

BITINGedge is a publication produced by Ameritas Life Insurance Corp.
for dentists involved in managed dental care plans.

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BITING edge

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Who's Who



April Smith

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Meet April Smith, a senior provider network specialist for our Eastern U.S. region. Her office is located at First Ameritas Life Insurance Corp. of New York in Suffern, N.Y.

April joined Ameritas in 1998 as a provider network specialist. Her major job responsibilities include recruiting and retaining providers, conducting quality assurance visits of panel dental offices, and representing Ameritas at area dental conventions. A California Association of Dental Plans certified procedural auditor, April has completed the Dental Assistants National Board's Infection Control Examination and also is certified as an OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) compliance specialist.

April's hobbies include golf and reading. She recently became engaged to Anthony, a corrections officer at Rahway State Prison in New Jersey. The two enjoy participating in charity runs on his Harley-Davidson.

Happy Holidays!

Technology Investment to Benefit Dentists and Insurers Alike

Faster claim submission and reimbursement. Less paperwork. Lower office costs. Access to more online dental resources and claim information than ever before.

Ameritas has joined forces with Aetna, Delta Dental Plan of Michigan, Delta Dental Plan of New Jersey, Delta Dental Plan of Wisconsin, The Guardian Life Insurance Company of America, MetLife and Dental Benefit Providers (the dental subsidiary of UnitedHealth Group) in a cooperative technology venture aimed at putting the resources of eligibility and benefit plan information and streamlined claim submission at dentists' fingertips.

These companies have invested in Dental Connect, Inc., a technology company based in Irvine, Calif. A pioneer in developing Internet software to connect dental offices and insurance companies, Dental Connect operates dentalxchange.com, a web site that allows dentists to submit claims and pre-treatment estimates to all carriers **at no cost**. For some carriers, dentists can also check patient eligibility, benefits information and the status of submitted claims – all in real time. More patient and plan information from other carriers will be added as the functionality becomes available. This service is open to every carrier and dentist; exclusivity is not requested from anyone who uses the service. Currently thousands of providers submit free e-claims daily at www.dentalxchange.com. Dentists can submit single claims online or batch claims through their practice management system.

"We couldn't be more pleased that this sophisticated group of companies selected Dental Connect to provide these services," said Dental Connect's CEO Richard Lee. "It validates our belief that using the right technology can lead to a better experience for both dentists and patients, and at the same time save money for carriers and dentists alike. It is exciting to be part of an effort that will drive the behavior that may forever change the way dentists and carriers do business."

For more information about Dental Connect, call 1-800-624-2904 or visit www.dentalxchange.com. For general electronic claims questions, please call Ameritas' Tish Kohler at 1-800-487-5553, ext. 7829, or email tkohler@ameritas.com.

Dentalxchange is a licensed trademark of Dental Connect, Inc.

February is National Children's Dental Health Month

The American Dental Association held the first national observance of Children's Dental Health Day on February 8, 1949. This single day observance became a week-long event in 1955. In 1981, the program was extended to a month-long celebration now known as National Children's Dental Health Month.

Today, National Children's Dental Health Month messages reach millions of people in communities across the country and at numerous armed service bases abroad. Local observances often include poster, coloring and essay contests; health fairs; free dental screenings; museum exhibits; classroom presentations; and dental office tours.

The American Dental Association produces a program planning kit for its state and local societies and dental alliances to assist them in local promotional efforts. Planning kits include a poster, planning workbook, suggested resources, reproducible handouts and publicity information. Posters are also available to the dental societies for use in classroom visits. For additional information visit www.ada.org.

Source: the American Dental Association

Out with the old, in with the new ...

CDT-4 Codes Effective January 1

As reported in the previous issue of *Biting Edge*, CDT-4 – the new version of dental codes established by the American Dental Association – takes effect with the new year. Changes to the codes will impact providers as they report services and affect insurance companies as they consider those services.

At Ameritas we have been working diligently to have our system ready to process CDT-4 codes by January 1. Claims with dates of service prior to January 1, 2003, will be processed using CDT-3 codes.

During past revisions, we have accepted frequently submitted obsolete codes and processed them with a similar code. We can continue to accept the codes listed below through February to give dentists additional time to integrate the ADA changes into their practice; however, we must phase out obsolete CDT-1 and 2 codes to assure we are in compliance with ADA guidelines and HIPAA mandates.

Starting March 1, 2003, we will no longer be able to accept obsolete CDT-1 or 2 codes including: 0110, 0130, 1220, 1230, 9240. If we receive a claim with an obsolete code on or after March 1, we will send the insured member and the dental office an explanation of why we are not able to process the claim.

We realize that the transition to CDT-4 requires adjustments in how dentists submit claims for their office, just as we're required to adjust our claims system. We want to assist you in any way we can. Please contact our claims department at 1-800-487-5554 or www.group.ameritas.com with any questions or concerns you have.

Helpful Reminders

If you use practice management system software, please contact your vendor about getting an update that incorporates the new codes.

To order a copy of the new CDT-4 manual, contact ADA catalog sales at 1-800-947-4746 or www.ada.org. (A spiral-bound manual costs \$34.95 for ADA members, \$52.95 for nonmembers. The cost for a binder version is \$39.95 ADA members, \$59.95 nonmembers.)

If you have questions about the new codes or their definitions, please call the ADA at 1-800-621-8099.

2003 Fee Schedule

As 2002 draws to a close, contracted fees are being revised. Participating providers on the Ameritas PPO panel and the prepaid specialists will likely see an increase in their maximum allowable charges effective January 1, 2003.

The 2003 fee schedule will also include the new CDT-4 procedure codes.

We want to express our thanks to our panel providers for the excellent care and service they gave our insured members throughout 2002. As we ring in a new year, we pledge to continue a valuable partnership that will help create member/patient satisfaction and a successful 2003 for all!

If you are interested in contributing to *Biting Edge*, please e-mail Lori McPherson at lmcperson@ameritas.com.

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