



RESOURCE

Connections

Let's Get Digital: Electronic Records by 2014

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Picture the VA hospital after hurricane Katrina and you can understand why the U.S. Government passed a resolution for its healthcare system to be completely electronic by the year 2014. The federal government accounts for nearly half of the \$1.7 trillion spent annually on health care in the U.S. The federal government wants to eliminate paper medical records nationwide by 2014 to shave as much as 10% off the government's health-care bill.

This affects you as a dental provider, especially if you serve any portion of the population covered under any government paid insurance plan or reimbursement such as federal workers, military or Medicaid.

Where to begin? First: you need your own disaster plan. Hurricanes and storms in Florida can zap our computers. You need a double back-up system as you go to an electronic record. Select a hard drive back up that you take out of the office and have an online backup service also.

Second: Be sure your current software can support the change to an electronic record. This means both the ability to easily integrate digital radiographs, digital pictures and an electronic patient chart. If not, change now.

Third: Have heavy duty, up-to-date hardware. Unfortunately, hardware becomes obsolete before it wears out.

Fourth: Go Digital. Start with digital x-rays and an electronic chart. The goal is to become completely digital by 2014.

Five: Scan and Shred. Once you have digital records, begin to eliminate paper. Use electronic signature pads for your informed consents and health histories, or scan and shred. If the specialist sends a letter – scan and shred. A new patient arrives with films – scan and shred.

Create your plan and work your plan. Let me know if you need any assistance. "Toto, we are not in Kansas anymore!" ♦

Latest News for Dental Labs

By Barbara Rodriguez CDT
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Every year, dentists, hygienists and dental technicians from all over the world converge in Chicago for the Mid-Winter Dental Meeting. Following are a few items of interest for dental labs from this year's meeting.

- Digital interface is becoming more prevalent in all facets of dentistry.
- Labs are seeing rapid progression of new milling systems. Eight to ten percent of dentists in the U.S. are reported to have and use the Cerac in office milling system.
- Cerac is rapidly moving forward with scanners and software for digital impressions, as

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Area Winners Announced

Dental Assistants Recognition Week March 2-9, 2008

“One Team – One Goal – Improving Oral Health”

No matter what the setting or location, assistants enhance the delivery of quality dental health care and are critical members of the dental team. March 2-9, 2008 was designated by the American Dental Assistants Association and the American Dental Association as the perfect time to acknowledge and recognize this versatile, multi-talented member of the dental team!

Dental Temps of Northeast Florida sponsored the annual event in the greater Jacksonville area, awarding each winner a \$50.00 cash prize, commemorative certificate and flowers delivered to the office.

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| Duval County: | Thelmtsha Brunson nominated by Dr. Willette Shaeffer |
| Clay County: | Yvonne Cooper nominated by Dr Peggy Lessig |
| St Johns County: | Michelle Dryden nominated by Dr Jason Lewis |
| Nassau County: | Mistye Rauls nominated by Dr’s Owens, VanEtta, Kitson and Birtenholtz |



LOOSE LIPS

Tidbits of wisdom that may or may not be loosely related to dentistry

April’s Lighthearted Holiday

The history of April Fools’ Day, sometimes called All Fools’ Day, is somewhat unclear. There really wasn’t a “first April Fools’ Day” on anyone’s calendar. Some believe it evolved simultaneously in several cultures around celebrations for the first day of spring. The closest “guestimate” for the start of this fun and frivolity was in France in 1582. Before then, a new year had been celebrated for eight days, beginning on March 25th and ending on April 1st. With introduction of the Gregorian calendar by Charles IX, New Year’s Day was moved to January 1st. Fortunately for the playful among us, no one ever cancelled the idea of having fun on the first of April. ♦



Kudos Korner

Look for Linda Harvey’s article, “Perfect Storm or Perfectly Planned” in the March issue of Dental Assisting Digest online at www.dentalassistingdigest.com ♦

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Patients Don't Sue Providers They Like!

Elaine Anwander

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The risk of being sued for malpractice has little to do with how many mistakes a doctor makes but, much more so, with how patients are treated, on a personal level, by their doctor. It boils down to the respect conveyed to patients by providers, especially through pitch, rhythm and tone of voice, with the most corrosive being a dominant tone.

In his top selling book, Blink, The power of thinking without thinking, author Malcolm Gladwell discusses the immense power of snap decision making. Our unconscious sifts through a situation and quickly discards what's irrelevant while zeroing in on what really matters. What matters most to patients is the relationship that's been established (or not) with their providers of personal care. ♦

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well as perfecting digital communication to laboratories.

- Labs continue to become more efficient and

play a more prominent role in initial design decisions, in part, by helping dentists stay abreast of new products as they become available. At Dr. Gordon Christensen's seminar on veneers, several different options were presented.

While many new techniques and materials have their place in everyday dentistry, of particular note was the importance of case design and communication with patients about realistic expectations. But technology cannot take the place of good dentists or technicians. Knowledge, expertise and experience will continue to make dentistry more precise and patient friendly. High tech and high touch, working together. ♦

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