



Dental Fees and Informed Consent

In order to obtain informed consent, patients must understand the treatment that is being proposed, any alternate treatments, and the accompanying risks and benefits for each treatment option. The informed consent discussion should also include information concerning the cost of the various options.

When patients are depending upon third party coverage to pay for some or all of those costs, patients should be assisted in understanding their financial responsibility to pay for treatment.

This discussion should include advising patients about services that include co-payments, what are non-covered services, and where the dentist's fees exceed those covered by the patient's particular plan. The discussion should also clearly explain that laboratory costs would be on top of the professional fees that are quoted. It would be helpful if an estimate of these laboratory fees were provided to the patient as well.

Dentists are entitled to set their own fees;

however, because insurance benefits often are determined by the fees set out in a particular fee guide, dentists should consider advising patients when they anticipate that their fees will exceed the fees allowed by the patient's plan. This could help to minimize patient complaints and help patients better understand their financial responsibilities to pay for the treatment. If you have any questions about this article, please contact:

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