



### Introduction

Billing practices are a critical component of professional and ethical denturist services. Transparency and accountability in billing are essential to maintaining public trust and ensuring compliance with the Standards of Practice and applicable law.

### Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to clarify and reinforce the responsibilities expected by all denturists relating to ethical and transparent billing practices.

### Timing of Billing

Clear timing in billing protects patients from being charged before receiving care. It ensures accuracy, prevents financial harm, and reflects professional accountability.

- a) Denturists shall not submit claims to the benefit or funding provider or bill patients/clients for dentures or related services before the services are rendered.
- b) Patients/clients must be informed of fees or billing charges before treatment begins, with clear communication on payment expectations.
- c) If patients/clients are unable to immediately pay for care or services, denturists shall present available payment options, if they exist, in a timely manner to prevent financial uncertainty.

### Transparency in Billing

Patients and clients have a right to understand what they are paying for. Transparent billing builds trust, supports informed consent, and reduces the risk of disputes.

- a) Denturists must provide clear, accurate, and itemized billing reflecting only the services and products provided, along with the dates of service.
- b) Billing must only be in the name of the person to whom the services were provided.
- c) Denturists shall submit preauthorization requests, where required, to the appropriate benefit or funding provider to confirm coverage.
- d) Any changes to estimated costs shall be communicated to the patient/client as soon as possible.
- e) Direct billing, co-payment, and balance billing (where permitted by law) must be applied transparently.

## Financial Arrangements

Fair financial arrangements protect patients from undue pressure and help ensure decisions are based on care needs, not financial incentives. This safeguards public trust.

- a) Any financial arrangements made to accommodate a patient/client's personal financial situation for a specified treatment plan must be in writing and signed by the patient/client and the dentist.
- b) Payment plans must not place undue pressure on patients/clients to commit to services they may not need or cannot afford.
- c) Any financial interest in third-party financing or referral arrangements must be disclosed to patients/clients to ensure informed decision-making.

## Documentation Requirements

Accurate billing records are essential for accountability. They protect both patients and denturists by ensuring charges match the care provided and supporting continuity of care.

- a) Maintain accurate and detailed records of billing information, including the type of service provided, the date of service, and the fees charged.
- b) Billing records shall align with patient/client records and the documented treatment plan.
- c) Denturists shall maintain accurate and up-to-date billing information including:
  - ☒ Type of service provided, date of service, and fees charged.
  - ☒ Funding provider responsible for the patient/client account and provider details.
  - ☒ Updates on patient/client financial arrangements, where applicable.

## Avoid Conflicts of Interest

In the context of billing practices, "best interests" means that financial decisions support and never compromise patient/client care. This includes providing clear, transparent fee information, unbiased treatment and payment options, and avoiding undue pressure or conflicts of interest.

- a) Billing practices must always prioritize the patient/client's best interests.
- b) Denturists must not engage in financial arrangements that create a conflict of interest or compromise patient care.
- c) Patients/clients must be informed of all reasonable treatment and payment options without bias or without personal financial gain influencing recommendations.
- d) Provide written documentation of fees and payment terms before treatment begins.
- e) Provide objective, non-conflicted alternative treatment, referral, or payment options (if they exist) if patients/clients are unable to immediately pay for care or services.
- f) Denturists shall not place undue pressure on patients/clients to choose specific treatments or payment plans that may not be in their best interests or create a financial conflict of interest.

## Education and Training

Billing is not only an administrative function but a professional responsibility. Ongoing education helps denturists and their team stay compliant, transparent, and accountable in their billing practices.

- a) Denturists shall maintain knowledge of the relevant benefit or funding sources for denturist services and comply with the benefit or funding provider requirements, policies, and procedures.
- b) Denturists shall familiarize themselves with these guidelines, the Standards of Practice, and any relevant legislation to ensure compliance.
- c) Denturists shall educate patients/clients on the various benefit or funding options available to them.
- d) Denturist administrators must ensure their staff understand and adhere to these guidelines, relevant legislation, and various benefit or funding requirements.

## Consequences of Non-Compliance by Denturists

Consequences exist to protect the public and maintain confidence in the profession. Denturists who fail to comply with ethical billing practices risk the following consequences:

- a) Complaints of unprofessional conduct resulting in potential disciplinary actions under the *Health Professions Act*.
- b) Erosion of patient/client trust and public confidence in the profession.
- c) Potential loss or limitations on billing privileges by the respective benefit or funding program provider(s).

## Summary

Adhering to ethical billing practices is vital for upholding the integrity of the denturist profession and ensuring the protection of the public. These guidelines serve as a practical resource to ensure compliance with standards and foster public trust in the profession. Denturists are encouraged to integrate these principles into their practice to promote transparency, accountability, and excellence in patient care.

## APPENDIX A – Billing Practice Scenarios

Denturists may wish to reflect on their own billing practices. The following fictional scenarios are provided to assist in this reflection and include a brief analysis of each case which integrates best practices in billing.

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### Examples

#### Scenario 1

A denturist creates immediate dentures for a patient/client. The denturist bills the funding provider on the day the dentures are provided to the patient/client for insertion by their dental surgeon or dentist.

#### Situational Analysis

This conduct demonstrates compliance with billing requirements and respect for professional accountability. By billing only after services are rendered, the denturist ensures accuracy in claims, prevents premature charges, and upholds the patient's right to fair billing. This behaviour supports transparency, maintains public trust, and aligns with the principle of prioritizing the patient's best interests in financial matters.

#### Scenario 2

A denturist explains the full breakdown of fees for a complete set of dentures during the consultation and provides a written estimate. The denturist advises the patient that billing will occur after the dentures are inserted.

#### Situational Analysis

This example highlights good practice in patient communication and financial transparency. Providing a detailed fee breakdown and a written estimate ensures patients understand their financial obligations in advance, which helps prevent confusion or disputes. Advising on the timing of billing promotes trust, reinforces informed consent, and demonstrates the denturist's commitment to patient-centered care and ethical billing practices.

#### Scenario 3

After delivering a partial denture, a denturist discovers an adjustment was required due to unforeseen complications. The denturist accurately updates the billing information to reflect the additional service provided and ensures the patient is informed.

#### Situational Analysis

This reflects responsible and ethical billing practices. By updating billing records to accurately reflect the service provided and promptly informing the patient, the denturist demonstrates accountability and transparency. This conduct prevents

potential misunderstandings, aligns with documentation requirements, and shows respect for the patient's right to accurate information about the care and charges they receive.

#### **Scenario 4**

A dentist knowingly engages in fraudulent billing practices including submitting false insurance claims, overcharging patients, and billing the funding provider in advance of providing professional services.

#### **Situational Analysis**

This behaviour displays a lack of integrity, honesty, and accountability. Patients and the public expect billing to reflect the services provided and to align with accepted billing practices. Fraudulent behaviour erodes public trust, may result in disciplinary action, and could cause the dentist to lose the ability to bill third-party providers.

#### **Scenario 5**

A patient requests an itemized bill for their treatment. The dentist refuses, providing only a lump sum invoice without explanation of fees or services.

#### **Situational Analysis**

This undermines transparency in billing practices. Patients have a right to know what they are paying for, and failure to provide accurate, itemized bills may create suspicion of overcharging or improper billing. Such behaviour compromises public confidence in the profession.

#### **Scenario 6**

A dentist recommends a more expensive denture treatment plan primarily because it offers a higher profit margin, even though a less costly option would meet the patient's needs.

#### **Situational Analysis**

This conduct places personal financial gain above the patient's best interests. Patients must be informed of all reasonable treatment options without bias. Undue influence or self-serving recommendations may constitute a conflict of interest and breach professional obligations.

#### **Scenario 7**

A dentist tells a patient they must pay for their dentures in full before treatment begins, without discussing payment options or pre-authorization possibilities, even though the patient has coverage.

#### **Situational Analysis**

While dentists may set payment expectations, patients/clients must be informed of available coverage, pre-authorization processes, and any applicable billing options before treatment begins. Failing to discuss insurance benefits or provide clear financial information may limit a patient's ability to make an informed decision

about their care. This lack of transparency undermines informed consent and may place financial considerations ahead of the patient's best interests.

### **Scenario 8**

A dentist pressures a patient to accept a financing plan connected to a company in which the dentist has a financial interest, without disclosing that connection.

#### **Situational Analysis**

This is a conflict of interest that compromises transparency and the patient's ability to make an informed choice. Patients must be told of any financial interest the dentist has in a third-party arrangement. Undisclosed conflicts undermine trust and contravene ethical and professional obligations.

### **Scenario 9**

Before beginning treatment, a dentist clearly explains the full cost of care, provides a written fee estimate, and submits a pre-authorization to the patient's funding or benefit provider.

#### **Situational Analysis**

This demonstrates transparency, professionalism, and respect for the patient's financial planning. Providing fee documentation and verifying coverage before treatment ensures informed decision-making, aligns with ethical billing practices, and supports public trust in the profession.

### **Scenario 10**

A patient expresses concern about affordability. The dentist reviews alternative treatment options, provides a detailed explanation of the pros and cons, and helps the patient understand the available insurance and financing arrangements.

#### **Situational Analysis**

This conduct prioritizes the patient's best interests by ensuring they can make a choice aligned with their health and financial situation. Offering objective alternatives without pressure supports fairness, transparency, and patient-centered care.

### **Scenario 11**

A dentist identifies an error where a patient's benefit provider was billed for an appointment that did not occur. The dentist promptly informs the provider, corrects the claim, and notifies the patient.

#### **Situational Analysis**

This demonstrates integrity and accountability. Correcting billing errors, even when unintentional, is essential to maintaining trust with patients, funders, and the public. Taking proactive steps to resolve mistakes reflects professionalism and ethical responsibility.

## **Scenario 12**

A dentist provides a patient with a written financial agreement that outlines the cost of treatment and a mutually agreed-upon payment plan. Both parties sign the agreement before treatment begins.

### **Situational Analysis**

This approach ensures clarity, prevents misunderstandings, and documents financial arrangements in writing. It reflects transparency, protects both the patient and dentist, and aligns with ethical standards for billing practices.