

2015 AFTER HOURS ACCESS SURVEYS

Healthplex conducts quarterly After Hours Access surveys. The purpose of these surveys is to ensure that all providers participating in our programs have an "After Hours" method of communication in place for patients.

The ADA Principles of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct (ADA Code), Section 4.B, Emergency Service, states: "Dentists shall be obliged to make reasonable arrangements for the emergency care of their patients of record. Dentists shall be obliged when consulted in an emergency by patients not of record to make reasonable arrangements for emergency care." A patient injured as a result of inadequate after hours coverage may allege that the treating dentist, facility or both abandoned them. To reduce the risk of this happening and protect the treating office from potential liability, the office should make every effort to provide coverage for its own after hours emergencies.



Here are the 2015 year-end After Hours Survey results:

- New Jersey: 92.1% of providers surveyed were compliant
- Upstate New York: 90.7% of providers surveyed were compliant
- Downstate New York: 84% of providers surveyed were compliant (Come on, downstate providers! You can do better than this!)

Any one of the following accommodations will ensure compliance:

- An answering machine with an emergency telephone number to contact either you or a covering doctor.
- An answering machine stating that Healthplex members can contact Healthplex if they need immediate care. The Healthplex phone number for patients is 1-800-468-9868.
- An answering machine allowing the caller to leave a message that will be returned that same day or evening.
- An answering service.

OFFICE OF THE QUARTER

Dr. Gary Rafal Brooklyn, New York Congratulations!

A special thank you to Dr. Gary Rafal and staff for their ongoing commitment to patient care and service. We appreciate the consistent and excellent services Dr. Rafal has provided to our members since 1979.

Offices chosen are voted upon by the various departments interacting with providers. An office gift and a plaque were presented to the office.



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DOWN IN THE MOUTH

Studies have found that the microbes that live in the mouth can travel to other parts of the body. Poor oral hygiene encourages bacterial growth, which allows the microbes to multiply on and in between the teeth (as well as under the gums). These microbes begin to form a microbial community that is bound together with a thin coating of sugar molecules, also known as biofilm. The longer the plaque sits there, the thicker it becomes. The innermost plaque favors anaerobic bacteria, which can survive in the oxygen-starved sections of your body. As the plaque builds up the gums become irritated and swell, which draws more blood into the distressed tissue. Eventually, the chemicals produced by the biofilm begin to break down the boundary between the gums and blood vessels. Periodontitis arises when the gum and bone tissue starts to deteriorate and the space between the tooth and gums forms a pocket.

For years clinicians have been trying to make connections between periodontal and systemic health, proving that periodontal treatment has an overall effect on systemic health. One study published last year compared patients on dialysis who received periodontal treatment against those who did not receive treatment. The findings found those who received periodontal treatment were at a lower risk (about 30% lower) of contracting pneumonia and being hospitalized from infections. Another study has found that gum disease is associated with about 10% higher mortality over ten years among patients with kidney problems.



Clinicians have been trying to link periodontal bacteria to other systemic complications, such as clogged arteries and Alzheimer's. *P. gingivalis* (an aggressive pathogen which has antennae that can pry open the space between two cells) is commonly found inside arteries, and is also driven by many of the same inflammatory chemicals triggered by periodontal disease. New research is finding *P. gingivalis* bacteria in other places, such as the brain. Research from Florida and the United Kingdom compared samples of brain tissue from ten people who had died from Alzheimer's disease against samples from ten people who had died from other causes. Signs of *P. gingivalis* were shown in those patients who died from Alzheimer's. Another oral bacterium, *Treponema denticola*, travels along the nerves that connect to the jaw. Once *Treponema denticola* enters the brain, it could trigger an inflammatory chain reaction that eventually destroys nerve cells that could lead to diseases such as Alzheimer's.

When it comes to health care, the mouth and body have been disconnected for centuries. Now, it seems periodontal and systemic health is closely connected. Advocates of this connection are hoping to find convincing proof of this connection, while discovering new links between ailing gums and other diseases, such as cancer, arthritis, diabetes and even Alzheimer's disease. This new research has a profound impact on public health, given that more than 65 million American adults are thought to have periodontal disease.

Reference: Laura Beil (Science News)

HEALTHPLEX CONTACTS

www.healthplex.com

Phone Numbers

Provider Hotline..... 888-468-2183
(Options)

- 1: Eligibility
- 2: Urgent Referrals
- 3: Website Support
- 4: Claims Automated System
- 5: Contracting (Commercial Programs)
- 6: Contracting (Government Programs)
- 7: Panel Participation

UM Clinical Review..... 888-468-5182

Internet Support..... 888-468-5171

Fax Numbers (516 area code)

Claims..... 542-2614

Credentialing..... 228-9568

Customer Service..... 227-1143

Government..... 228-9576

Provider Relations..... 228-9571

Referral Authorization..... 228-5025

E-Mail

ProviderRelations@healthplex.com

Info@healthplex.com

Claims@healthplex.com

Referrals@healthplex.com

E-MAIL PHISHING

E-mail is the main means we use to communicate with others for business and personal purposes. We assume that the individual or company the e-mail states as the sender actually sent the e-mail to us. Unfortunately, we need to be careful when responding to an e-mail, or clicking on a link embedded in an e-mail. Computer hackers will take advantage of our trust in e-mail communications and use that to attempt to fraudulently gain access to information. Using e-mail to trick someone into responding with information or clicking on a link is called “phishing”.



The goal of a phishing e-mail is to have you respond by:

- Clicking on a link in the e-mail which will direct you to a fake website and request you to enter information about yourself, such as your bank ID/password, credit card number, social security number or health information.
- Forwarding information about others. One of the most successful current phishing e-mails is an e-mail supposedly sent from senior company or office personnel requesting information on other company personnel or clients.
- Performing a wire transfer of money out of your bank account (or your company's or office's bank account) to an account set up by the hacker, which is hastily disabled after the money is received.
- Clicking on a link in the e-mail which will download malicious code allowing the hacker to take control of your computer.

If you receive an e-mail from a company or individual that is not familiar to you, asking you for information or to click on a link, delete the message, **do not respond and do not click on any links in the e-mail.**

If you receive an e-mail from someone who you know which may seem suspicious, consider whether the e-mail makes sense. Would that person actually ask you for that information or send you a link? If you are not sure, check with the sender prior to forwarding the information or clicking on the link.

HEALTHLINES

Fraud and Abuse

Prevention and detection of fraud and abuse is in everyone's best interest. Preventing fraudulent activities can help lower costs, form a better provider network and create higher overall satisfaction for providers, their patients and employers. The U.S. government estimates that \$68 billion is lost to health care fraud annually.

What is dental fraud and abuse?

Fraud is any act of intentional deception or misrepresentation of any fact made for the purpose or likelihood of gaining an unauthorized benefit. Acts of dental fraud involve three defining features: intent, deception and unlawful gain.

What does an act of dental fraud look like?

- Performing services not clinically necessary or justified.
- Waiver of copayment or deductible. This results in a change in fees charged by the dentist, inconsistent with what the insurance carrier believes is being charged.
- Unlicensed personnel performing procedures (assistants, hygienists, etc).
- Unbundling of claims by submitting several procedures separately to receive higher reimbursements.
- Billing for services not performed or not completed.
- Altering records or claims for the purpose of enhancing billing.
- Misrepresentation of services (performing a cosmetic service but billing for a covered service).
- Misrepresentation of dates of service.
- Up-coding of dental procedures by submitting a claim for a procedure that is more complex than the one actually performed.



Healthplex SIU

Healthplex has provided an electronic mailbox for its Special Investigation Unit (SIU), to which either grievances or matters of suspected dental fraud and abuse can be forwarded. Please email us at Webcomplianceoffice@healthplex.com, or call the Compliance Hotline at (888) 468-5180 if you suspect fraudulent activity or have any questions about our fraud and abuse program. Please visit our website at www.healthplex.com for more information on dental fraud and prevention. **With your help, we can all benefit from prevention of fraud and abuse.**

CHECK IT OUT

Keep us Updated!

You may have noticed that Healthplex's Provider Relations Department is sending quarterly Substitute W-9/Office Information Forms to your office. We are periodically sending you this form in an effort to comply with standards put forth by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Please fill out the form and fax or mail it back to Healthplex Provider Relations so that we may update our systems accordingly.

In addition to filling out the form, please contact us at **any time** with changes to your practice (e.g. when you are adding a new practice location, changing a tax identification number, when a dentist joins or leaves your practice, etc.) We appreciate your continued cooperation with this matter.

You may fax any office changes to the Provider Relations fax lines. Our fax numbers are **(516) 228-9571** and **(516) 228-1326**.

Cultural/Linguistic Competency

Cultural competency is the ability of providers to work effectively with patients in cross-cultural situations. Culturally competent dental practices may experience improved patient care, improved patient satisfaction, decreased malpractice risk, and increased operational efficiency. For more information about cultural competency and its potential benefits, check out <https://www.thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/>.

Bits & Pieces: _____
 "Yesterday is not ours to recover, tomorrow is ours to win or lose."

 Lyndon B. Johnson

