

Advance Your Full-Mouth Treatment Plans to GO!

By: Laurie Owens CPC, CPB

Monopoly, a great game of strategy that advances you around the board to purchase various properties (except Boardwalk, because it is so very expensive) and trying to get a monopoly of the same color places. The one thing I always looked forward to is the chance card that would advance you to Go. Why do you ask? Because you get extra money by landing on Go!

You may be thinking, what on earth does a board game have to do with medical billing for full-mouth treatment plans? Thank you for asking! As I recall the game, there are several types of players that are guaranteed to not win. Which one are you?

The Distracted One

This type of player does not pay attention to the board or where the other players are, even having no idea if another player owes them money by landing on their property. Now think about this type of person in the dental office looking to bill medical insurance. When you do not ask questions or should I say the right questions, you cannot establish **medical necessity**. Not paying attention to medical conditions that have oral manifestations or the exacerbation of these conditions because of the problems of the mouth, can be detrimental to successful medical billing for dentistry. The result is worse than losing the game, it is not helping your patient get healthy. I have a saying, no one loses all their teeth or needs full mouth crowns for no reason...ask questions. Here are some of my favorite questions:

1. Have you had any new prescriptions?
2. If I were to ask you to spit in a cup when you wake up, could you do it without any difficulty?
3. Has your doctor prescribed a higher or lower dosage in the last year?
4. If yes, have you noticed any side effects like nausea, dry mouth, tired, hungry, not hungry?
5. I noticed you have Lupus, can you describe to me what a bad day may look like for you (as in, cannot get out of bed, sore body or joints, etc)?

Giving them some options of what you are looking for can spark a thought or help them remember something.

Controller of the Board

This player is a strong player and wants to make sure that all the best properties are purchased...by them. They may even make sure that people are taking turns quickly by handing them the dice. Now think of a person in dental that may have this strong presence; a patient may feel strong-armed and without options by someone that must be in charge. Be present during the consult and listen to where the patient is at emotionally and financially.

Giving our patient's a payment option such as [CareCredit](#) is not a weakness, it shows strength and understanding of your doctor. I would also like to add that it gives time for the medical claim to be processed. Please do not tell your patient that medical will take care of it and they have nothing to worry about...that is a recipe for disaster. Even on the medical insurances I know best, I do not say that medical will cover a dime because you never know 100% that it will be processed the way you think. It only takes one disappointed patient to give a bad review.

Incognito Player

With every roll, this player calculates what number needs to show up to get them around the other properties, thus limiting interaction with another player. In the dental office, this team member will show a patient with not only presence, but with voice inflection, that maybe the doctor is not right. Being confident and caring shows that your doctor wants the best treatment for your patients. If there ever needs to be a change in treatment either by phase or type, **always** let the patient know that you will need to check with the doctor...**never** undermine authority. For medical billing, if you present to the patient that you have a good case, it can come off to the patient that you are unsure just by your voice inflection. You can be confident without promising.

Advancing your full mouth cases to GO requires an understanding of the procedures as well as medical difficulties that compromise the oral cavity. Education on this is the best way to make it around the board and for successful treatment for your patients. After all, isn't that why we are in dentistry...to help our patient's achieve great health?



Laurie Owens CPC, CPB

As the Director of Medical Billing Education for Devdent, Laurie brings over a decade of experience educating dental practices on billing medical insurance and the techniques to get claims paid. Laurie believes that patients should be able to utilize their medical insurance for procedures due to oral systemic conditions.