THE DENTAL DOW—STILL CRUISING THROUGH 2015:
Comparing the first half of this year to last year for the sample mature area practices, we find practice production is up 6% and collections are up 5.5%, continuing the trend from the first quarter.

Total patient flow (as measured by exams) is up 3.5% with new patient exams up 6%. Crown and bridge is up 2.7%.

The gross collection percentage for the sampled practices is 85%, consistent with last year. I guess we can be happy that it hasn’t slipped another notch this year.

The trend to fuller Doctor and hygiene schedules continues too with Doctor downtime reduced by 15% and hygiene downtime by about 5%.

Back in the ‘90’s, 6% used to be sort of assumed background growth. Now, this is the best trend in many years and over 75% of sampled practices showed growth.

EVERYONE ON YOUR TEAM HAS TO DEAL WITH PATIENTS, MONEY AND INSURANCE. MAKE SURE THEY KNOW HOW!

Presented by Shelly Ryan

A Must for Your Team – Collections Made Comfortable is coming soon – Friday, November 6th: This seminar is almost always a sellout. Clients get first dibs! So CALL TODAY to reserve your space. $198 first person and $168 each additional. $20 discount per attendee if registered by September 15th.

WANT MORE NEW PATIENTS?
To Move the Numbers, You Have to Do a Number of Things:

Of course, almost every dentist wants more new patients and everyone is looking for the quickest, fastest way to do it…the “Silver Bullet”.

As you probably have heard Bill say many times before, “It is possible to get more new patients but you have to actually do something.”

Let’s talk about a recent case history—by recent I mean over the last 2 years. This practice has worked hard on a number of fronts: they polished up their website, got updated photos, made sure their online directories were straight, kept somewhat active with Facebook, experimented with Pay per Click and “Conversion Factors” on the website (e.g. offers and testimonials).

The staff was coached on “New Patient Readiness” making it more likely that patients’ phone calls or website visits turned into patients inside the office.

They even did call tracking to find out when new patients were calling in and the success rate in converting them.

They also used all the features on their digital communication system (in this case Demand Force).

The net result was the patients increased enough that now they’re getting over six months “extra” new patients per year (and their Continuing Care numbers are going up too).

Practice production is up over 15% this year.

For most solo practices, an increase of 6-10 new patients a month is all they want or need to keep their practice cruising. For this Doctor, it wasn’t just one thing. It wasn’t all that expensive or hard though either.

That’s why we believe in “Checklists”. We use Checklists to insure Continuing Care effectiveness, Collections effectiveness and so on. When our clients work with our “New Patient/Marketing Checklist” and complete it each month, we see the best results.

Every office should have a person in charge of their marketing efforts—if you’re serious about bringing in new patients, you have to designate a person to be in charge of that, just like there should be a specific person in charge of Continuing Care, Collections, etc. That’s how you insure that those advances on many fronts actually happen. Otherwise, they’re just good ideas (Thank you notes aren’t sent, reviews aren’t tracked or added to, website visitors aren’t converted into patients, etc.).

★★NEW SPECIAL SEGMENT★★
2015 and 2016 CDT Codes: Learn which codes get the best reimbursement and when to use them; How to get better reimbursement for ERPT’s; And more!
Are you serious about giving your marketing a push? Call me and we’ll come up with a specific plan for your office. It’s my job to support your staff, coach them and give them the advice they need to be successful. I also keep them accountable but I’m accountable too. Together we can make things happen.

BALANCING PPO PARTICIPATION:

For many practices, PPO participation is their biggest “expense” after staff wages (or even greater than wages in some cases). Historically, practice collection percentages have been 95%+ (of gross production). Now it’s not uncommon to see collection percentages of 70%-80%...and sometimes less.

Most dentists join a PPO in the hopes of gaining and retaining patients. No dentist likes to lose patients and when you do lose a patient because you’re “not on their network”, it can be a powerful inducement to sign up for the PPO.

Once you are participating with a PPO, it’s easy to feel there is no other choice. But, please note the data below. Most PPO’s have participation of 45%-60% of offices in this particular survey. Granted, that’s the majority of offices. But for any of the individual PPO’s noted, 40% - 55% of offices aren’t participating. So for every plan you feel you must have, keep in mind there are a lot of Doctors that are surviving without having it.

And, if you aren’t participating in any PPO’s but your practice is foundering, maybe some participation would be worthwhile.

Insurance companies have the upper hand but things don’t have to all go their way! You do have power. Don’t assume that you have to be participating as much as you are. For most practices, a reasonable mix of PPO’s is what makes most sense. As practices mature and succeed, they are likely able to cut back on PPO participation. And, if you’re mostly busy, it doesn’t make sense to work at deep discounts.

Decisions regarding PPO participation involve serious risks and rewards. Too often Doctors will sign up with a PPO too quickly, or when they decide to leave PPO’s, leave them too recklessly. Every office must carefully consider its PPO participation. Smart moves here can add more to your bottom line than practically any other thing you can do.

These stats are from a survey of 59 East Coast offices** PPO participation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PPO</th>
<th>% of Offices Participating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BCBS</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MetLife</td>
<td>46%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aetna</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cigna</td>
<td>58%</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Concordia</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>61%</td>
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44% of offices participated in 2-4 plans, with 30% participating in 0-1 plans and 26% participating in all 5 plans.

GOODBYE JOE, IT WAS A PLEASURE KNOWING YOU!

As you may have heard, Dr. Joe Steven, lecturer, author and founder of “Kisco”, passed away May 22nd.

Shelly and I always enjoyed our professional collaboration with Joe. He was such a down to earth guy and practiced what he preached. Shelly travelled with Dr. Steven doing seminars all across the country. Many of you have told us you’ve enjoyed his “bread and butter” approach.

We, along with many others, will miss Joe and send our condolences to his team, family and friends.

**The survey itself was conducted by Alan Schiff & Associates, www.shiffcpa.com