# HIPAA Compliance on EHR from the ADA

*by Ramon Garcia, Account Executive*

Many questions have been swirling around regarding Electronic Health Records (EHR) and paperless offices. The questions revolve around the need to go fully electronic by a certain date. While it is not a regulation that will engage police-like enforcement, the ADA is highly recommending health care providers to get most, if not all, of their patient records into an electronic shareable format in order to be a part of the National Health Information Infrastructure (NHII).

The following are excerpts from a publication titled Dental Records, released by the ADA in 2010. These excerpts relate directly to EHR. To read the complete publication, go to http://www.ada.org/sections/professionalResources/pdfs/dentalpractice_dental_records.pdf

## National Health Information Infrastructure

How the dental practice manages dental records will change rapidly in the future. There is currently a new initiative to create electronic health records for patients that could be accessed by all health care providers. The goal is for patient records to be available to all health care providers electronically, virtually anywhere in the country, through an interoperable system.

Scheduled for completion in 2015, the National Health Information Infrastructure (NHII) will be a communications system comparable to a network of highways, roads and pathways on which all health information will travel. Its purpose is to enable patients' electronic health records to be accessed and added to by all health care providers electronically (with patient authorization), virtually anywhere in the country, via the network. The electronic health record will include health information entered for a specific patient at a specific point of service. It will travel and be accessible on the NHII.

Falling under the purview of the Department of Health and Human Services, HHS envisions regional collaborations among health care entities, including dentists and other health care practitioners, so that a patient's information can be securely stored in the local community and made electronically accessible to all health care providers involved in treatment of a particular patient.

For updates on this evolving topic, go to the American Dental Association Web site, www.ada.org.

## Making the Transition to a Paperless Office

Digital patient records are an increasingly common practice management tool as technology advances and become more effective. During the transition from a paper dental office to an electronic one, manual filing and record keeping continue to be extremely important. Dentists should educate themselves as to the legal, ethical, and technological issues that are related to an electronic medium — including whether state law mandates backup paper record keeping.

Some states may have "quill" laws that fail to recognize certain types of electronic records as valid in legal proceedings. Carefully check laws related to electronic record keeping as changes in this area occur rapidly.

Even with advancing technologies, practitioners and staff must realize that the transition to "paperless records" is not seamless, totally safe, or problem-free and may not eliminate the need to keep paper records due to legal requirements in some states.

No matter what precautions are taken, there is still a possibility that someone might gain access to stored electronic information. Computer viruses and other computer hardware and software problems can cause information to be lost, as well.
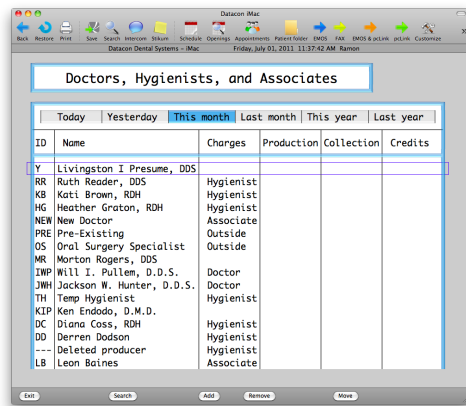
An increasing number of dental offices are using electronic communication and information technologies. The field of dental informatics, "the application of computer and information science to improve dental practice, research, education, and management," is emerging to work with computer science and telecommunications to bring all of these concepts into workable tools of the future. Dental informatics is helping to develop ways to implement the "sharing" of medical information, yet keep it from unauthorized individuals and comply with HIPAA and other legal requirements.

Interprofessional communications will improve, as dentists will be able to consult more quickly and in greater detail electronically with other healthcare professionals such as physicians, radiologists, pharmacists, psychologists, and nutritionists to deliver the best possible dental care.

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# Clean Up Your Doctor File
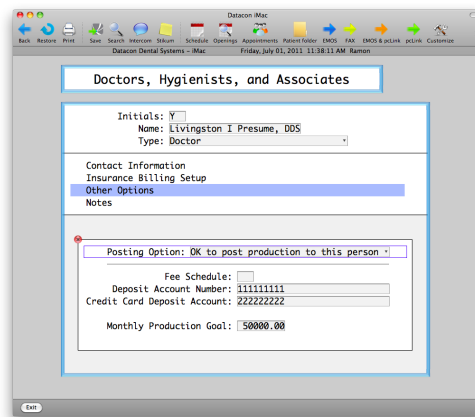
*by Laura Andersen, Software Support*



Did you know the order that producers come up in while posting charges is directly related to the list order in *Doctors* on the *Main Menu*? This order can be changed to accommodate your preferred order. Some offices prefer the doctor to be the first choice, while others prefer the producer that works most often. It's up to you.

There are now new ways to organize and clean up the list of Doctors and producers on your system. If you want to move a producer up or down on the list, put your cursor around the producers name and click on the new "Move" button at the bottom of the screen. Then use your up or down arrow keys to get it to the place you want it and then hit Return to set it.

If you want to remove a producer from the choices while posting charges, simply select "Other options" on that producer and toggle "OK to post production to this person" to either "Production posting not allowed" for a temporary removal, or "Inactive doctor or producer" for a permanent removal. This will not remove them from the system, just from the choice to post production to them.



# The All Mac Office:
## PLANMECA's Romexis Software is Mac Friendly

For those offices looking for a Mac solution to digital Xrays, PLANMECA has recently released software that is compatible with the Mac OS. Used in conjunction with PLANMECA sensors, Romexis software allows your office to acquire images from an Apple computer and store your digital Xrays on your MacPro server. Datacon has built a bridge into our latest version of pcLink for Mac. Your office can also import past Xrays and images into Romexis for viewing (picture, left). Contact your local supplier for a demo on PLANMECA. View their website at www.planmecausa.com

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Romexis software is a complete-solution software package for acquisition, viewing, and rendering in multiple dimensions, multi-views, and multi-planes such as coronal, axial, and sagittal. Romexis encompasses all aspects of 2D and 3D imaging, including printing, sharing, and interactive diagnostics. PLANMECA Romexis Software is now compatible with Apple computers. All PLANMECA X-ray models feature full Mac OS support, which allows 2D and 3D images to be sent to an iPhone and iPad for diagnosis.