

HEALTHY PRACTICE NEWSLETTER

Monthly Insight from Burkhart's Practice Support Team

How Many Boxes Can You Check? *A Front Office Success Challenge*

Practices that strengthen systems while embracing modern tools and workflows are seeing stronger collections, improved efficiency, and higher patient satisfaction.

What's Changing in Today's Front Office

Front offices are under more pressure than ever, and a high-performing front office is no longer just the first impression of your dental practice: it's the engine that drives patient experience, operation flow, and financial success. Patients now expect seamless digital experiences—online scheduling, real-time communication, and transparent financial conversations—as they do in other industries. All while insurance verification, claim denials, and reimbursement challenges continue to increase the administrative burden.

As practices adapt, three key trends are emerging:

- Automation and AI-assisted systems help teams manage high call volumes, scheduling, and verification processes more efficiently.
- Real-time insurance verification is becoming a critical need to reduce delays and billing errors.
- Patients expect upfront financial clarity and flexible payment options before committing to care.

With these realities in mind, refining front office systems is essential. Use the below checklist to determine how you can improve your systems.

Front Office Systems Improvement Checklist

Fee Schedule & PPO Management

- ☐ Review and update fee schedules annually using regional benchmarks; your Burkhart Account Manager can assist.
- ☐ Evaluate PPO contracts for profitability, reimbursement trends, and administrative burden.
- ☐ Consider renegotiating or exiting underperforming plans; a PPO Impact Analysis from Burkhart's Practice Support Team can support decision-making.

- ☐ Update in-house membership plans to reflect rising costs and patient demand for predictable pricing.
- ☐ Train team members to communicate financial changes with clarity and confidence—cost transparency now happens early in the patient journey.

Accounts Receivable (AR) Health

- ☐ Keep AR over 90 days below 10% (excluding ortho).
- ☐ Maintain an AR-to-production ratio at or below 1:1.5.
- ☐ Review AR reports monthly and identify trends.
- ☐ Assign clear ownership for follow-up on overdue balances.
- ☐ Offer third-party financing to support treatment acceptance in a more price-conscious environment.

Scheduling & Check-Out Optimization

- ☐ Define two clear roles:
 - Simple Check-Out Specialist for routine visits.
 - Treatment Coordinator for complex cases, financial arrangements, and follow-up.
- ☐ Implement structured scheduling to maximize provider productivity.
- ☐ Leverage automated reminders, online booking, and digital waitlists to reduce no-shows and fill last-minute openings.

Clinic-to-Front Desk Transitions

- ☐ Use routing slips or digital handoffs for every patient.
- ☐ Encourage chairside scheduling, especially for hygiene recare.
- ☐ Support clinical team training on clear, confident handoffs.
- ☐ Utilize consultation rooms when discussing complex treatment or financial matters.

Daily Front Office Huddle

- ☐ Review the schedule and identify high-risk gaps or cancellations.
- ☐ Flag outstanding balances and financial arrangements.
- ☐ Assign insurance verification and follow-up tasks proactively.
- ☐ Align team priorities and anticipate patient needs.

Monthly Doctor-Front Office Meeting

- ☐ Review KPIs: collections, AR, scheduling efficiency, and patient feedback to strengthen alignment between clinical and administrative teams.
- ☐ Celebrate wins and recognize team contributions.
- ☐ Identify process gaps and opportunities for improvement.

Training & Resources

Ongoing training is essential as systems become more complex and patient expectations rise. Equip your team with:

- ☐ Financial and scheduling conversation guides; contact your Account Manager for resources.
- ☐ Insurance communication and objection-handling tools.
- ☐ Task flow and accountability structures.
- ☐ Credit/debit authorization protocols.
- ☐ Workflow optimization strategies, including automation tools where appropriate.

Today's most successful practices recognize that the front office is not just administrative—it's strategic. By strengthening systems, embracing smarter workflows, and prioritizing clear communication, your front desk team can reduce stress and elevate the entire patient experience.