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The Incisor

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*Tom Raffio
President & CEO
Northeast Delta Dental*

Affordable Care Act (ACA) Update

When the last Incisor edition was published three months ago, Northeast Delta Dental was in the throes of evaluating how the first whirlwind Open Enrollment period of the Health Insurance Marketplaces had impacted us as a company. Although that evaluation continues, we can report now that we sold more dental plans on the Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont Marketplaces (Exchanges) than we had expected to, that the Exchanges in Maine and New Hampshire have operated more effectively than Vermont Health Connect, and that the first six months of Exchange plan claims have not wreaked sustained havoc on our processing systems.

There has been no rest for the weary, however, as decisions about the plan designs for our 2015 Exchange plans had to be made and related documents filed with our state insurance departments before June of this year. In addition to updated plans to be offered on the Exchanges in 2015, Northeast Delta Dental is also offering ACA-compliant plans (i.e., plans that meet the Pediatric Dental Benefit plan design requirements set by our federal and state governments) in the private market off the Exchanges. These are in addition to our traditional plans and offer small groups and individuals more opportunities to have coverage provided by us.

While legal challenges to the Affordable Care Act (ACA) work their way through various federal and state court systems, Northeast Delta Dental continues to prepare for and participate in the changing markets created or impacted by the ACA's implementation.

Practice Transition Support for Participating Dentists – Follow-Up

On June 26th and again on July 17th, we distributed an Informational Update regarding "Practice Transition Support for Participating Dentists." This June 26th Update stimulated questions from some dentists. We believe it appropriate to share this additional information with all Northeast Delta Dental participating dentists in this follow-up communication.

We have received past inquiries from several dentists in connection with practice transfers and the possibility for a purchasing dentist to participate as a Premier-only dentist. A few dentists have followed up and specifically requested the right to transfer their Premier-only participation status when retiring and selling their practice. Upon specific request, we have permitted this type of one-for-one transfer on four occasions when the selling dentist retired and resigned

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Electronic Clinical Notes

The vast majority of dental practices today are taking advantage of the wonderful benefits and efficiencies of a computerized practice. Ease of scheduling, production reports, automated appointment reminders, digital radiographs and photographs, and electronic notes are just a few of them.

The dental consultants at Northeast Delta Dental are seeing more and more electronic clinical notes attached to claims. The benefits are certainly that these clinical notes are legible and often more complete as the software prompts the provider to “fill in all the blanks.” However, we are also seeing more “cut and paste” verbiage in these clinical notes which may be a great time saver, does not always provide the exact description of what was actually done for that particular patient, and may conflict with what the consultant sees in the attached radiograph or photograph. The consultants may return the claims to you, if further or more detailed, patient-specific information is needed, which delays processing the claim.

Remember—the clinical notes are a legal document, and should reflect what actually took place to complete that particular procedure for the particular patient.

- Richard Berryman, DDS, FACD

Practice Transition Support for Participating Dentists - Follow-Up, continued from front page ...

from our network. Our policy provides additional flexibility for Premier-only dentists including a process whereby a selling dentist may continue as Premier-only in transition and transfer his/her Premier-only status to a purchasing dentist at a later identified date if the purchasing dentist is a PPO dentist in the interim. We have also been flexible in extenuating circumstances, such as a transitioning dentist committing to practice expansion pursuant to which specialty PPO dentists will be recruited. In short, we have recognized the need to balance some reasonable flexibility for Premier-only dentists with the best interests of the Corporation and the groups and individuals that we serve.

Again, if you anticipate selling your practice please contact our Professional Relations Department at 1-800-537-1715. We are grateful for your loyal participation as a Northeast Delta Dental dentist and are prepared to discuss how we can help you to make your transition as smooth as possible.

Restorative Foundation vs. Core Buildup

The purpose of this article is to inform you about the differences between a restorative foundation (D2949) and a core buildup (D2950), and the proper use of these codes when submitting a claim.

The nomenclature and descriptors for the codes are as follows:

- **D2949** Restorative foundation for an indirect restoration. Placement of restorative material to yield a more ideal form, including elimination of undercuts
- **D2950** Core buildup refers to building up of coronal structure when there is insufficient retention for a separate extracoronary restorative procedure. A core buildup is not a filler to eliminate any undercut, box form, or concave irregularity in a preparation.

A review of the current literature notes a core buildup as follows:

1. To replace enough missing tooth structure to permit creation of ideal retention and resistance form for the crown preparation
2. Less than 50% of tooth structure remaining in anatomical crown
3. Adequate 1 mm to 2 mm ferrule beyond the core material without violation of the biological width

Northeast Delta Dental will approve benefits for a core buildup if the above criteria are met. This is not an industry-wide policy. According to a recent issue of Dental Economics, most insurance companies consider core buildups as “all inclusive” of the crown procedure, and no benefits are available.

Because the newer code **D2949** is a restorative foundation, this implies that a slight undercut or defect in the crown prep can be repaired with a small inclusion of restorative material not necessitating a complete buildup. This code can be submitted to Northeast Delta Dental, but the charge will be disallowed (not chargeable to the patient) as Northeast Delta Dental considers it to be part of the definitive indirect restoration. I hope the above facts are informative and will help in submitting claims properly for these two procedures.

- Robert J. Urbon, DMD, FACD

Premier Reimbursement and National Processing Policies Changes Effective January 1, 2015

Northeast Delta Dental has been sending frequent communications to our participating dentists regarding the coming changes in 2015 regarding the new Premier Reimbursement Maximum Allowable Charges (MACs), practice transition, and National Processing Policies. In effort to assist dentists as they consider their continued participation with Northeast Delta Dental, we also held forums and webinars, or attended statewide and component dental society meetings by invitation to review the dental industry landscape and answer questions from dentists and office staff members. The most recent forum was held by the Vermont State Dental Society in Montpelier on July 29, at which subject experts from Northeast Delta Dental management and dentists and their staff members had a healthy dialogue.

On August 5, 2014, we had a successful Webinar on the dental industry landscape, with over 100 registered participants from Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont, and numerous questions submitted on various Premier, MAC, PPO, office transition and related topics. The presentation slides and a summary Q + A document are available for all providers who log in to our website at www.nedelta.com/providers. If you missed the webinar, you may wish to read about these important topics online.

We compiled a Northeast Delta Dental Dentist Handbook that incorporates Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont's By-Laws, Policies and Procedures, and the National Processing Policies that will be in effect for 2015. This document is also available on our website at www.nedelta.com/providers. Simply log in with your password to the secure side of the website, and find it listed on the first page under "Documents." The Handbook will be updated with any changes as they occur; for instance, the CDT 2015 procedure codes and their related National Processing Policies will be added to that section of the Handbook this fall.

You and your office colleagues may be familiar with many of the National Processing Policies, as they are used by Northeast Delta Dental for group benefit plans when the employer has employees outside Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. The National Processing Policies are based on a combination of dental science, clinical efficacy, and actuarial analysis. Other Delta Dental member companies use the National Processing Policies (NPPs) for their entire book of business, and this is the direction that Northeast Delta Dental is taking for consistency in claims processing throughout the Delta Dental system. We will be transitioning to the NPPs as employer groups renew their contracts with us, beginning in January of 2015. There

may be exceptions to the National Processing Policies by employer group request and so please continue to verify your patients' most current benefits online at www.nedelta.com/providers or by contacting our Customer Service at 1-800-832-5700.

Listed below are some of the National Processing Policies that are a change from Northeast Delta Dental's standard Processing Polices:

1. The Date of Incurred Liability will change from the prep date to the completion date. Claims should be submitted upon completion, using the completion date as the date of service.
2. Limited oral evaluations (D0140) and re-evaluations (D0170) will now be benefited with definitive treatment and will count toward the patient's total benefit for evaluations.
3. Detailed and extensive evaluations (D0160) will be benefited as comprehensive evaluations (D0150 or D0180). Any difference in fee is disallowed (not chargeable to the patient).
4. Either a complete series or panoramic radiographic image will be benefited once every five years, instead of the current policy of either once every three years.
5. Benefits for a complete series will be applied when bitewings are performed on the same date of service as a panoramic radiographic image. Any difference in fee is disallowed (not chargeable to the patient).
6. Most of the oral pathology procedures (D0472 through D0483) will now be covered, and will require a pathology report.
7. Minimum age for adult prophies will be age 14, instead of the current age 13.
8. Biologic materials (D4265) will now be covered with periodontal surgeries requiring a flap (D4240, D4241, D4245, D4260 and D4261) for natural teeth only.
9. Guided tissue regeneration (D4266 and D4267) will now be covered in conjunction with osseous surgery (D4260 or D4261) for natural teeth only.
10. Periodontal scaling and root planing (D4341 and/or D4342) will be benefited once per quadrant every 24 months, replacing the current once per quadrant every 12 months.
11. Bone replacement graft for ridge preservation (D7953) will no longer be covered, and will be chargeable to the patient.
12. Benefits for general anesthesia (D9220 and D9221) and intravenous sedation (D9241 and D9242) will be limited to one hour. Any additional minutes will be disallowed (cannot be charged to the patient) unless clinical documentation is submitted (e.g. anesthesia record) that supports more than an hour was necessary.

Please refer to Northeast Delta Dental's Dentist Handbook for 2015 for a complete list of the National Processing Policies by procedure code. Please contact Professional Relations at 1-800-537-1715 with questions about these or any other policies.



A Hole-in-One will win you TWO Mini Coopers on October 10!

Northeast Delta Dental is pleased to announce the addition of an exciting Hole-in-One Prize to the Dr. Thurston J. Carpenter Memorial Golf Tournament, courtesy of New Hampshire's Mini of Bedford -- two brand-new, 2014 Mini Coopers.

Join us at the Abenaki Country Club on October 10, and your best drive of the day on a par three hole could win you the drive of your life (it it's a hole-in-one, of course)!

A Mini Countryman S All 4 and a Cooper Hardtop Coupe await the hole-in-one winner! Both are available in a variety of colors. Mini of Bedford will have staff members on hand the day of the tournament to answer any questions.

This annual tournament is a signature fundraising event for the Northeast Delta Dental Foundation. Last year, nearly \$18,000 was raised to support the Foundation's mission: to improve access to and the quality of oral health care and education in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont and help underwrite costs of Northeast Delta Dental's own P.A.N.D.A. (Prevent Abuse and Neglect through Dental Awareness) program.

Abenaki Country Club offers a private facility, rich in tradition and unsurpassed excellence. Located on the beautiful New Hampshire seacoast, it is surrounded by pristine woodlands, and cooled by subtle ocean breezes.

Check-in, registration, and a continental breakfast will begin at 8 a.m. followed by a 9 a.m. shotgun start. The tournament will follow a four-person scramble format.

A greens fee of \$160 includes 18 holes of golf, cart, continental breakfast, lunch, and prizes including a chance to win two Mini Coopers! The tournament committee will organize foursomes for individuals, or you can put together your own team.

To sign up, simply complete and return the registration portion of the attached brochure with a check payable to the Northeast Delta Dental Foundation, Inc. You can also register and pay online by going to <http://bit.ly/carpentergolf2014>.

For more information please contact Kathleen Gleason at 603-223-1317 or kgleason@nedelta.com.

We look forward to seeing you again for a great day of golf and camaraderie at the Abenaki Country Club.

New Participating Dentists

We are pleased to announce that the following dentists have joined Northeast Delta Dental's networks in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont:

Maine

Steven Shaw, DMD
Peter Repole, DMD
Oscar Rankin, DDS
Peter Levandoski, DMD
Michael Truscott, DMD
Kevin Guze, DMD
Benjamin Lamarche, DDS
Victoria Matthews, DDS
Alphonse Homicz, DDS
Burton Rankie, DDS
Owen Johnson, DDS
Natalie Sigwart, DDS
Allan Mulandi, DMD
Mark Franklin, DDS
Cory Murray, DDS

Vermont

Jennifer Logigian, DMD
Untray Brown, DDS

New Hampshire

Gary Hammond, DDS
Prachi Sontakke, DMD
Hengameh Shekarlaban, DDS
Andrea Fraser, DDS
David Bloom, DMD
Beth Cowie, DDS
Ramona L'Heureux, DMD
Pranali Amin, DDS
Daniel Jun, DMD
Mohamed Elnahass, DDS
Dhara Shah, DMD
Nisreen Takulla, DDS
Ruby Chaudhary, DMD
Maura Sanders, DMD
Gaurav Malik, DMD
Anthony Quinta, DMD
Tracy Pogal-Sussman, DMD
Meaghan Collamore, DMD
Torai Joshi, DDS
Megan Lucier, DMD
Mark Lucier, DMD



Office Changes or Updates

Please contact the Provider Services department at 1-800-537-1715, extension 1100, for any dentist and/or office changes or updates. These include, but are not limited to:

- New and/or change of physical or payment address(es)
- New and/or change of phone number(s)
- A dentist joining or leaving an office
- Closing of an office or practice
- Tax information changes
- New and/or changed NPI information
- Retirement
- Sale or purchase of a practice
- License status updates

Please be sure to notify the Provider Services department of all changes/updates **in advance** to ensure proper claims payment.