

IN THIS ISSUE

**FEATURE:
STARTING AN IN-HOUSE
MEDICAL-DENTAL
BILLING SYSTEM**

**ASK THE CONSULTANT:
HMO
PREAUTHORIZATION**

**SERVICE SAVVY:
DID YOU MAKE ANY
CHANGES?**

Starting an In-House Medical-Dental Billing System: Is It Right For Your Practice?

by Becky Gerber

Integrating medical-dental insurance billing has become a hot topic in the dental industry. A central question is whether your practice should invest in an in-house medical billing system. While the potential benefits are enticing, it's crucial to evaluate the decision carefully. This article outlines the key considerations to help you determine if implementing a medical-dental billing program is the right move for your practice.

Understanding the Basics: Is It Worth the Effort?

For a typical general dental practice, there may only be four to five true medical claims to file each month. These claims arise when a systemic link between a dental procedure and medical necessity has been established. With such a modest volume, diving headfirst into medical billing with significant financial and time investments may not make sense for every practice.

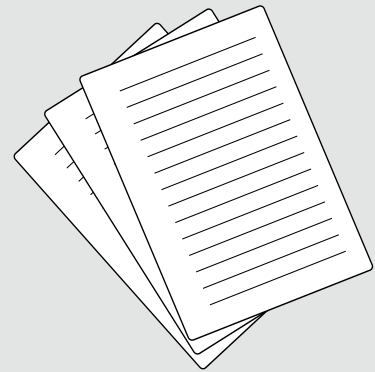


Start small. Conduct a survey to estimate your potential medical claims volume. Calculate the return on investment (ROI): how many claims will you need to cover your upfront costs? If the answer is only one or two claims per month, then moving forward might be a viable option. However, if the ROI is unclear or uncertain, consider a slower, more cautious approach with minimal startup costs.

Step 1: Organize Your Documentation

Documentation is the cornerstone of effective medical-dental billing. Begin by creating and saving well-structured note templates in the auto-notes section of your practice management software. Examples include:

- **Letter of Medical Necessity**
- **Comprehensive Medical Exam Documentation**



Ensure these templates are easy to use, customizable, and compliant with the SOAP format (Subjective, Objective, Assessment, Plan). The provider's signature should be included to meet medical carrier requirements.



Step 2: Match Dental codes to Medical Codes

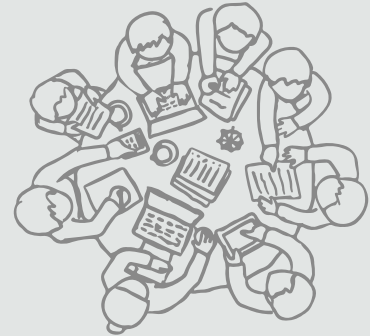
Identifying and cross-referencing codes is another foundational step. Start by listing the dental procedure codes your practice uses most frequently—often found in the customized buttons or charting module of your practice management software. Next, match these dental codes to their corresponding medical CPT (Current Procedural Terminology) codes and ICD-10 (International Classification of Diseases) codes.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 3)

Online resources like icd10data.com can help you stay up-to-date with medical coding standards. For additional support, consider purchasing reference books that summarize commonly used CPT codes and provide a crosswalk to ADA dental codes. These resources simplify navigating the thousands of codes used in medical billing.

Step 3: Streamline Communication Within Your Team

Create a streamlined communication process to prevent errors and misunderstandings. One effective strategy is to develop an internal "superbill" equivalent—a modernized version of the routing slip or pegboard system. This tool ensures the entire team stays aligned, especially when documenting the patient's chief complaint and treatment plan.



Step 4: Assess Your Software Needs


Your current practice management software may not fully support medical billing. Many systems allow only limited documentation or fail to meet the detailed coding requirements of medical carriers. Think of medical billing as painting a picture with codes—precision and clarity are essential.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

What They Say

Rose, Office Manager

I appreciate every time I call, the techs are always extremely helpful and FIX what I need!



If your software isn't up to the task, consider these alternatives:

- **Paper Claims:** Purchase CMS-1500 claim forms (printed in red ink) from a specialty paper supplier. This format is required for medical claims
- **Affordable Software Solutions:** Explore budget-friendly applications that include pre-formatted CMS-1500 claim forms.
- **Carrier Portals:** Use insurance carriers' electronic portals to submit claims, track claims status, and inquire about billing and submitting medical claims.

Starting with these low-cost options can save you from committing to a separate medical clearinghouse, which operates differently from dental clearinghouses.

Step 5: Engage Your Team

A successful medical-dental billing program requires team buy-in. Every team member should understand the value of connecting oral and systemic health. Start by discussing medical issues that relate to dental care and sharing case examples during team meetings. Additionally, educating patients about the role of overall health in dental treatment can foster trust and improve case acceptance.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 5)

Check out these seminars and online training opportunities:

Debbie Seidel-Bittke's
[Dental Power Hour](#)

Christine Taxin's
[Dental Extravaganza 2025](#)

Rebecca Gerber
<https://www.dentalpracticecareers.com/>

Final Thoughts

Implementing a medical-dental cross-coding system offers several benefits:

- **Increased Case Acceptance:** Patients are more likely to proceed with treatment when medical insurance offsets costs.
- **Enhanced Marketing Opportunities:** Advertise your practice's ability to handle medical claims as a unique selling point.
- **Expanded Services:** Cross-coding allows you to offer a wider range of treatments, helping patients access the care they need.
- **Competitive Advantage:** In an ever-changing dental market, standing out from the competition is essential

Launching an in-house medical-dental billing system can be transformative for your practice, but it requires thoughtful planning. By starting small, organizing documentation, and leveraging available resources, you can determine whether this approach aligns with your practice's goals and patient demographics. If done correctly, medical-dental billing can boost revenue, enhance patient satisfaction, and position your practice for long-term success.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Becky Gerber has been a leader in the dental consulting community for more than 4 decades. In 2006, she started the Academy of Dental Practice Careers, a training institute for dental front office professionals. In 2013, the insurance courses were launched online to reach students nationwide. Recently, Portland, Oregon, has become the new site for the corporate office of the ADPC.

FMI: <https://www.dentalpracticecareers.com>



Read more by Becky Gerber:

[Trojan Today | 7 Key Elements of Front Office Orientation](#)

"Classic" Trojan Today articles, coming soon to trojanonline.com

1/15/25

The Benefits of Being Proactive

by David E. Nelson

1/25/25

Three Steps to making Dentistry Affordable

by Penny Reed & Angie Skinner



“QUOTE-WORTHY

New year - a new chapter, new verse, or just the same old story? Ultimately, we write it.

The choice is ours.

-Alex Morritt

”

Share your Trojan Today with members of your office. Anyone can subscribe.

SIGN UP



Trojan Today provides a forum for industry professionals to offer diverse information and provide ideas and suggestions in dental practice management. These articles are meant to be information and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Trojan Professional Services, Inc.

Did you make changes for the new year?

Is your office making changes to your practice computers or Practice Management software?

If your office is planning to:

- Upgrade your Practice Management System to a new version
- Upgrade any workstations or the main server (replacing or getting additional computers)
- Convert to a new/different Practice Management System than what you are currently using in the office



Please contact Trojan's Software Support. Depending on your current or new Practice Management System, specific programs may need to be installed.

The Henry Schein (Dentrix, Easy Dental software) and Patterson (Eaglesoft) products do require a reinstallation of their Trojan integration software. This software is not provided by Trojan, please contact your vendor for assistance.

Other Trojan programs that may require reinstallation:

- Trojan Benefit Service Program
- Trojan Managed Care program
- Trojan Communicator
- Trojan Eligibility Program
- Trojan Dr Direct (Electronic Claims)

If you have questions before you begin, please call Trojan Software Support at 800.451.9823 ext. 1. Or visit Trojanonline.com, go to APPOINTMENT CALENDARS, and choose the General Support Questions calendar to schedule a support call time that is convenient for you.

If your IT Company is needed for any type of reinstallation, please feel free to provide them with the number to Software Support. Our representatives would be more than happy to speak with them.



TROJAN PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Accelerating dental practices to excellence
by providing services that increase case
acceptance, production,
collections, and profit.

TROJAN TODAY PHONE: 1-800-451-9723 • E-MAIL: nikkim@trojanonline.com • www.trojanonline.com • Published monthly by Trojan Professional Services, Inc., P.O. Box 1270, Los Alamitos, CA 90720 and distributed to members of the dental profession. Statements of opinion in TROJAN TODAY do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Trojan Professional Services, Inc. or the Editor. Neither Trojan Professional Services, Inc., Trojan Today, its Editor, nor its staff assumes any liability in connection with the use or implementation of any policies or procedures discussed in this newsletter. Trojan Today is distributed as a newsletter, with the understanding that neither the publisher, the Editor, nor the staff render professional or legal services of any kind. If legal or professional advice of any other kind is required in connection with topics discussed in this newsletter, competent advice should be sought.

• PRESIDENT: Ingrid Kidd Goldfarb • EDITOR: Nikki Myers •

Copyright ©2025, Trojan Professional Services, Inc. All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form without permission.