

PEER-TO-PEER ARTICLES
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MEMBER
FEATURES



MEET THE MEMBER

Kelly Lynch, FAADOM is an Office Manager, Published Author, Practice Growth Specialist, and a Team Cross-Training Guru! She has supervised dental offices for over 25 years and spent over a decade in retail and hospital management. Kelly earned her AADOM Fellowship in 2016 and is pursuing her Mastership. She is a lifetime AADOM Member and is a past winner of the Practice Administrator of Distinction award. Kelly is also a member of the Speaking Consulting Network and the Golden Girls of Dentistry.

what do Motorcycle Riding & Dental Insurance have in common?

MEMBER ARTICLE | BY KELLY LYNCH, FAADOM

How difficult is decision-making when you know that your life or your livelihood hangs in the balance?

What if you did all the research and studying possible, all of the nail biting and negative thinking, and you still made the decision to move forward?

What would happen?

Recently, I made the decision to purchase a motorcycle and take the training to get my license. Ever since, people have been asking, "Why would you do that? It's so dangerous".

This is not the first time I've decided to take a risk and try something new. Not because I have a death wish or because I'm a little off (well, maybe a little off!) but because I have always been a very guarded person, one who follows the rules and does the right thing. The smart thing!

I thoroughly enjoy skydiving, whitewater rafting, hot air ballooning, parasailing and ziplining. Now that I have reached a time when I can come and go as I please, why not learn to ride a motorcycle and become really

good at it? I made the decision with my husband on Memorial Day weekend 2018. We were looking at 3-wheel motorcycles, when the thought of having his and her cycles took over my thought process. You see, I had always been a passenger. How freeing would it be to control my own bike?

We went home and talked about it over the weekend. On Tuesday, we returned and made the purchase. Two days later he rode his home and I towed mine on the trailer. I signed up for the Motorcycle Safety Licensing Class, bought boots and a full-face fluorescent yellow helmet to complete my safety gear.

Was I nervous? I'd be lying if I said no! Was I prepared? Well, I had the gear, did the computer course and passed with 100%. I've been reading the manual, watching videos, and keeping my mind open to learning how to keep myself safe.

So, what does any of this about motorcycle riding have to do with dental insurance?

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...MOTORCYCLE RIDING CONTINUED

Quite honestly, it boils down to the fear of trying something new and changing your thinking!

A healthy dose of fear is actually a good thing; it keeps us on our toes and focused on doing things properly. I often hear dental managers asking, "How do I get my dental practice out of the PPO nightmare without losing all of my patients? I want to be FFS but I know I will go bankrupt because patients will leave".

Unfortunately, these comments are all too common.

We can all agree that dental insurance is not "insurance". Maybe 50 years ago it was, but in today's economy it's shockingly lacking! Patients and the general public have been brainwashed into thinking they "need" dental insurance to see a dentist. They think they "need" dental insurance to have a broken tooth fixed, an achy cavity taken care of, a tooth extracted, or even a hygiene appointment.

You only need to look at your local emergency room to see how ubiquitous this problem is.

As an industry, we have fed this thought process for decades by focusing our conversations on the "insurance" instead of the basic care needed for good oral health.

Shame on us!

The first step to getting out of the PPO rat race and removing your practice from contracts is to start having crucial conversations with your team and your patients.

Learn how to talk to your patients confidently about their care. Consistently exceeding their expectations by raising your bar of service, customer satisfaction, and communication skills will start you on the right path. Get the entire team on board with skills and

communication training!

Next, look at your numbers. Which plans are your worst payers and how many patients rely on that poor-paying plan? These are the plans to eliminate first. Look at each of your insurance contracts closely. Assess the amount of money you're writing off each month. What could you do with that money if it stayed in your practice? What other payment options can you offer your patients? Have you thought about offering a membership plan?

Finally, it's time to look at your marketing strategies and what they're telling your potential patients. What is it about your practice that makes them want to come there, as opposed to just an office that takes their "insurance"?

Leaving dental contracts to become fee-for-service is a daunting thought for many practices. Not knowing what's around the bend, or if this decision will "crash" your bank account is truly scary.

Once you take the steps to learn the proper way to implement these changes with minimal casualty to your patient base, you will wonder why you waited so long. The money that you will be able to keep in your

bank account will open up more opportunities for your practice, your team, and your livelihood!

The freedom to build your practice with confident communicators who get excited to care for their patients is like the freedom of driving your own motorcycle through the countryside! The cool wind in your face, the warm sunshine beating down on you, and a road ahead that is full of possibilities! ■

