



# Go the Extra Mile for Your Patients

## Meeting patient needs while maintaining profitability

Uncertainty has been the mantra since February 2020 when the pandemic changed the way dental practices operate. One certainty is the pressing need to meet patient needs safely while maintaining profitability – in fact, they go hand-in-hand. Practices that focus on reducing patient exposures, while increasing profit margins, will recover more quickly than those that don't.

- **Teledentistry.** Many practices utilized teledentistry during practice closures to treat emergencies and yet, they discontinued this practice over time. Teledentistry allows the dentist to determine if a referral is appropriate, saving the patient a possible unnecessary exposure. A diagnosis can also take place allowing the practice to schedule enough time to complete treatment, eliminating the traditional in-office emergency visit before treatment.

This puts the safety of the patient first, reduces Op time, and expensive turnover protocols. Block time for teledentistry visits as part of your emergency protocols.

- **Longer Appointments.** Providing as much treatment as possible in a single visit is the safest protocol to reduce exposure. Providing maximum treatment, also known as "quadrant dentistry," has long been known to be more profitable for dental practices. It is even more true now as Op turnover costs have risen. Consider collecting at least part of the patient portion before the appointment to reduce no-shows for these longer time blocks.
- **Treat Periodontal Disease Proactively.** Providing periodontal care to patients who present with bone loss and reduced support for their teeth helps patients retain their teeth longer. Actively review periodontal protocols and align them with the doctor's philosophy of care. Understanding your periodontal statistics is the first step in aligning your coding with your care philosophy.
- **Reduce Missed Appointments.** Missed appointments will quickly erode profit margins. Reduce this phenomenon by building value in the next visit, utilizing a confirmation



system that can text and email your patients, following up with phone calls when needed, and collecting the patient portion, or at least part of it, before the restorative appointment.

- **Use Block Scheduling.** A busy schedule is not necessarily profitable. On the other hand, a well-constructed schedule designed to meet practice goals and eliminate unnecessary patient wait time, will meet the needs of the practice and the patient.
- **Look for additional treatment daily.** If there is a possibility to provide additional care while the patient is already in the chair, you will best serve your patient and the practice. Additional treatment may include whitening, adjunctive therapy, a CT scan, fluoride, desensitizing treatment, same-day filling, sealants, updating a needed panoramic image or FMX, or a consultation. Keep the patient's safety top of mind by having a comprehensive approach to their care to reduce the number of needed visits. It can be easy to become complacent and let the schedule dictate the treatment provided. Change your mantra to take a comprehensive approach to offer and provide all care that is appropriate on the same day.
- **Incorporate touchless systems.** Patients may not see everything that goes on behind-the-scenes to keep them safe. They do notice when you utilize technology for touchless COVID screening questions, health history updates, bill pay, and online scheduling. Each of these systems provides a level of safety that is easily recognized, and appreciated, by your patients.

For further support in any of these areas, contact the Practice Support Team at [practicesupportteam@burkhartdental.com](mailto:practicesupportteam@burkhartdental.com).