for all is to meet with employers in your area. Human resource departments do not understand dental codes, but we are the translators. Our knowledge can assist everyone in this process. By meeting with targeted employers, you can help the company navigate and choose preferred plans which offer more value to your patients. What an advantage it would be for your practice if you invested the time to do this! Can you imagine the positive things that would be shared by this word-of-mouth marketing? Not to mention the increased profitability by targeting the insurance plans you want to work with.

September is a great time to get in touch with your patients who have not used all their insurance benefits, so they can complete treatment before the end of the year. By doing this, your patients will feel they are important to your practice and know you are trying to help them use their benefits before they disappear.

It's time to be the hero!



Founder of Victory Dental Management, LLC, **Lynne Leggett** has over twenty years of experience in business. Her dental consulting involves the implementation of synergistic team strategies for optimal efficiency, profitability, and patient satisfaction.

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Benefits	In-Network
Class A (Basic) Services – e.g., exams, cleanings, X-rays, sealants	100%
Class B (Intermediate) Services – e.g., oral surgery, fillings, gum scaling	70%
Class C (Major) Services – e.g., crowns, bridges, implants, root canals, dentures	50%
Class D (Orthodontic) Services – Adults & Children	50% Up to \$3,500 lifetime maximum per person

