

Ride the Wave: Utilize Remote Services

by Becky Gerber



In the past, doctors and team members have asked my thoughts regarding using remote technology and outsourcing insurance billing to third party companies. In thinking about it, businesses have been referring out certain front office tasks for years, and it has become extremely cost-effective in many ways.

Best example is Trojan Professional Services. For decades, they have been collecting money and giving dental practices up-to-the-minute insurance information and breakdowns, which would be time-consuming tasks if done in the office. More and more practices are relying on outsourced services for billing and benefit checks.

As a result, I have gathered information, listening to both pros and cons from providers, virtual assistants, and business owners. On the following page is a checklist of the tips I have prepared from those queries:

- **First and foremost, the Virtual Office Assistant should sign a Business Associate's Agreement (BAA) for HIPAA compliance.** Make sure the BAA includes all parties working on your account within the company. Also have a copy of that BAA in your HIPAA binder at the front desk.
- **Check references and/or ask for a resume.** If you are hiring a company, look at the reviews online. Ask around to see what other practices are saying about remote services. If hiring an individual, ask for a resume.
- **Confirm you will not pay the Virtual Office Assistant more than you would pay a front office team member for the same duties or job description.** The Virtual Office Assistant is an extension of the front desk. Try to instill the same personnel policies and job descriptions as if they were there, in person. Before outsourcing, check to see if the task or tasks can be assigned to another staff member.
- **Some companies charge hourly, while some charge per task, while still others charge a percentage.** Ask about charging policies when comparing services. Some companies charge a percentage of what is collected by the Virtual Office Assistant, incentivizing the work on your behalf. When paid hourly, some of the tasks that are tedious or time-consuming can be completed in less time, with fewer distractions. If paid hourly, have the Virtual Office Assistant clock in and out of your practice management software. If paid hourly, make sure the payment is in direct correlation with the task(s) you want completed.
- **It is beneficial to have the Virtual Office Assistant meet with the team or schedule weekly phone conferences with the office manager.** Some companies will have the Virtual Office Assistant visit the office annually to have that person participate in all front office functions for a period of time. Others will have the Virtual Office Assistant participate in team meetings via Skype or some other video platform. This gives that individual an opportunity to experience the work environment firsthand and communicate in person.
- **Confirm the time zone from which your Virtual Office Assistant is operating.** This is important so the office knows when to expect work to be completed. For example, can you expect end-of-day reports and billing finished by the next morning or that evening? This is significant information for the bookkeeper or accountant, as well.
- **Verify the Virtual Office Assistant has a separate folder on the practice desktop or furnishes a dedicated computer work station in your office.** The Virtual Office Assistant needs to be able to remote into the office computer daily or when a question comes up. If that means there should be a dedicated computer work station, make sure the Virtual Office Assistant can access necessary practice data in order to effectively do the job. Do not create extra work for the team by having them perform any unnecessary scanning of documents. All front office team members and Virtual Office Assistants need to properly coordinate duties in order to make most efficient use of time.
- **As a way of keeping control, all payments and EOBs must come directly to the office and be posted immediately.** Do not give the posting of payments or adjustments to the Virtual Office Assistant. This is one task that should not be outsourced for any reason because a physical deposit should be handed to doctor at the end of each day.
- **All documentation entered in the computer by the Virtual Office Assistant needs to be formatted properly with attention to detail, correct jargon, and initials.** Abbreviations are accepted as long as the entire team knows what those shortcuts mean. It is recommended the Virtual Office Assistant enter all notes in a different color font for proper clarification.
- **One of the benefits of remote service is that your Virtual Office Assistant does not get involved in the personal aspects or politics of the practice.** The Virtual Office Assistant can also become an unbiased form of checks and balances when reviewing and analyzing end-of-day, end-of-month, and end-of-year reports.

There are many reasons why a doctor finds it necessary to outsource certain tasks. Some providers will hire remote billers while their front office is in transition. Others may find the insurance department is behind. For whatever reason, do your homework, and make sure that hiring a Virtual Office Assistant will enhance and accelerate the process of attaining a positive bottom line. Do not let the outsourcing of front office functions become a crutch or an unnecessary luxury. Remember, outsourcing anything in the practice should allow the front office to focus on patient care, marketing, and promoting higher case acceptance.



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Ask the Consultant

Q: When we have a patient who refuses Periodontal Maintenance Treatment (and only wants his two free cleanings), the hygienist will have the patient sign an "Informed Refusal for Periodontal Treatment" form. Then, she will proceed to perform a debridement or D4346. The cleaning she administers is even more invasive than a perio maintenance procedure. Shouldn't we perform just a prophylaxis as the patient requests, clean just the surface of his teeth to the gum line? We have informed the patient about his periodontal disease and the repercussions of not treating the condition. The patient informs us on follow-up visits that his gums are fine, he has no bleeding, etc. Basically, we've been treating his Perio condition. Am I correct? Should the hygienist just perform a prophylaxis or refuse to treat the patient?

A: If you continue to treat this patient, from a legal aspect, you are "supervising neglect." As an alternative, the newer gingivitis treatment can be used for a patient without radiographic bone loss and at least 30% of the dentition shows inflammation.

Response provided by [Debbie Seidel-Bittke](#).

FUN! Fact

Did You Know?



At birth, the only fully developed human organ is **the tongue**.

Which might be helpful in saying the word ODONTALGIA, which means **toothache**.



Ancient Babylonians believed **evil spirits** caused toothaches.

A Siberian folk remedy for toothaches involved **gargling with vodka and garlic**.



Quote-Worthy

As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.

— John F. Kennedy





Service Savvy

Updating Trojan plans in Easy Dental

DOWNLOADING TROJAN BENEFITS FOR EASY DENTAL

(Trojan recommends you update once per week.)

- Double-click the **Download Benefit Update icon**. Your download will begin.
- The file transfer status screen shows the progress as each file downloads. The time remaining is indicated.
- When the download is complete, a screen with two options appears:
Click **Option 1) Click here to minimize this program**.
- This minimizes the Trojan Benefit Download program allowing you to update benefits in your Easy Dental.

UPDATING THE BENEFITS IN EASY DENTAL

The steps are minimal to update your Easy Dental system.

- Be sure all users are out of the **Trojan Viewer**. (They can still work in Easy Dental.)
- Double click the **Trojan Update Utility icon**. (If you do not have this icon on the Windows desktop, then you can click **Start, Programs, Easy Dental Trojan Viewer, Easy Dental Trojan Update Utility**.)

If you are unable to run the Trojan Data Update now, please call Software Support. **DO NOT DOWNLOAD A SECOND TIME!**

- When you have opened the **Easy Dental Trojan Update Utility**, click on **Database Update**.
Click **OK** to continue from the back-up message.
- Be sure all computers are exited from the Trojan Viewer and remain out for the entire update process.
- You are prompted to choose the location of your updates. In the Install Update from: box type the path **C:\tro**.
Then click on **OK** to proceed.

The Easy Dental Trojan Insurance Update will immediately begin to process your update. You will see a series of events processing, beginning with Deleting Records. **DO NOT STOP THE UPDATE**. Deleting records is a necessary process. Do not interrupt the update process once it has started.

- Click **OK** in the "Update complete" message.
- Click **File** and **Exit**.

You have now completed updating your Easy Dental with the latest Trojan benefits. Users may use Trojan again.

COMPLETING THE PROCESS

- Click on the **Trojan Communicator** that you minimized at the beginning of the process.
- Select **Option 2) Click here only after you have processed the Trojan update**.
- Confirm that you have processed the update by clicking **YES**.

If you were unable to process the downloaded files into your Easy Dental, **DO NOT DOWNLOAD A SECOND TIME!** You will have gaps in your data.

If you have any questions about updates for your office, please call Trojan's Software Support team at 800-451-9723, Ext. 1. We are here to help you Monday through Friday from 6 AM to 4 PM PST.

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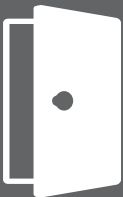
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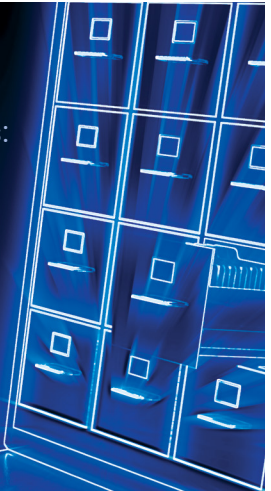
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— Elinor M.



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