



Medical Billing - For the Good of Our Dental Patients

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While many employers offer dental insurance, it often fails to cover major dental procedures. Yet patients can still receive financial relief for many of these procedures if their dental offices will make the commitment to help by coding for medical insurance.

Take the case of Sherry, a 61-year-old New York resident who was diagnosed with breast cancer. Sherry needed surgery and radiation treatments which lasted over three years. Her treatments led to many further health issues: loss of weight, impaired ability to chew and swallow, pain, dry mouth, decay and so much more.

In an email to me, Sherry wrote: "A volunteer from the Cancer Institute came to support with recommendations of where to get a wig, support groups, nutritionists and other care...but never mentioned dental." Sherry went on to tell me that the damage to her oral cavity and the burning pain in her mouth were harder and more painful to bear than the actual cancer treatments.

"Fifty-five pounds is a lot to shed," she wrote, "but how can you eat when your entire mouth is in pain?!" She even gave up going to the nutritionist, since it never helped with the pain.

Finally, Sherry's husband took her to her long-time dentist who told her that she needed treatment for advanced periodontitis and would also require extractions and implants. After three years of therapy with many co-payments, deductibles and medications that cost more than her rent, her need for financial help was becoming unbearable. Sherry and her husband asked her dentist, "Can you bill to medical, so we can get some of this paid?" The office manager answered no, since they do not bill medical.

Sherry and her husband went online and googled "medical billing for dental" and that's how they discovered me. She sent me her information, begging me to help bill her medical insurance company for the dental work. Sadly, receiving emails from patients like Sherry has become a regular part of my week, and it is time to tell our oral physicians that if we all understand the oral-systemic issues and explain to our patients why our treatment is not optional, but necessary, we can make a change. I cannot make the difference without our providers who understand the need and want to help. We must train all of the oral physicians how to work along with medical physicians - how to bill for both dental and medical, and to learn their state and federal laws. Coding is now international and continues to grow, so I say let's commit now to working with our patients.

Over the years, Sherry and others like her have turned to me and I feel I must start to let our industry know that these patients need help but are not even sure their dental providers want to give it or have the knowledge of how to address it. If we are indeed working for our patients' overall health and well-being, we will make a difference. There is a real need for our services; we need to let the world know we are not an option, but a necessity.

Before she even began her cancer treatment, we could have helped Sherry. If physicians know what we can do, and if patients themselves can google "medical billing for dental" and read about it, surely, we can step up and take the necessary measures to help. Who better to spread the word, who better to learn what you can do for everyone who walks into your office?

The key is to spread knowledge and indeed implement it. With knowledge, compassion and skilled help from our billers, your patients can receive the best collaborative treatment care available without succumbing to crushing financial burdens. Sherry and the other patients I have contacted prompted me to set up the first ever Insurance.

Extravaganza meeting in Las Vegas October 4 - 5, 2018. On our website, we are also setting up a referral link to offices who learn how to bill medical - this is our gift to all the practices who spend time learning how to provide this benefit. We want patients to be able to connect with you! Please visit www.dentalmedicalbilling.com and join us! You will not be sorry!!!!

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