

**For the attendees of Dr David Crane's Kauai Seminar February 07
Jennifer de St. Georges' communication and management approach
for handling some key aspects of patient management**

Scheduling Emergencies

1. Scheduling the emergency patient:

"Dr is committed to being available for patients in pain. We keep special time open each morning just for patients needing this immediate service. Our special time this morning is 9.30 a.m."

2. When emergency patient initially not able to come to phone to personally answer staff's questions, we need to make that happen!:

"Mrs. Spouse, we've 13 medical/dental questions we need to ask your husband, such as; how long has it been hurting off/on, how long has it been hurting constantly, does he have a temperature, is it swollen, does it hurt to hot or cold or both. We'll need him to return our call in order that we may best serve his needs. When may I expect him to call me?"

3. Walk-in Emergencies:

"We're sorry you found yourself unable to telephone us in advance to tell us of your problem. Let me take some details (scheduling coordinator interviews patient using telephone slip). Let me check with Debbie, our senior clinical assistant, to see if, or when, we'll have a treatment room available this morning.....please take a seat"



Scheduling New Patient Exams

1. New patient examination. Confirming with patient procedures to be performed on initial visit

"Mrs. New Patient, Dr., will be prescribing a range of necessary X-rays, doing the full diagnosis, taking blood pressure and doing oral cancer examination. (Adjust dialogue to fit your practice's specific needs.)

2. New Patient asks to have teeth cleaned on initial visit when practice does it on subsequent visit:

"We used to clean patients' teeth on the initial visit. We've found it is in our patient's best interest to do any necessary cleaning or cleanings on a subsequent visit or visits, when their appointment or appointments can be customized to the individual needs of each patient."



When and How to Discuss \$ with New Patients

1. New patients calling for a new patient examination:

Following statement made at the end of conversation when the emotional and clinical needs of the patient have been met.

"We ask that all new patients joining the practice, take care of the charges in full on their initial visit, regardless of any insurance involvement."

**2. Patient calls for emergency appointment conversation ends with same dialogue above.
However, if patient shares with us they don't have the money:**

"Mr. Patient, thank you for sharing that information with us. We really appreciate you being so up front. We'll plan on still seeing you at 10.00 a.m. this morning. Regarding payment for today's visit, we are able to take a personal check or use MasterCard or Visa. Oh, you don't have a personal checking account or credit card. I'm sure payday is Friday, so plan on being here today at 10.00 am. We'll make a note you'll return on Friday with your payment."

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P. O. Box 9369, Salt Lake City, Utah 84109

800-366-7004 Fax 866-379.7004

Email: info@jdsg.com Web: AskJennyForHelp.com

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3. Patient at the end of the visit who is found to have 'forgotten' their checkbook:

"Mrs. Patient, let me give you a self-addressed envelope. Please drop your check for \$XX the mail later today when you get home. I'll note on your records that you'll be doing that. We'll look for your check by Friday."

4. Offering a patient a choice of how to pay for treatment

"We've 3 financial options available Option #1 is..... Option #2 is..... Option #3 is..... which one best suits your needs?"

5. Patient who complains about the fees being too high:, too expensive etc

"We're very proud of the fees we charge; they reflect our very high quality of care & commitment to excellence."

If you feel you would like to have a longer dialog, the following is a good foundation

"Mrs. Patient, this treatment is both extensive and expensive. Certainly the cost to bring your mouth back to optimum health is a long term financial investment. Not having been to a dentist for ten years has indeed resulted in some major treatment now being needed. If rendered some time ago, it would have been more of a minor, and less expensive, treatment. However, once you have made this financial and time investment in your dental health, we encourage you to become part of our Continuing Care Program. This will protect your dental health and keep your maintenance costs to a minimum."

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