



INFORMATION FOR DENTAL OFFICES USING Visiting Physicians or Dentists to Administer Anaesthesia and/or Sedation

A number of Ontario dentists use the services of a visiting dentist with anaesthesia/sedation training, or a physician with similar training to administer anaesthesia or sedation to their patients in their dental facility. This article reviews three aspects of this relationship:

- *professional responsibility;*
- *submission of dental insurance claims;*
- *provision of anaesthetic/dental facilities.*

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Compliance with College Guidelines

Dentists who use the services of a visiting dentist or physician anaesthetist in their practices share the responsibility of complying with the RCDSO Guidelines for the Use of Sedation and General Anaesthesia in Dental Practice with the visiting dentist and/or physician.

Each dentist in whose office parenteral conscious sedation, deep sedation or general anaesthesia is administered must apply for, and obtain, a facility permit for the dental practice. Like all dental offices using anaesthesia or sedation, those offices using the services of a visiting dentist or physician anaesthetist will be subject to an on-site inspection to ensure that the emergency drugs and equipment, monitors and other armamentarium, and sedation/anaesthesia records meet the standards set out in the College Guidelines. These Guidelines are available on-line at www.rcdso.org.

It is the responsibility of the host dentist to ensure that the visiting dentist or physician anaesthetist has been registered with the College as qualified to administer anaesthesia and/or sedation agents according to the qualifications set out in the Guidelines, as follows:

- dentists who have successfully completed a post-graduate anaesthesia program;
- dentists who have successfully completed a post-graduate program in oral and maxillofacial surgery suitable for certification in Ontario;
- physicians registered to practise in Ontario who hold a fellowship in the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada in anaesthesiology;
- physicians registered to practise in Ontario who can provide evidence satisfactory to the RCDSO that they have successfully completed a post-graduate program in anaesthesiology recognized by a Canadian Faculty of Medicine, and
 - either hold active hospital privileges to administer deep sedation or general anaesthesia in a public hospital in Ontario,
 - or can show proof of recent regular anaesthesiology practice.

Maintenance of Sedation/Anaesthesia Records

The anaesthesia/sedation record is part of the patient's overall chart and, therefore, must be retained in the dental office. If the professional administering the anaesthesia or sedation requires a copy of these records for his or her own

personal files, it would be appropriate to provide a copy of this portion of the record.

SUBMISSION OF ACCOUNTS

If the person administering the sedation and/or anaesthesia is a dentist, he or she can bill the patient for these services, and if there is third party coverage, the visiting dentist is able to submit a claim on the patient's behalf. He or she could also enter into an associateship arrangement with the host dentist. In this case, the person who provided the sedation/anaesthesia services must be made clear in the claim form.

When the services of a physician are used, the billing mechanism is not so clear, especially since the unique billing numbers that dentists use for third party dental plan claims submissions are not available to physicians. What is clear is that a dentist cannot have a principal/associateship relationship with a physician, nor can there be any form of fee splitting.

To assist patients in taking advantage of their dental benefits coverage, in the College's view, it would be acceptable for the host dentist to claim for the anaesthesia/sedation services that were provided by the physician, and then to add the following additional information to the "For Dentists Use Only" section of the claim form:

*Anaesthesia/Sedation services
were administered in this office
(RCDSO Facility Permit G123)
by John Smith MD.*

In this way, there will be no confusion or misunderstanding as to who provided the anaesthesia/sedation services and, based on this information, the third party provider can properly assess its

financial obligation.

If the physician chooses to invoice the patient or the host dentist directly, a copy of this invoice could be appended to the claim form indicating the services rendered, length of procedure/ appointment etc.

PROVISION OF ANAESTHETIC/DENTAL FACILITIES

There are procedure codes in the ODA Suggested Fee Guide for general practitioners that can be used when submitting insurance claims for the provision of facilities, equipment and support services for general anaesthesia.

According to explanatory wording in this Guide, the use of these codes is only appropriate when the facilities and support services for general anaesthetic are provided by:

- the practitioner who provides the dental treatment;
- or the practitioner who provides the general anaesthesia;
- or the practitioner who provides neither the treatment nor the general anaesthesia.

If a dentist provides the dental treatment, the general anaesthetic, and the facility and related services, the use of these codes is not appropriate.

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