

# FIRST IMPRESSIONS

The Provider Pub: News, Trends and Insights  
For You and About You

Delta Dental of Arizona  
SPRING 2018



## DENTIST SPOTLIGHT

### Q&A with Dr. Kevin Haley of Oro Valley Canada Hills Dental PC

- Q:** You mentioned you're a third generation dentist, would you tell us about the century-old cabinet in your lobby?
- A:** My great uncle was a dentist in Buffalo, N.Y. who passed the cabinet and chairs to my father (also a dentist). He used them for 60 years and it's an honor to carry on the tradition.
- Q:** Did you find items of interest in the cabinet?
- A:** Yes! Ivory hand instruments, a dental casting machine, and multiple crown/bridge tools. Also intact were assorted pharmaceutical agents used at the time.
- Q:** Do you know how old your artifacts are approximately?
- A:** Yes, the cabinet was dated 1894, and was made by a company named The Ritter Dental Manufacturing Company in Rochester, NY, bought out by Kerr Dental in the 1960s, still in business today.

If you'd like to be featured in First Impressions or the Delta Dental of Arizona Blog, email [marketing@deltadentalaz.com](mailto:marketing@deltadentalaz.com).

## EXCLUSIVE OFFER FOR DELTA DENTAL PROVIDERS! NO COST, NO OBLIGATION

COMPLIMENTARY IT SECURITY ASSESSMENT  
*PROVIDED BY MEDIX DENTAL*

Breaches can cause damage for a lifetime, while putting your practice and livelihood at risk. Delta Dental of Arizona has arranged to provide a service at no cost to you to find out what may put your practice at risk.

According to Accenture's 2017 report, a staggering one in four patients have had their medical information stolen from tech systems. Protecting your electronic health information is essential, and robust cyber security is surprisingly affordable.

Visit <https://deltadentalaz.com/dentist/> to hear what Delta Dental of Arizona Board Member Dr. Rich Higgs says he learned through our no-cost IT security assessment. After watching the video, visit [medixdental.com/deltadentalaz](http://medixdental.com/deltadentalaz) to sign up for your free IT security review.

**FREE**  
**\$1500 VALUE**



## CALLING ALL OFFICE MANAGERS

We're looking for 10-12 office managers who would like to join a focus group to discuss dental office trends, how Delta Dental can best assist you, and how we can best communicate with you and your dentists. We'd like to hear your thoughts about our newsletter and topics of interest as well.

Email us at [prelations@deltadentalaz.com](mailto:prelations@deltadentalaz.com), with your name, office or dentist name, contact phone number and email address. In addition, please let us know the days and times you'd be available to attend a one-hour get together at, or near our office located at 5656 W. Talavi Boulevard, Glendale, AZ 85306. Breakfast or lunch will be provided.

**PLEASE JOIN US  
FOR A FOCUS GROUP**



# CEO's CORNER

Delta Dental Arizona – Working with You and for You!

On April 20<sup>th</sup>, Delta Dental of Arizona held its annual meeting with 405 members participating either in person or by proxy. At the meeting, four board members were re-elected: Rear Admiral William L. Putnam; Gary Jones, DDS; Alvin Matthews, DDS, JD; and Frederick Olsen, DDS. New to the board this year is Steven Houghton, Vice President of Global Markets for GM Cruise, General Motors' Autonomous Vehicles Division, who replaces Dutch Baker.

For those of you who were unable to attend the annual meeting, here is a summary of some information we shared:

- ▶ Delta Dental of Arizona achieved a new all-time high membership total in 2017 of 513,564 (about 274,000 primary subscribers and their dependents). When we include other Arizonans: who have obtained coverage through their employers in other states, and our Delta Dental member companies in other states, Delta Dental now covers 1,086,617 Arizonans.
- ▶ We retained 96.7% of our subscribers this past year
- ▶ We obtained and implemented more than 300 new employer groups and now have 39,525 Individual Plan members
- ▶ We were recertified as a call center of excellence by BenchmarkPortal, an independent, third-party evaluator
- ▶ The *Phoenix Business Journal* named us a Best Place to Work
- ▶ Delta Dental of Arizona's Foundation distributed nearly \$760,000 to the community in 2017

All in all, 2017 was a very solid year for our company.

Delta Dental of Arizona continually strives to serve all our key stakeholders; subscribers, dentists, employers, benefits brokers, our employees, and the underserved across Arizona. We work diligently to understand how current market shifts will impact you so we can offer information and services to help you navigate these changing market conditions.

Two industry dynamics that impact us all are increased cyber threats and the proliferation of leased dental networks. On the first page of this issue we've outlined how you can take advantage of a complimentary cyber security-assessment (worth more than \$1,500) for your practice. We have also created a new insert for our newsletter titled, *For Your Practice*, specifically designed for researching and reporting on multi-faceted trends. One of those new important trends is leased networks, which we've highlighted and explained further in this issue's insert.

Thank you for partnering with Delta Dental of Arizona, we appreciate all that you do.

Warmest Regards,

**R. Allan Allford**  
President & CEO

# IMPROVED PAPER CLAIMS, BENEFIT FAXBACK AND PRE-DETERMINATION PROCESSES

Delta Dental is making improvements to customer service and claims processing functions to pay your claims more efficiently, and better serve our dental community.

## Paper Claims Submissions:

Paper claims are no longer being entered manually, instead they're imaged and entered electronically into our claims processing system. This process change impacts claims sent to us by paper, including attachments and finalized pre-determination submissions. It will be extremely important to consistently submit claims that are complete and legible. This change greatly increases the speed of claims processing, however, claim submissions with errors may be delayed, processed incorrectly or even fully rejected.

These tips will help ensure your paper claims are not delayed:

- **Do not highlight.** When you highlight information on paper claims, they come across visually as black boxes.
- **Make sure your claim is complete.** Missing or inaccurate information will delay processing.
- **Make sure you're using the most current ADA CDT version, you'll find by visiting [www.ADA.org](http://www.ADA.org).**
- **Copiers and scanners may not reproduce a quality diagnostic x-ray.** If X-rays are not sufficient quality, they will be separated from the claim and discarded. This applies to all x-rays.
- **Review each paper claim submission with close attention to detail, ensuring that all text and checked boxes are clear.** Electronic processes used to capture submitted paper claims data may misinterpret blurry, misaligned or mottled text, which may lead to issues in processing and claims payment. For example, if the text is not clear, the number 6 may look like an 8 or the number 8 may be captured as a zero. Artifacts on a claim, such as printer static lines, may also lead to misinterpreted information.

## The Many Benefits of Electronic Claims Submissions

If you are not submitting claims electronically, talk with your practice management system vendor about activating your system's electronic claims component. Electronic claims submissions provide several benefits; they greatly decrease the amount of time it takes to submit each claim, to validate claim information and to receive rejection reports (decreasing the amount of time for corrections and simplifying the overall tracking of claim submissions). Submitting claims electronically also eliminates the cost of paper, ink, envelopes, postage, as well as the office staff-time required to prepare paper claim submissions.

**NEW**

## PRE-DETERMINATIONS PROCESSES TO BEGIN THIS FALL

To better serve you we will be implementing a change to the way we process our Pre-Determinations (Pre-D's). This change will allow you to submit a new claim form with the treatment performed, dates of service and Pre-D number that you received from us. In Box 2 of the claim form, include the claim number from the Pre-D sheet.

*See example below.*

## GAIN FASTER ACCESS TO MEMBER ELIGIBILITY AND BENEFITS!

We know that proper management of the day-to-day operations of your office is time-consuming and pulls you in many directions. Waiting on the phone to get your patients' benefits and eligibility information can be tedious and time consuming. We now offer a much faster way for your office to access patients' benefits and eligibility information. To better serve our dental offices, we've enhanced our automated tools (faxback and website) to include the top 50 most utilized and requested dental services. Accessing this improved service is fast and easy. You can either call our Dentist Direct line at 866.746.1834, or log-in to the Provider Connection website at [www.deltadentalaz.com/dentist](http://www.deltadentalaz.com/dentist).

Our call center service specialists are there to serve you. However, we encourage each office to request and utilize the faxback and website versions of your patients' benefits and eligibility prior to contacting our service center. By adopting and utilizing Delta Dental's electronic tools and technology, we're certain you'll enjoy increased productivity, and you'll spend more time with your patients, rather than on the phone.

### ADA American Dental Association® Dental Claim Form

HEADER INFORMATION	
1. Type of Transaction (Mark all applicable boxes)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Statement of Actual Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Request for Predetermination/Preauthorization
<input type="checkbox"/> EPSTD / Title XIX	
2. Predetermination/Preauthorization Number	
[Redacted]	

More information to come in the next newsletter.

# Dentist Direct Phone Numbers

Toll free: 866.746.1834 | Local: 602.588.3982

- press **1** Faxback of eligibility & benefit information
- press **2** Automated claim information
- press **6** Customer Service - Claims status/benefits/eligibility
- press **7** Professional Relations - DDS contracts/appeals



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Delta Dental of Arizona  
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Glendale, AZ 85306

## TOP OF THE LIST

Groups acquired since  
February 2018 with 75+ employees

Company	Number of Employees	Location	Plan
Arizona Digestive Health	152 employees	Phoenix	PPO
Silverado Stages, Inc.	135 employees	Phoenix	PPO plus Premier
Macpie, LLC dba Avondale Toyota	86 employees	Avondale	PPO plus Premier
Cactus Transport Holdings, Inc.	79 employees	Tolleson	PPO

## DELTA DENTAL EXPANDS ASDOH OUTREACH PROGRAM



A.T. Still University's Arizona School of Dentistry and Oral Health (ATSO-ASDOH) trains students in telehealth outreach to vulnerable populations as part of their dental school instruction. The students and faculty travel throughout Maricopa and Pinal counties providing oral health education and services to seniors and children with little to no access to dental care.

Delta Dental of Arizona, through its foundation, purchased ATSO-ASDOH an additional van to expand this telehealth program, which not only allows more students to participate in the program, but also provides access to oral health education, and services to those who need it most.





**NETWORK NEWS YOU CAN USE**

**RENTAL NETWORKS COULD HURT YOUR BOTTOM LINE!**

Network rental (or network sharing, network leasing) is a way for dental carriers to increase the number of “in-network” providers who are available to treat their customers/members. Before signing on to participate in a specific carrier’s provider network or in a freestanding network, it is important to know up front if that network is shared, rented or leased to other companies, because that could end up hurting your bottom line.

Despite the fact that you may have direct contracts with carriers/networks based on specific fee schedules, carriers that share/rent those networks often reimburse according to partnership agreements if the fee is lower. It might seem like this would be difficult to justify legally, but many network agreements contain language which indicates that a change may be made if it is in the best interest of the member, which allows for reimbursing the provider at a lower fee than what was directly contracted.

**THE DELTA DENTAL DIFFERENCE**

Delta Dental contracts directly with all of its network dentists. We do not rent from any other networks, nor do we rent or share our networks with other carriers. All network management, fee schedule determination, quality control standards, credentialing and provider disputes are handled by Delta Dental directly.

**HERE’S HOW THIS WORKS:**

If you sign up with both Carrier A (pays \$40 for a cleaning) and Carrier B (pays \$30 for a cleaning) and both of their networks are leased by Carrier X, when you see a patient who has coverage through Carrier X, you would be reimbursed at the lesser of the two rates—\$30 instead of \$40 in this case.

**EXAMPLE: Reimbursement for a cleaning**

Networks leased by Carrier X	
Carrier A \$40	Carrier B \$30

What you would be reimbursed if a patient has coverage through Carrier X—the lesser amount.

The trend toward network rental/leasing is only increasing. A survey of Delta Dental’s top 27 competing networks shows the average number of networks directly or indirectly leased is 4.4 and the maximum is 10 networks. This means that a carrier’s reimbursement to you could be based on the lowest fee of those 10 networks! It is probably safe to assume that if you are part of a rental network(s), the lowest paying fee schedule may likely dictate the fees you are paid regardless of whether you have a direct contract in place with the network paying the lowest fees.

It’s important to know if you are indirectly contracted with other networks and, if so, which fee schedule is actually being used to determine your reimbursement.

**HERE ARE SOME QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD ASK BEFORE PARTICIPATING IN A NETWORK:**

**Do you lease your network? If yes:**

- How many indirect networks will I be a part of?
- What are the names of those indirect networks?
- Is the provider payment based only on the lower of the submitted fee or direct network fee **OR** could it be based on the indirect network fee?

**If the latter, then ask the following questions:**

- Who is responsible for setting the indirect network fees?
- How often are indirect network fees updated?
- Could you provide a fee schedule of the lowest indirect network fees by procedure?

# FIVE TOPICS FOR YOUR NEXT DENTAL STAFF MEETING

From managing payroll to acquiring patients, running a dental practice is a lot of work. With so many competing priorities, it can be easy to forget about staff communication. And who has time to come up with dental staff meeting topics? We're here to help! Ensure you and your team are on the same page with pre-planned topics. Here are five themes to guide every meeting.

## RECOGNIZE STAFF SUPERSTARS

Identify those who have gone above and beyond or simply upheld your standard for outstanding customer service. A little recognition goes a long way. Seven out of 10 employees who received appreciation from their supervisors reported being happy with their job, according to Harvard Business Review.

## TALK TRENDS & TECHNOLOGY

Happiness and learning are closely tied. Is there a new scientific discovery that could change the dental industry? Is there a technique that could make things better for the patient? These topics encourage engagement and keep your staff up to speed on all things oral health.

## PLAN THEMES & INITIATIVES

February is National Children's Dental Health Month. March is National Nutrition Month. April is Oral Cancer Awareness Month. The Great American Smokeout is November 16. Perhaps there's a Water Wednesday or other local activity coming up. Utilize your staff as oral health experts. It's a great way to promote healthy habits to patients.

## REPORT ON PROGRESS

Transparency promotes trust. Keep your team informed on office goals and progress to date. Doing so may keep them around longer.

## ASK FOR FEEDBACK

End each meeting the same way you started it—with a chance to provide feedback. While the opening topic identifies exemplary employees, the closing minutes should contain constructive feedback including any areas for improvement. Are there concerns about new procedures or policies? Is there a sticking point with your patients? Foster open channels of communication and your team will thank you for it.

Whether you convene once a year or once a week, these dental staff meeting topics will provide the blueprint for a positive session.

Ms. Morrow is the director of professional relations at Delta Dental of Arizona. She has more than 30 years combined experience working in the dental insurance industry and managing dental office operations. She can be reached at [kmorrow@deltadentalaz.com](mailto:kmorrow@deltadentalaz.com).



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FOR YOUR PRACTICE