

BITINGedge is a publication produced by Ameritas Life Insurance Corp.
for dentists involved in managed dental care plans.

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BITING edge

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Fun Fact

In 1540, Henry VIII of England granted a charter to the Royal Commonalty of Barber-Surgeons, outlining the areas in which surgeons and barbers could practice. Tooth extraction was permitted by both groups.



Fact OR Fiction?

Regulations in the dental office



by Kip Koll, senior network specialist – S. California region

Today's dental office associates are challenged in meeting ever-changing quality standards. Many are unsure about regulations and receive conflicting information. For some offices, securing an office evaluation means hiring an independent consultant.

Our provider network is unique in that every office has an assigned Provider Network Specialist. These professionals assist our dental offices in meeting a checklist of quality standards. The evaluation process involves criteria from OSHA, Center for Disease Control, state and local regulations. Your Provider Network Specialist is a well-informed resource for helping sort through the confusion.

What happens when a professional such as an auditor attends a seminar and the speaker's opinion is thought to be law? In California, various offices were informed by auditors that a dentist is required to have his/her signature and license number on the patient record. However, a review of The Dental Practices Act indicates that a signature—or an ID number and initials—is required along with the date for each treatment entry.

Any legal or dental representative who visits your office to provide a service should share current regulations with you. By asking for documentation, you can uncover whether the recommendation is an actual requirement, and also learn how it may benefit your office. And because each dentist is responsible for his/her office, go to the source when questioning how a regulation is interpreted or enforced.

Suggested web sites:

www.osha.gov/comp-links.html

www.cdc.gov

www.epa.gov

<http://soswy.state.wy.us/sos/rules.htm>
(Information on most State Boards of Dental Examiners)

www.leginfo.ca.gov (California only)

Within each site, look for the search function to help you find information.

¡Se habla español!

from Group Customer Relations



by Tish Hughes, Team Leader – Customer Relations

Did you know that California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, Arizona, New Jersey, New Mexico, Colorado, and Massachusetts account for about 87 percent of the Hispanic population? By 2005, Hispanics are projected to be the largest minority in the United States—about 13 percent of the population.*

As a dental insurance carrier, how do we provide customer service to our Spanish-speaking insureds? In the past, we used an outside translating company, making these phone calls lengthy and costly. What's worse, we didn't have the chance to provide our stellar customer service.

Since 1998, the number of Spanish calls has increased nearly 300 percent! **

Opportunity knocked and we listened! As a result, I am the proud team leader of the Spanish-speaking customer service representative team in Group Customer Relations (group claims). If you speak Spanish, you no longer need to rely solely on yourself or Spanish-speaking staff members to explain dental benefits.

In addition, we receive numerous inquiries from insureds regarding the availability of Spanish-speaking dentists. Via our web site, we can efficiently locate Spanish-speaking PPO dentist(s) near an insured's home or office.

* U.S. Census Bureau

** The Ameritas Acacia Companies group claims statistic

Customer Loyalty Measure

It's important for us to know what our customers want and need—to ask tough questions and carefully review the responses.

Group Division quality team members developed a long-term survey process to help measure customer satisfaction and how it affects customer loyalty. This process will concentrate on identifying "satisfiers" and building loyalty with our surveyed groups.

Each group listed below will be surveyed monthly. With results compiled quarterly, we'll also be sampling from each group monthly. (No individual should be surveyed more than once yearly.)

- Participating Provider Organization (PPO) panel dentists
- Non-panel dentists submitting five or more claims a month
- Brokers appointed with Ameritas or First Ameritas
- Ameritas or First Ameritas policyholders and insureds
- Policyholders with terminated cases



Season's Greetings

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

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