



Concerned Dentists of Washington State
PO Box 65169
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April, 2012

To WDS member dentists from the board of CDWS: An update, and an Open Letter to WDS

At the Special Membership Meeting, the WDS leadership agreed to meet with a small group of member dentists, including CDWS. The intent was to discuss critical topics member dentists verbalized at the meeting that were not part of the bylaw revisions the membership submitted. As summarized in our previous post, we were unsuccessful in scheduling the meeting due to WDS's requirement that a gag order be in place that prohibited us from criticizing their policies. We were open to the confidentiality aspects during the negotiations, but not the outright ban on communication with our members with no timeline established on the negotiation period. This is unfortunate. We were optimistic, as this would have been a significant step in improving our relationship with WDS. This does not deter us from discussing the issues we planned on negotiating on your behalf. We will continue to communicate with you and WDS via this forum. It is our hope that WDS is listening.

1. Balance billing after maximum allowable has been used by patient.

WDS does not allow network members to bill patients at UCR fees for any treatment after their allowable maximum has been used up for the year. Regardless of the extent of treatment needed for the patient, you are required to bill all procedures with your reduced filed fees. Since maximums rarely exceed 2000, a patient will satisfy the maximum with routine prevention and basic restorative. WDS' obligation for reimbursement ends with the maximum.

Comprehensive treatment that involves multidisciplinary care with

specialists, coordinated treatment planning, quality lab support and multiple follow up appointments to assure quality and predictable outcomes is not covered by WDS. Essentially, these become non-covered procedures subject to the filed/reduced fee schedule. The patients do not have the freedom of choice to pay the members the UCR fees for this required care. These treatment options may not be practical or offered by the member dentist, as the reduced reimbursement makes it impossible to deliver the service. We would ask the ability to bill UCR fees after the maximums have been satisfied, upon consent and agreement with the patient receiving the care.

2. Balance billing for gold restorations.

Due to the inflated market value of gold, the lab fees for these restorations have climbed 200% in the last 3 years. As a member, you are required to use your filed fee if placing a gold or metal restoration. This fee is usually similar to that of a porcelain restoration, which has significantly lower lab costs. This makes the use of this restoration impractical, even if the diagnoses require the use of gold or metal for best outcomes. Without the ability to bill WDS or the patient the gold cost excess, this valuable and predictable restoration is effectively eliminated as a treatment option. We would ask for the option of balance billing for gold restorations, and gold used in porcelain fused to metal restorations.

3. Direct member nominations/elections.

Currently, the members do not have the ability to nominate a dentist board member. They are all selected by WDS' nominations committee under the direction of the CEO and the WDS board. We would like the option to submit our own names per a member nomination process to run for election to the WDS board

4. Increase the requirement for notice of major policy changes from 90 days to 180 days.

This will give providers more time to adjust to policies that require major changes in infrastructure or delivery.

5. Increase member communications with e mail and other electronic methods.

It is quicker to be read and easier to distribute to staff and other relevant parties.

6. Provide more information for dentists and supporting staff to utilize the WDS website.

This will facilitate efficient claims review and policy updates on individuals and groups.

7. Send out automatic reminders for licensure renewal.

This would be seen as a courtesy and customer service by WDS, even though the WSDA already does this. This can be a source of significant loss if WDS asks you to forfeit payments because your dental license had not been renewed.

Sincerely,

Concerned Dentists of Washington State