

# DocTalk

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*Exclusively for Dental Health Services Participating Dentists and Their Staff*

## Keep Your Patients Smiling!



*Staff members at Dr. Thai's office in Lakewood, California keep grins on their patients.*

The patient experience begins as soon as members enter your office. That is why your front office staff is such an asset to your business. They have the ability to put the patient's mind at ease before they sit in the chair, and therefore, have the opportunity to drastically improve the patient's overall experience.

What differentiates your office from others is the quality of service your members receive and the connection they build with your practice.

If this is the first time a member is visiting your office, give them a call and make sure they are prepared ahead

of time with a friendly reminder of when they should arrive and what they will need. When a member enters the door, greet them by their first name.

Keep a few toothbrushes, toothpaste and floss handy at the front desk. If your patient is rushing to get to their appointment, they may have not had time to brush. Doing so shows that you appreciate their time and want to help them make your patients' make the most out of their dental visit.

Pay attention to your patients' verbal and nonverbal cues. If a patient seems uneasy about a procedure or appointment, try asking questions to understand what is making them nervous. This will indicate to your patient that your office is a safe environment and you are willing to listen to their concerns.

By better understanding your patient's needs, you can also make your job easier. Ask about what your patient likes or dislikes. A quick way to gauge the quality of your customer service is to leave an anonymous survey available in the waiting area of your office. It is better to know what is working than to see feedback on a review website or get it as a grievance.

When the patient is signing up for their next appointment, find out how they prefer to receive a reminder. This will save you time and show that you value them. This will also leave a lasting impression as the patient leaves your office.



Dental Health Services

800-637-6453

[www.dentalhealthservices.com](http://www.dentalhealthservices.com)

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## Are You Ready for the ACA?

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) is finally here. **We are very excited about participating in the Washington and Oregon exchanges for 2014.** This new chapter in healthcare is leading to some unanswered questions asked by your staff and patients. With so much misinformation coming from every corner, it may be hard to know where to get the facts. Dental Health Services wants to guide you through this transition and help you get the tools you need to stay head of the game. Below are some commonly asked questions answered by our Executive Vice President, Josh Nace.

**Q: What are the policies affecting dental in the exchange?**

**Josh Nace:** Pediatric dental coverage is considered an Essential Health Benefit. All dental plans on the West Coast will be offering dental coverage through the exchange, but not all are mandating it as a requirement. Washington is the only state that requires dental coverage for all children who purchase a plan through the exchange.

**Q: What should dental offices know about these open enrollments?**

**JN:** Dental offices should know what dental plans are being offered in their state. We are proud to be included in the Washington and Oregon exchanges. We are also certified to fulfill the Essential Health Benefit requirement outside of the Oregon exchange. If dentists are contracted with those dental carriers in the exchange, they should inform their patients. On the West Coast, approximately one million people will be purchasing coverage through the exchanges. Chances are very high that at least one of the dentists' patients may be receiving coverage through the exchange.

**Q: Is there anything offices should do to prepare for the exchange?**

**JN:** Dental offices should be prepared to see an influx of pediatric patients come January 1, 2014. Many people who have never had coverage or have not seen a dentist will need immediate care. However, you should know that this will not happen overnight. This will be a gradual progression as the exchange continues to evolve.

**Q: Do you see any changes involving Dental Health Services?**

**JN:** Dentists should experience growth in their patient base from Dental Health Services and from other sources. This is due to the nature of benefits being offered and the attention the ACA and the exchanges have brought to healthcare as a whole.

**Q: What websites should participating dentist visit?**

WA - [www.wahealthplanfinder.org](http://www.wahealthplanfinder.org)

OR - [www.coveroregon.com](http://www.coveroregon.com)

CA - [www.coveredca.com](http://www.coveredca.com)