

# Dr. Samy's Smile Update



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## Management of Dental Treatment

The art and science of Dentistry has evolved significantly in the past few years. Techniques are more predictable and treatment options have become more complex. This adds challenges to management of treatment for people. If there are no complex health problems, then it is most often and individual's decision which dictates treatment options.

The most common concerns we hear in Dentistry are related to anxiety and finances. The old days of belt driven dental drills and treatment without anesthetic are long gone! We now have various local anesthetics to choose from and can also use sedation techniques to help an individual tolerate the treatment and relax. The financial investment for bringing someone up to healthy level in Dentistry can also be overwhelming. This again is most often driven by the treatment option(s) chosen.

The average "New Patient" in our practice has not seen a dentist for 4-5 years. Therefore the treatment issues can become much more complex than a person who goes to the dentist regularly. When developing a treatment plan, I always attempt to address the "basics" first. In other words, I try to clear up any infections, cavities and periodontal (gum) problems. Once I have established a pattern of stability for teeth, then I would make an attempt to better an individual's health / situation using various techniques and approaches.

In the new era of third party billing (insurance), an individual most often has limitations placed on financial assistance for the treatment they receive. This often is presented as "the insurance company said I didn't need it". The thing to remember is that there are so many plans and insurance products, that it virtually becomes a full time job attempting to keep track of the companies. Often the same company will have up to 30 different products available!

The American Dental Association along with the majority of dentists are recommending "Direct Reimbursement" which is a cafeteria type medical savings plan. This appears to be the most logical and practical approach to long term financial planning for dental treatment. If you have questions regarding your dental plan, or a problem with a reimbursement level, contact your employer or insurance company. As always we'll be more than happy to help you with this.

### About Us

Another thanks! To all of you who have been referring your friends and relatives to us for dental care. We are pleased to know you are happy with the treatment you receive in our office.

Our practice grows and develops by "word of mouth,"— as many of you who have been with us for a long time are very healthy and have few dental problems to correct.

## Dr. Samy's Perspectives

- You've probably heard me say "Short – Mid – Long" term treatment by now, this is my approach to breaking up dental treatment so it does not become overwhelming.
- When dental insurance became available to the public the average yearly benefits were \$1,500. After 40 years of existence, the average yearly benefits are still \$1,500. Hence, dental insurance has become a limitation rather than a benefit!
- It takes a long time for a dentist to learn how to create restorative references and get a person into a "holding pattern" without having to go back and "re-do" treatment in order to get better results.

Dentistry, for the most part, is a self-regulating profession. However, like many professions there are increasing agencies being created to assure “compliance.” No one really seems to know what we should comply to. Common sense, high degree of integrity and self-expectations are the only guidelines we have to help us with these new agencies. For many industries, regulation tends to increase business cost and decrease efficiency with minimal benefit to the end user (consumer). Many people are not aware of the amount of regulation the health care profession has.

### **What is HIPAA?**

**Health Insurance Portability Accountability Act** was a bill passed by our previous congress to help protect patient information sharing between insurance companies and expedite health insurance payments.

This created a new regulatory agency for health care providers. It has now become a major issue for every health care provider to become compliant, if they choose to help their patient’s bill health insurance plans.

Health care consumers must now give written permission to their provider to be able to share information, which is considered private. In the end this regulatory act will increase bureaucracy and decrease efficiency for everyone involved.

### **What is OSHA?**

**Occupational Safety and Health Administration** is an agency that mostly deals with employee safety issues. However, since the late 1980’s they have increased their regulatory powers for the health care profession.

Their main concern in the health care field is asepsis and prevention of infections for health care workers. More recently they are making an attempt to improve the work environment for ergonomic issues. They require very specific documentation and / or training.

In our office, we have to have initial training for all staff as well as continue certification training at least once per year.

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