

EP. 10 5 Benchmarks of a Profitable Hygiene Department

Is your Hygiene Department as profitable as it could be? We often have doctors tell us that they have a great hygiene team, that they are great people and that their patients love them.

That's always a good start, but are they maximizing their relationships with the patients to be as profitable as they can be? If not, everyone loses! The patient may not be getting the high-level services that they deserve to hear about, the practice is not reaping the benefits of the additional profits coming from that, and the hygienist is ultimately missing opportunities to be more profitable.

Here are Five Benchmarks of a highly profitable Hygiene Department:

- 1. 75% of doctor treatment should be diagnosed out of the hygiene chair.** This is not recommending the hygienist "diagnose", but you certainly want the hygienist to be constantly educating and showing the patient what they need during that appointment. Using IO Cameras, x-rays, chair side tools, etc., and then passing that information off to the doctor in handoff. Treatment acceptance should be a number that is being tracked.
- 2. Hygiene downtime should be 5% or less.** The most common frustration we hear from doctors is same-day cancellations. This is a costly issue to every practice, and should be intentionally worked on to make sure that number stays low. There should be an "owner" of the recare process, but each hygienist should be working the process every time there is an opening in the schedule. This should be a priority for downtime and should be tracked for accountability.
- 3. 25%-40% of all hygiene codes should be the active perio disease codes.** Often hygienists believe they are treating "a lot of perio" but in reality, when an analysis is done, it is much lower than that and often in the single digits. Having these percentages reach the benchmark means you have patients who are being diagnosed and accepting the perio treatment they need, and also that profits in the hygiene department are higher as a result.

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4. Hygienist is producing 3 times her/his salary. A hygienist who is only offering the preventive services that insurance covers may not be producing three times their salary. Again-- everyone loses. If the hygienist is making little effort to offer additional, beneficial services, the patient is missing out. The practice is losing because the revenue is not being maximized as it should be in the Hygiene Department.

5. The Hygiene Department contributes to at least 33% of overall office production. This goes hand-in-hand with the one above. Many offices don't even know the percentage, and when it is tracked it is often in the 25% range. If your percentage is less than a third, it may indicate that your hygiene team needs additional training. There is SO much more that hygiene teams can offer that is in the best interest of the patient and that patients will actually accept in spite of insurance not covering.

Evaluate your practice according to these benchmarks to ensure that your hygiene team is practicing to the highest potential.