Roadmap to a Paperless Office
Are you ready for a Chartless Future?

by Terri Evans, RDA, Founder of Digital Record Storage Solutions

How the dental practice manages dental records will change rapidly in the future. There is currently an initiative to create Electronic Health Records (EHR) 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.

Why do we need a National Health Information Infrastructure? Computerized health care records will be accessible to all health care professionals (with the patients consent). All the patients' information will be in one place for all their health care providers to view. Providers won't have to rely on the patients' memory for important information. Such information includes:

- Allergies the patient may have to medication
- Medications the patient may be currently taking
- Premedication requirements
- Complete dental and medical history

As part of his plan to revive the U.S. economy, President Obama plans to invest billions of federal dollars on health information technology. This is not a new plan; it was initiated by President Bush in 1996. The federal National Health Information Infrastructure (NHII) has been formulating the parameters for future guidelines. Chartless electronic records are not a choice. The year 2015 is only four years away, which can seem far until one remembers 2000, when the Y2K computer update was supposedly going to create computer failure. Computers needed upgrades to insure "00" meant "2000", not 1900. As 2000 approached, finding qualified technicians became a concern for those who waited.

Most corporations, businesses, and governments are interconnected with computers. Yet adoption in health care has been slow. Hospitals, physicians' offices, and other healthcare providers are moving in this direction, yet dentistry is moving much slower. Very few offices are prepared for 2015 deadline. Approximately 25% of practices are using computers chairside, and only 1% of dental offices are completely chartless.

"Chartless" is not "paperless". It is not realistic to think that dental offices can operate without paper. Almost all dental offices have paper documents that need to be retained at least as long as

Your new filing system.

state and federal laws dictate, usually 7 years. These include the following documents:

- Financial information
- Confidentiality Statements
- Patient treatment information with original patient signatures

With today's digital technology, these documents, including X-rays, can be digitally stored indefinitely. Digital storage is the recommended form of document storage according to the California Dental Association (CDA) guidelines. Items that are stored electronically can also be submitted to the NHII database as needed and required.

2015 is not as far off as it seems. Take steps now to be ready for the change.

Contact Terri Evans, RDA, Founder of Digital Record Storage Solutions at 530-417-1010 or email her at storagesolution6@aol.com.

Helpful Links:
http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/
http://healthit.hhs.gov
http://www.ada.org/news/4603.aspx

Integrating Software with Datacon

by Ramon Garcia, Account Executive

If you're getting a new software package for your X-ray machine, intraoral camera, or pano machine then you should be talking to Datacon to be sure that your software integration, or bridge, will be set up. Likewise, if you already have a software that hasn't been integrated with Datacon, then contact us so that we can get your system synchronized.

Datacon integrates with most major imaging software. If you have a question about a system that you own, or intend to purchase, then call us so that we can either plan to integrate, or create a new integration, for your practice.

Sometimes, account reps may be misinformed about their product's integration capabilities, or they may have an incentive to move another practice management software that falls under their corporate umbrella. Either way, don't accept the answer that you would have to change software platforms in order to use your new piece of equipment. (It should also raise a red flag when you're told you can only use a certain practice management software with a certain set of equipment.)

Datacon was deliberately created as an open system. The agile and flexible nature of Datacon give our clients the options to choose their own equipment without restriction. This encourages more competition in the market, while requiring vendors to always be improving their product. It will also allow Datacon to integrate with new and future technologies that have yet to be created.

Below is only a sample group of products that Datacon currently integrates with:

PLANMECA
TigerView
DEXIS
schick
XDR

GENDEX
Kodak Dental Systems
sirona The Dental Company

and many more...

Did you know that we integrate with more than just equipment software? Datacon also integrates with Microsoft Office applications like Word, Excel and Outlook.

Work with us to develop your email correspondence with your patients. Send out reminders and confirmations automatically. Send as batch emails or individual ones. Leverage your productivity tools to create a better relationship with your patients.

Export reports and statistics to Microsoft Excel. Use the information and data to create stunning charts and graphs, develop business plans, and prepare for future business decisions.

Using form fields, your most often used word processing documents will import the patient information you designate. Work with Datacon to get trained on how to create awesome Word docs that will speed your day along,

Datacon has the capability to notify your patients of appointments via text messaging. Be sure to get your patients' cell phone number and carrier to provide this exciting service.

The integration buttons on your toolbar can be configured to launch just about any application or open a file you commonly use. Perhaps you have a PDF you often print out for your clients, or you need to jump into QuickBooks a few times a day. The integration toolbar is a great place to put a hot button for oft-used items.

We are always improving our use with other dental practice and business tools. If you have a product that you are currently using or have the plan to use, then please contact us about it. We would be happy to share our plans with you on the integration development. Your input is very valuable to us. Contact Datacon today.

Upcoming Classes and Events

March
Wednesday, 3/9
9 am - 2 pm
New User Seminar*

Thursday, 3/24
9 am - 12 pm
Air-tight Recall Training*

April
Friday, 4/1
9 am - 12 pm
Schedule Profiles*

Monday, 4/25
9 am - 12 pm
New User Seminar *

May
Tuesday, 5/3
9 am - 2 pm
New User Seminar *

Thursday-Saturday, 5/12-14
CDA Spring Session
Anaheim, CA

Thursday, 5/26
9 am - 12 pm
Power User Seminar *

* Qualifies for CE Credits