

Dialogue



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Technology Risks You Can't Afford to Take in 2018

by Tom Terronez, CEO, Medix Dental

The benefits of modern technology have allowed dental professionals to become increasingly efficient, competitive and appealing to the patients they serve. Additionally, the vast array of new technology has equipped practices to provide quicker diagnosis and faster treatment; all without the use of paper charts. And with 3D printing gaining steam in our industry, there's no telling where we'll be in ten years.

Despite the countless benefits, we've quickly learned that modern advancements in healthcare don't come without a price. Every year, we see an exponential rise in data hacks, breaches and new vulnerabilities that put practices and their sensitive patient data at risk. As 2017 comes to a close, we've passed the point where practices can claim blissful ignorance. How are you safeguarding your practice?



Tom Terronez,
CEO, Medix Dental

Contrary to popular belief, protecting your practice's IT security doesn't have to be difficult or costly. As we head into 2018, consider our list of technology risks your practice can't afford to take:

Insufficient Data Protection

Data protection should be one of the most important security precautions your practice takes. We strongly encourage implementing a HIPAA-compliant off-site data backup service to secure all patient and business data. This act alone has the potential to save thousands of dollars, along with hundreds of stressful hours should something go wrong and the practice be without a secure and up-to-date backup. Offices opting to skip this protection often do not realize the severity of their decision.

Utilizing a strong antivirus/anti-malware software and a firewall with an active gateway security service subscription is another data protection method overlooked far too often. These technologies help safeguard your practice from the **millions** of malicious attacks released on the Internet every week (it's estimated that 1 million new vulnerabilities are now released every day). As a healthcare provider, your office is full of everything a hacker needs to successfully steal hundreds of identities in an instant. Therefore, privately owned healthcare facilities, such as dental practices, are often a highly sought after target for those with vicious intentions. A high-quality antivirus and firewall are easy to implement, and make a huge impact on the integrity of your practice data and network.

Lastly, many practices fail to properly configure their networks and encrypt their data (files, emails, etc.). To spare you the technical explanation, we'll just urge the importance of working with a specialized IT provider who understands and properly abides by HIPAA IT regulations. This ensures they know the latest rules and will keep your practice protected.



Lack of Adequate Staff Education

While computer protections play an extremely important role in defending your practice, even the best safeguards can't stop human error. Do not assume your staff knows how to identify suspicious emails and web content. Knowledge is power when it comes to protecting your practice, so guide and train your team to ensure online safety. At minimum, short biannual meetings with your team to review Internet and email safety guidelines can help ensure everyone can confidently identify and avoid malicious threats. If you feel inept to lead team trainings of this nature (no need to be bashful – your specialty is dental after all), a trusted IT provider can help design a training agenda and set your team on the right track. For example, our partners are provided with easy, effective staff training options from the beginning of our partnership.

Unmonitored IT Environment

Although it is commonly an afterthought, proactive monitoring of your server and workstations will help to prevent potentially catastrophic failures from occurring. Proactive monitoring allows you to catch and eliminate miscellaneous bugs in your computer system before they impact productivity or compromise security. Aside from the technical benefits, proactive monitoring also provides you with peace of mind that your office is working optimally every day. It's important to remember that even though your office computers appear to be functioning properly does not mean they are free of potentially catastrophic issues.

If your practice is lacking in any of these areas, do your best to make security a top priority in 2018. Doing so will set you on the right path for the future, as risks and vulnerabilities continue to rise. Implementation can be overwhelming, so partner with a trustworthy IT provider who truly has your practice's security and well-being at heart.



Medix Dental is Delta Dental of Iowa's latest value-added services partner. Delta Dental dentists can receive a complimentary IT security risk assessment from Medix Dental. To request your complimentary assessment, please visit medixdental.com/winter2017 or call Laura at 877-885-1010.

New Remittance Advice Design



Delta Dental of Iowa appreciates your participation in our network and we are always looking for ways to make it easier for you to work with us. Based on your feedback, we have introduced an enhancement to our remittance advices (RA) and explanation of benefits (EOB).

The fee adjustment calculation has been modified so the “**fee adjust**” and “**patient payment**” columns more accurately reflect patient responsibility. These changes specifically address when services may not be paid based on frequencies, limits have been met or the procedure is a non-covered service.

Below is an example of how the RA is calculated demonstrating several different reference codes. For example purposes, some claim detail has been removed.

Claim Details

Tooth Nbr Quad	Submitted Proc Code	Procedure Description	Submitted Amount	Approved Amount	Allowed Amount	Fee Adjust	Co-pay %	Delta Dental Payment	Patient Pay	Ref Code
16	7220	REMOVAL OF IMPACTED TOOTH – SOFT TISSUE	\$315.00	\$245.13	\$245.13	\$69.87	100	\$243.78	\$1.35	72
8	7140	EXTRACTION, ERUPTED TOOTH OR EXPOSED ROO	\$184.00	\$116.70	\$116.70	\$0.00	100	\$0.00	\$184.00	1799, 72
	9612	THERAPEUTIC PARENTERAL DRUG, SINGLE	\$101.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$0.00	\$101.00	15, 72
Claim Total:			\$600.00	\$361.83	\$361.83	\$69.87		\$243.78	\$286.35	

- Fee Adjust** - the difference between the Delta Dental allowed amount and the dentist fee.
- Patient Pay** - the amount the patient is responsible for paying the dentist for that service.
- Example** - the member has met their annual benefit maximum (Ref. Code 72), but Delta Dental makes partial payment. Since a partial payment was made, the non-covered services law does not apply.
- Example** - the member has met their annual benefit maximum (Ref. Code 72), and no payment is made by Delta Dental. The fee adjust does not apply. In addition, the non-covered services law (Ref. Code 1799) applies to this service and the member is responsible for paying the submitted amount.
- Example** - the service is not a benefit of the plan (Ref. Code 15), and the member is responsible for paying the submitted amount.

Fraud and Dental Claims

Dental insurance fraud is defined as any crime when an individual receives insurance money for filing a false, inflated or altered claim, or billing for services not rendered. It can also include practices considered inconsistent with sound fiscal, business or dental practices. Insurance fraud takes many forms and can occur whether or not there was intent to defraud the insurance company or patient.

Here are a few tips to protect your office from these situations:

- **Educate your staff.** Hold training sessions regularly and include defined instances of potential fraud. Give staff members guidelines for filing claims appropriately and accurately.
 - The claim should be billed for the date the services are delivered.
 - The claim should be for services completed. As an example, for multi-stage procedures, the office should bill the delivery date rather than the start date.
 - The claim should name the dentist who completed the services.
- **Document the services.** Be sure to document services performed and treatment clearly in all clinical records.
- **Audit your books regularly.** Know your payables and receivables. Ensure overpayments are returned promptly.
- **Limit the number of authorized check signers and try not to use a signature stamp.** If you must use a signature stamp, keep the stamp locked in a secure location.
- **Mind your computers.** Be sure patients and guests in the waiting room are not able to see protected health information. Protect desktop areas and turn patient information face down when checking patients in or out.
- **Have a password policy.** Be sure all employees keep their passwords secure. Passwords should be like toothbrushes – don't share them!

If you or an employee sees or suspects something suspicious, call Delta Dental at 800-544-0718 or email us at provrelations@deltadentalia.com.

Stay Informed With Our Recently Updated Website

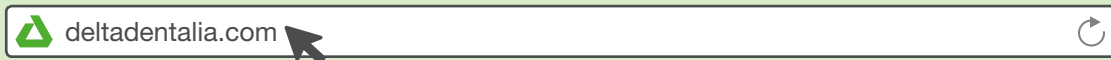


Stay up-to-date on the latest news from Delta Dental of Iowa by visiting the dentist section of our recently updated website – deltadentalia.com/dentists. Visiting the dentist section of the Delta Dental website, will give you:

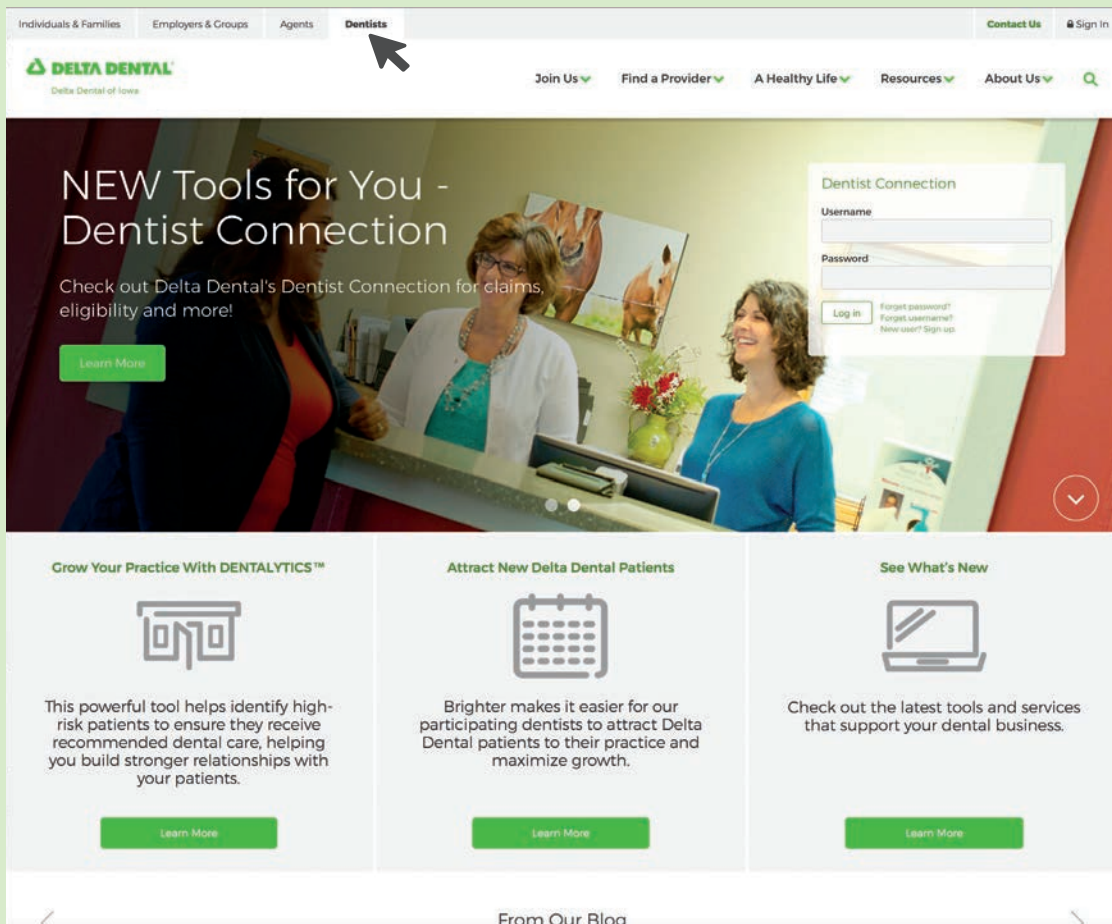
- **Access to the Dentist Connection** with your username and password.
- **Timely information** from Delta Dental on our value-added service offerings and upcoming events.
- **Resources** for you and your patients such as oral health information and forms without having to log in to the Dentist Connection.

To visit to the dentist section of our website:

- 1 Go to deltadentalia.com



- 2 Select "Dentist" from the top left navigation.



It's a good idea to bookmark deltadentalia.com/dentists to ensure you are getting the latest information from Delta Dental.

Continuing Education Course Coming in March

Save the date for our upcoming spring continuing education course. The Controversies in Restorative Dentistry course will be presented by Dr. Jeffery Nordin.

The practice of operative dentistry has never been more exciting or challenging. Revolutionary preventive strategies allow dentists to abandon “drill and fill” paradigms of the past.

The course will be offered at the following times:

Thursday, March 8, 2018

Iowa City

1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Friday, March 9, 2018

Des Moines

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

This course will be open to all Delta Dental and Dental Wellness Plan participating dentists and office staff. Three continuing education credits will be awarded. There is no cost to attend this informational seminar. More information will be available in early 2018.



PPO Fee Schedule Update Coming in 2018

Delta Dental of Iowa reviews reimbursement for our networks on a regular basis. The Delta Dental PPO fee schedule will be updated effective January 1, 2018. This serves as your notice of the new fee schedule, which will be published to the Dentist Connection on January 1.



Holiday Schedule

Delta Dental of Iowa's office will be closed December 25-26 and January 1. Because the upcoming holidays fall on Mondays, Delta Dental's claims payment schedule will be modified as outlined below:

- **Christmas Holiday** - Claims will be processed through Thursday, December 21, 2017, and will have a check date of December 29, 2017.
- **New Year's Holiday** - Claims will be processed through Friday, December 29, 2017, and will have a check date of January 3, 2018.

CDT 2018 is Effective January 1, 2018

The new version of the Code on Dental Procedures and Nomenclature (CDT Code) is effective for services provided on or after January 1, 2018. The 2018 version includes 18 new codes, six revised codes, three deleted codes and many minor edits.

CDT 2018 Highlights

- Revisions to general and IV sedation with two new and two revised codes:
 - **D9222** – deep sedation/general anesthesia – first 15 minutes (*new code*)
 - **D9223** – deep sedation/general anesthesia – each subsequent 15 minute increment (*revised code*)
 - **D9239** – intravenous moderate (conscious) sedation/analgesia – first 15 minutes (*new code*)
 - **D9243** – intravenous moderate (conscious) sedation/analgesia – each subsequent 15 minute increment (*revised code*)
- There was also a revision to **D4355** full mouth debridement. The major revision is the addition to the descriptor of “**not to be completed on the same day as a D0150, D0160 or D0180.**” Per the new CDT code, Delta Dental will not pay comprehensive examinations on the same date as a **D4355**.
- There were six additions in the denture repair section. These were added to arch specific codes for a previous code:
 - **D5511** – repair broken complete denture base, mandibular (*new code*)
 - **D5512** – repair broken complete denture base, maxillary (*new code*)
 - **D5510** – (*deleted*)
 - **D5611** – repair resin partial denture base, mandibular (*new code*)
 - **D5612** – repair resin partial denture base, maxillary (*new code*)
 - **D5610** – (*deleted*)
 - **D5621** – repair cast partial framework, mandibular (*new code*)
 - **D5622** – repair cast partial framework, maxillary (*new code*)
 - **D5620** – (*deleted*)
- The following are additional new codes added to CDT in 2018:
 - **D0411** – HbA1c in-office point of service testing
 - **D6096** – remove broken implant retaining screw
 - **D6118** – implant/abutment supported interim fixed denture for edentulous arch, mandibular
 - **D6119** – implant/abutment supported interim fixed denture for edentulous arch, maxillary
 - **D7296** – corticotomy; one to three teeth or tooth spaces, per quadrant
 - **D7297** – corticotomy; four or more teeth or tooth spaces, per quadrant
 - **D7979** – non-surgical sialolithotomy
 - **D8695** – removal of fixed orthodontic appliance(s); other than at conclusion of treatment



CDT 2018 Highlights

- Two new codes were added for teledentistry. Currently, teledentistry is not approved by the Iowa Dental Board:
 - **D9995** - teledentistry; synchronous, real-time encounter
 - **D9996** - teledentistry; asynchronous, information stored and forwarded to dentist for subsequent review

The CDT codes have been designated as the national standard for reporting dental services under HIPAA and all offices that transmit health information electronically must use the current version of CDT. Please be sure to use the most current codes.

Delta Dental and DWP Office Manual Changes January 1, 2018

As a participating dentist with Delta Dental and/or Dental Wellness Plan (DWP), the Delta Dental Office Manual and DWP Office Manual detail how we work together. This document is updated periodically and we will notify you of amendments 30 days prior to their effective date.

This is notice that there has been an update to the DWP and Delta Dental Office Manuals effective January 1, 2018. The updated manuals will be available on the secure Dentist Connections at Delta Dental's website (deltadentalia.com/dentists) and the DWP website (dwpiaowa.com) no later than January 1. After logging into the Dentist Connections, the office manuals can be found under the Resources tab in the Educational Materials section.

The revised manuals will include CDT 2018: Dental Procedure Codes and other important updates. The office manuals are important and useful resources for you and your office staff. Please take time to review the updated manuals thoroughly.



Delta Dental of Iowa
9000 Northpark Drive
Johnston, IA 50131