



ODS

DENTAL OFFICE UPDATE

Spring 2005

ODS Celebrates 50 Years of Partnering with Oregon Dentists

By Alan Shoebridge
The ODS Companies

Dentistry has experienced a number of changes during the past 50 years, one of the most significant being the advent of dental insurance. Dental insurance has not only made dental care more accessible, it has also provided valuable support to the dental profession. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the nation's first dental insurance plans, which were developed almost simultaneously in Oregon, Washington and California.

The idea of dental insurance began to take shape when the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) joined with the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) to look for a way to provide affordable dental care for the children of its members. In early 1954, the ILWU-PMA approached the Oregon Dental Association (ODA), asking its dentists to develop a system to administer that care.

In February of 1955, Oregon Dental Service (ODS) was founded to provide the program the ILWU-PMA was looking for. ODS established offices in downtown Portland to facilitate claims administration with the union and distribute payments to dentists. Initially, coverage was available only in Portland; however, within one month union members in all areas of the state were allowed to participate.

A five-member board appointed by the ODA oversaw the company's operations and appointed its first employees, which consisted of just two people during the first year.

"Our initial operations were humble, and it took a number of years to solidify the viability of dental insurance in the minds of many dentists, and the general public. However, it was clearly an important change in the industry with numerous positive effects," said Dr. William Ten Pas, Senior Vice President of Dental Services at ODS.

In the years following its founding, ODS added additional

clients and benefit plans. ODS also created three subsidiary companies to provide services exclusively for dentists. Dentists Benefits Corporation (DBC) and Dentists Benefits Insurance Company (DBIC) were founded in 1981 and 1985, respectively. DBIC offers professional liability, general liability and property insurance. DBC is an insurance agency that provides DBIC policies and other business-related insurance products. In 1982, ODS founded DAISY, practice management systems for dentists. "These companies were very unique in that they focused exclusively on serving dentists," Dr. Ten Pas said. "They continue to provide important services for dentists and play a significant role in our mission to strengthen the dental profession."

While having diversified into many other areas—such as medical insurance and third-party administration—during the past two decades, ODS remains firmly committed to dentistry. According to Dr. Ten Pas, one example of that ongoing commitment can be seen in the company's plans to open a dental hygiene school in La Grande this fall. "Building this facility was a way to ensure that Oregon does not experience a major shortage of dental hygienists in the future. Such a shortage would ultimately result in fewer people getting care, which would have an adverse impact on dentistry," Dr. Ten Pas said.

To help celebrate ODS' 50th birthday, a special commemorative brochure has been sent to all Oregon dental offices. The brochure outlines the company's growth throughout the years and its support of organized dentistry. "We would like to sincerely thank all the dentists who have worked with us over the years. Dentistry has taken a giant leap forward in the past 50 years and ODS is happy to have played a part in that," Dr. Ten Pas said. "We look forward to another half-century of similar progress and success."

ODS UPDATES

Brushing Matters

The ODS Companies is proud to announce the return of Brushing Matters.

Brushing Matters is an illustrated booklet aimed at teaching children the importance of oral hygiene.

Brushing Matters booklets are available in both English and Spanish. For copies of the book, please contact Lizz Murrietta at 503-228-6554, ext. 2995.

Clinical Information for Consultant Review

Recently we added a link to the ODS website providing information on clinical requirements for certain dental procedures. If you receive a request from ODS for clinical information, including X-rays, you can refer to this site for specific guidelines on what is needed. Visit www.odskompanies.com, click on Dental Providers, Billing Tips and finally click on Clinical Information for Consultant Review.



Benefit Tracker

ODS Online Dental Benefits and Eligibility.

www.odskompanies.com/dental

Available 7 days a week

Helpful Tips

Here at ODS, we pride ourselves on helping you deliver the best possible care to your patients. In an effort to better serve you, here are some tips for submitting claims to ODS.

1. When submitting claims, please double check the tooth number and procedure code.
2. When calling customer service, please have your Tax Identification Number (TIN) and subscriber ID number available.
3. Crowns are payable on the *seat date* if a patient is eligible. We do not pay on the preparation date.
4. X-rays:
 - a. Do not submit X-rays unless requested.
 - b. Make sure submitted X-rays are of diagnostic quality.
 - c. List the patient's name on the mount or copy.
 - d. Include the ID number when submitting X-rays without a claim.
 - e. Identify all duplicate X-rays left or right.
5. Claim Forms/Clinical
 - a. Do not use highlighters. Highlighted areas turn black once scanned.
 - b. If adding notes on the claim, please use black ink.
 - c. Use standard ADA claim forms with dark printing.
 - d. Submit forms on white paper only. Colored paper does not scan well; as a result, the submission gets returned.
 - e. The claim with the ADA watermark does not scan well. The watermark scans black, leaving the description and code unreadable, which delays claims payment.

Online Filed Fee Update

Watch the ODS website (www.odskompanies.com) in April for the launch date of the new electronic Filed Fee system. You will need access to DBT to file your fees online. If you are not already signed up for DBT, please contact ODS Customer service at 503-243-4494 or 1-800-452-1058.