

The Denturist Association of Canada Network, DACnet, was officially launched in July of 2007 with Greenshield and First Canadian Health as the first carriers to accept transmissions from denturists. DACnet is using the same protocol and network that dentists use so, in theory, it should not be a big deal for all insurance carriers that accept claims for dentists to accept claims for denturists. But we are dealing with insurance companies. Being the lead programmer for the only software company that exclusively services denturists, I have found myself in the unique position of educating and helping insurance companies make necessary changes to their systems to accommodate denturists. This has taken an extraordinary amount of time and while it has delayed the release of own product development on DOMx, I believe the ability to electronically submit claims serves the denturist community well.

Which companies are E-Billing for denturists?

As of September 2009 the following companies are accepting electronically transmitted claims from denturists:

ALBERTA BLUE CROSS
ALBERTA DENTAL SERVICES CORP
AUTOBEN
COUGHLIN & ASSOCIATES
FIRST CANADIAN HEALTH
GREAT WEST LIFE
GREEN SHIELD CANADA
JOHNSTON GROUP
LA CAPITALE
MANION WILKINS
MANITOBA BLUE CROSS
MEDAVIE BLUE CROSS
PACIFIC BLUE CROSS
QUIKCARD
STANDARD LIFE
SUN LIFE CANADA

How well has electronic billing been working ?

In short, electronic billing has been working very well for most clinics. Pre-authorizations and claims have been adjudicated with less errors and much faster. Some companies such as Green Shield give immediate **Explanation Of Benefits** and pre-authorizations online. This means you get instant pre-authorization amounts and claim adjudication amounts. Other companies such as Great West Life and Medavie Blue Cross give **Claim Acknowledgments** online. This means the denturist submits the claim or pre-auth instantly online and Great West Life acknowledges that it has been received and that they will be mailing you a response. Denturists report that this has sped up the process of pre-authorizations from 4 to 6 weeks to less than 10 days. And money for claims is also received in under 10 days.

The most common issues that have arisen are: issues of registration, user input errors, and line transmission errors.

The issues with registration revolved around the individual insurance carriers not updating their list of denturists enrolled in ebilling because they kept assuming the denturists are included with the dentists submitted by the Canadian Dental Association. So in some cases it took some time before an individual denturist was recognized by some companies. However registration is going a lot smoother now.

User input errors are easily overcome as users become used to how picky the electronic format is. For example, a patient name must match exactly what the insurance company has on file so if the name is "Michael" it must be "Michael" and not "Mike". Dependant numbers can not be blank, the birthday must be correct etc. etc.

Line transmission errors are eliminated if the denturist elects to send the electronic claims over an internet connection rather than a regular phone line. See below.

Phone line vs Internet

When denturists sign up for electronic billing most assume it will go through the internet. However, signing up for DACnet by itself will only grant a denturist the ability to send a claim over a regular phone line. This means the denturist would have to plug a regular phone line into the back of their computer. DOM would then use this phone line to dial up individual insurance companies and send the data over the phone line and not the internet. This technology is less than ideal and can be prone to line transmission failures with vary in frequency depending the unique location of the clinic and the physical phone lines it will travel through. The internet is a far better way to submit claims.

Why the internet is better than a phone line:

- Phone lines are analog and claim transmissions are binary signal can be degraded and lost/fail.
- There can be compatibility issues between your computer's 56 k datafax modem and the corresponding insurance company.
- Each insurance company only has a specific number of lines set to receive phoned in electronic claims and that could mean a busy signal.
- Internet has none of the above issues and is much easier to setup.

For an extra fee the denturist can submit claims over the internet through DOM and the iTrans network. Read on.

iTrans

The protocol that DACnet uses was developed by technicians at the Canadian Dental Association. Those same folks realized how much more effective sending claims would be over the internet and started a private company called Continovation. This company created a secure format to send claims over the internet. Your DOM practice management software can send claims over internet if the denturist has also signed up with iTrans as well as DACnet. The extra cost of iTrans is \$127 per year. Users can sign up by visiting www.goitrans.com or call the good folks at DOM 1-800-495-8771 and we will help you out.

How to get setup ?

Easiest way is to call DOM at 1-800-495-8771 and we help you with the following steps:

- 1) **DACnet Registration**
ph: 604-538-3123 email: dacadenturist@telus.net
- 2) **iTrans Registration**
ph: 1 866 788 1212
- 3) **DOM software setup**
ph: 1-800-495-8771

Dean Fenwick is the lead software developer for the DOM (Denturist Office Manager) practice management system for denturists. Dean has been helping denturists improve practice management across Canada for the last 8 years. Before his work with denturists, Dean was a computer science and business teacher at both the high school and college level.