

BITINGedge is a publication produced by Ameritas Group Dental
for dentists involved in managed dental care plans.

Ameritas Home Office - Managed Dental Care Division • 800-755-8844

BITING edge

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Ameritas Life Insurance Corp.
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You asked for... PPO Contract Changes

Recently we announced our newest enhancement to your participating provider agreement. Here's a look at what the enhancement, which took effect January 1, 2001, means to you:

- ★ Benefit checks dated after December 31, 2000, do NOT have the 4% utilization withhold taken from each claims dollar paid to your office.
- ★ A 4% increase in your actual claims dollars received.
- ★ Less administrative work for your billing/front office staff.
- ★ (new for Specialists) A contracted fee schedule, allowing your contracted fees to be loaded into your system.
- ★ We will continue to pay all benefits to your office for billing reconciliation.



Your ongoing input is an important factor in making our panel successful. *We're listening!*

Get A Discount on Practice Management Software

The EZ 2000 Dental Software company offers our PPO/prepaid panel dentists a special price on its Windows 98 dental software for practice management.

The regular price is \$2,395 for single user, \$3,395 for multi-user. **For our panel dentists, the price is \$1,895 (single or multi).**

EZ 2000 dental software lets you automate treatment plans, billing, recall, appointment scheduling and more. Read about the product features and view an online demo at EZ2000Dental.com, or call 1-800-273-5033.

2000

Dental Survey RESULTS



A big Thank You to all who took time to complete and return the Ameritas Managed Dental Plan, Inc. prepaid plan survey for Year 2000.

AMDP uses this annual survey of **prepaid plan** doctors, patients and employers to assess satisfaction levels and identify areas for improvement.

Patients responding to the survey gave doctors top marks for:

- providing attractive and comfortable surroundings
- having conveniently located offices
- observing mask and glove protocol

Many plan members indicated that doctors could increase patient satisfaction by making convenient appointment times available. Additionally, their responses reveal a need for a better understanding of their dental plan and its benefits – a concern also raised by doctors.

AMDP has created a **newsletter** that will provide members with a variety of information including articles about the philosophy behind managed care, how prepaid plans work and how members can best use their plan. Similar communication efforts also will be a focus at events such as **Health Fairs**, where plan representatives get a chance to interact directly with members.

One of the best ways doctors can help make sure their patients are informed about their plan coverage is to ask patients for a photocopy of their current prepaid plan **Evidence of Coverage**, which outlines benefit amounts. Keeping a copy of the EOC in the patient's file can come in handy when discussing treatment options. This simple practice is an effective way to help prevent unwelcome surprises and foster trust between patient and doctor.

In addition to patient knowledge of their dental plan, doctors' concerns included compensation and AMDP plans as a marketing tool. The top three survey areas that earned "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied" responses from doctors were:

- efforts to encourage and assure delivery of quality care
- clinical evaluations performed on dentist's practice
- overall integrity and honesty of Ameritas and AMDP

We appreciate your participation in the 2000 survey and invite you to share your comments and suggestions anytime by contacting your Provider Network Specialist or by calling AMDP at 1-800-336-6661.

Online Provider Directory

Did You Know ... It's easy for members to find your office listing advertised on our online PPO/prepaid panel provider directory.

Here's how it works: Members visit www.YourDentalSolutions.com (in New York, www.NY.YourDentalSolutions.com) and click on "Find A Dentist." They enter their address and specify the dental plan they belong to (or, for PPO plan insureds, select "PPO - Nationwide"), the distance they're willing to travel, and provider specialty preference (if any). A list of nearby dental providers appears, including name, address, phone and general or specialty practice. Members even have the option of requesting a map and driving directions for each provider listed.

Clicking on a specific provider brings up additional information, if available, regarding office hours and whether the practice is accepting new patients. Members also can create and print a personalized directory based on the nearest dental providers, or they can look up a specific provider by name.

Provider information online ... a fast, easy way for members to find quality dental care!

Bridging the Communication Gap

By Cindy Lemke and Lyle Brennan
Ameritas Managed Dental Plan, Inc.

The days of direct discussion between dentist and patient concerning the costs of necessary dental treatment are gone. With so many **prepaid dental plans** available for dentists to participate in, having an employee who interfaces directly with plans and the patient is a must.

That's why many dental offices now have a **treatment coordinator** on staff to discuss treatment and payment options with prepaid patients.

The coordinator and the patient work together to determine the best financial route for the patient to pursue. It is important that both the treatment coordinator and the patient be aware of what is and is not covered by the patient's plan. Treatment coordinators should compare the covered benefit and costs to any optional treatment and costs for the patient.

Ameritas strongly recommends using a treatment plan form. By providing your prepaid patient with a clear and concise treatment plan outlining both covered and optional treatments, you protect not only the patient, but also your own practice.

Have the patient sign and date this form on each visit to document that he has authorized treatment, then retain a copy in the patient chart. This simple precaution helps protect your office in the event a grievance relating to the authorized care is filed, and it also helps you keep your patients informed. *See more information about this topic in your AMDP prepaid provider manual.*

Ameritas/ The Principal PPO Arrangement

In February, we mailed you news of a groundbreaking panel leasing arrangement between Ameritas and Principal Life Insurance Company (The Principal®). Potential benefits of this arrangement include enhanced service for our customers, access to new markets, and a larger clientele base for many of our PPO providers.

The Q&A included in the mailing was created to provide necessary information to you and your staff. If you have additional questions about the arrangement, our Provider Relations Department is ready to assist you at 1-800-755-8844.

Prepaid Provider – Credentialing Notice

As an AMDP prepaid provider, you have the opportunity to review credentialing information. The prepaid questionnaire will now include a statement that reads:

"The practitioner has the right to review the information submitted in support of their credentialing application, including any information obtained from outside primary source verifications (malpractice insurance carriers, state license boards, etc.), but excluding peer review protected information, such as recommendations."

If you are interested in contributing to **Biting Edge**, please e-mail Lori McPherson at lmcperson@ameritas.com.

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