Learning Objectives
Lesson 62.1: Operating Procedure Manual, Computer Applications, Record Keeping, and Filing

1. Pronounce, define, and spell the key terms.
2. Discuss the elements of the operating procedure manual.
3. Discuss computer applications in the dental office.
4. Discuss record keeping, including types of practice records and files.
5. Discuss guidelines to efficient filing and describe how to use these filing systems: alphabetic, color-coded, numeric (cross-reference), chronologic, and electronic.
Introduction

- Efficient and effective business systems can:
  - Increase productivity
  - Decrease stress
  - Increase patient confidence
Role of the Business Assistant

- Greeting patients and answering the telephone
- Scheduling patients
- Managing patient records
- Managing the accounts receivable and accounts payable
- Managing the recall and inventory control systems
- Overseeing and monitoring practice marketing activities
- Managing payroll
- Presenting and making financial arrangements
Operating Procedure Manual

• Communicates the policies and procedures for staff to follow
  ➢ Objective or purpose of the manual
  ➢ Office communications
  ➢ Staff policies
  ➢ Employment policies
  ➢ Office records
  ➢ Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) procedures
  ➢ Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and infection control policy
  ➢ Clinical procedures
  ➢ Professional organizations
HIPAA Compliance

- The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 was adopted to enhance and protect the rights of patients.
- The dentist must follow a specific format when putting HIPAA policies into practice.
- The dental staff must be informed of specific security and confidentiality issues.
- HIPAA-related training of existing dental staff must be reinforced continuously.
HIPAA Privacy Compliance List

- Areas that must be included in a procedure manual:
  - Know the law and HIPAA regulations
  - Know the requirements of your state privacy laws
  - Adopt or develop the required forms to put into action privacy policies and procedures
  - Train dental staff on privacy policies and procedures, and designate a privacy officer and a contact person to receive complaints
  - Notify patients of the new policies by posting and distributing a Notice of Privacy Practice, and obtain written permission by the patient’s Acknowledgment of Receipt of Notice of Privacy Practice
  - Make sure policies and procedures are fully implemented and up-to-date
Personnel Manual

- Personnel topics include:
  - Job description for each employee
    - Details regarding pay periods and working hours
    - Information concerning employee benefits such as paid holidays, vacation, and sick leave

- Also included should be policies on:
  - Provisional employment
  - Maternity leave
  - Disciplinary measures
  - Sexual harassment
  - Termination
Some practices use a commercially prepared manual, whereas others customize their own personnel manual.

It is helpful to use a ring binder, which allows pages to be added or deleted as office policy is updated or information becomes obsolete.

To prevent miscommunication among staff, make sure that each new employee reviews the office manual during the first week of employment and that all employees continue to review any new information that is added.
Specific applications that the computer can handle in a dental practice include:

- Appointment scheduling
- Electronic patient records
- Word processing
- Networking and marketing
- Bookkeeping tasks
- Database management
- Billing and collection
- Patient ledger
- Processing of insurance claims
Characteristics of the Computer

● Consists of two main components
  ➢ The hardware that houses the wires, transistors, and circuits and responds to a specific set of instructions
  ➢ The software, which introduces data to the hardware to execute a list of instructions

● A general purpose computer requires the following components:
  ➢ Memory
  ➢ Central processing unit (CPU)
  ➢ Mass storage device
  ➢ Input device
  ➢ Output device
Record Keeping

- The maintenance of adequate records is one of the business assistant’s most important responsibilities.
- Because so much information is maintained in either a hard copy or an electronic file, the office must decide what types of records and filing system best suit the needs of the practice.
- The maintenance of accurate and complete records is a sign of quality care.
Types of Records and Files

- **Patient dental records**
  - Patient registration, medical and dental history form, examination findings, diagnosis and treatment plans, a record of all treatment provided, and radiographs

- **Patient financial records**
  - Patient statement or ledger including all of the individual patients’ financial accounts
Computerized Patient Account Summary

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Practice Business Records

Include, but not limited to, the following:

- Accounts receivable records
- Practice expenses awaiting payment
- Expense records
- Payroll records
- Business correspondence
- Canceled checks and bank statements
- Records of income and expenses
- Financial statements, tax records, and possibly corporate records
- Computer printout of practice reports
- Personnel records
Basic Filing Methods

- Alphabetic filing
  - This is the easiest and most commonly used system
  - Items are filed in straight alphabetical (A-B-C) order in accordance with the basic rules of indexing
Color Coding Filing

- Adhesive tabs that combine colors and letters are used to indicate the first two letters of the patient’s last name
Numeric Filing

- A number is assigned for each chart or document
- In straight numeric filing, all items are filed in strict 1-2-3 order
- This system is commonly used in large group practices
- It is necessary to maintain a cross-reference file
Chronologic Filing

- Commonly divided into months and may be further subdivided into days of the month
- This type of file may be used for the recall system or as a “reminder” system for miscellaneous tasks, such as routine maintenance, which must be performed at specific times during the year
- Other special files such as cross-reference files, inventory control files, and short-notice appointment lists may be maintained for various purposes
Electronic Filing

- Stored on the computer’s hard drive
- They should additionally be stored on a zip drive or CD
- To keep track of these files, label each unit with a subject name or number
Guidelines to Efficient Filing

- Filing is the act of classifying and arranging records to be preserved safely and retrieved quickly when needed
  - Keep the filing system simple
  - Label folders clearly
  - Leave adequate working space within each file
  - Label shelves or drawers
  - Use outguides
  - Presort
Active and Inactive Files

- **Active files**
  - Files of patients who have been seen recently (usually within the past 2 to 3 years)
  - These are maintained in the areas of easiest accessibility

- **Inactive files**
  - Files of patients who have not been seen in the last 3 years
  - These files are maintained in a less convenient area but can be accessed if needed
Purge Tabs

- Color-coded purge tabs make it easier to sort records into active and inactive categories.
- For example, at a patient’s first visit in 2014, a red 2014 tag is placed on the folder.
  - At the first visit in 2015, a green 2015 tag is placed over the previous one.
- When it is time to sort out the charts for all patients not seen since 2014, it is easy to go through the file and quickly identify those folders still labeled with only a red 2014 tag.
Record Protection and Confidentiality

- HIPAA electronic safeguards
  - The dental office must have physical and technical safeguards to ensure the protection and confidentiality of the patient’s personal information

- Protecting electronic files
  - Back-up all files each business day
  - Keep two sets of backup files: one in the office and a second set outside the office

- Protecting paper files
  - Records are protected in correct file cabinets and are properly closed each business day
Learning Objectives
Lesson 62.2: Appointment Scheduling, Inventory, Budget, and Record Keeping

6. Describe the process of scheduling appointments for maximum productivity.
7. Identify the types of preventive recall systems and state the benefits of each.
8. Discuss the management of inventory systems.
9. Explain the components of the dental supply budget.
10. Discuss the record keeping necessary for repairing and maintaining dental equipment.
Appointment Scheduling

- Scheduling is most effective when one person is responsible for all appointment planning and all entries in the appointment system.
- This responsibility is given to the business assistant, but in a larger practice, an appointment clerk might be involved.
Goals of Efficient Appointment Scheduling

- Patients are seen on time
- The patient load is well balanced
- The dentist and staff are able to make good use of their time
Computerized or Manual Scheduling

- Appointment control can be managed with a computerized scheduling system or manually with a traditional appointment book.
- Regardless of the system used, the basic understanding and guidelines are the same.
- The appointment book format must be selected, the days must be outlined, and patients must be scheduled efficiently.
The Appointment Book

- If a manual appointment book is used, it must be selected to ensure sufficient space for all necessary entries and to facilitate the efficient scheduling of patients for the dental practice
  - The most efficient format is the so-called week-at-a-glance design
  - Ideally, the book should lie flat when fully opened
The Appointment Book (Cont.)

- If an electronic appointment system is selected, you have the advantage of selecting a software program that will make the business assistant’s job much easier.
- Production goals can be set by controlling when and where specific procedures are performed.
- The following additional options can be included:
  - Auto scheduler
  - Patient record
  - Daily appointment screen
Computerized Schedules

Guidelines for Scheduling

● Units of time
  ➢ May be 10, 15, or 30 minutes, depending on the dentist’s preference
  ➢ The key to efficient patient scheduling is to schedule patients according to the time necessary for their complete procedure rather than trying to fit all procedures into a standard 30-minute or 1-hour formula
  ➢ If a 15-minute time unit is used in the practice and a patient must be scheduled for a procedure that will take approximately 40 minutes to complete, the dentist should request that this patient be given a “three-unit” appointment
Guidelines for Scheduling (Cont.)

- **Columns per day**
  - Appointment scheduling for each day will be assigned to a separate column designated specifically for each operator, with each column representing an operatory or treatment area.

- **To make most efficient use of everyone’s time,** many dentists prefer to use several treatment areas simultaneously.
  - This preference is reflected in the appointment book when one column represents each operatory.
Outlining the Appointment Schedule

- The business assistant should go through the appointment schedule several months in advance and outline basic information.

- The four basic elements to be outlined are:
  - **Office hours**
    - Opening, closing, lunch hour, and days off
  - **Buffer time**
    - Emergency patients and short appointments such as denture adjustments or suture removal
  - **Meetings**
    - Dental and staff meetings
  - **Holidays**
Making Appointment Book and Appointment Card Entries

- All entries must be accurate, legible, complete, and made in pencil.
- Entries must be clearly written so they are easy to read.
- Manual entries must be made in pencil that is sufficiently legible to read yet erasable if necessary.
- Entries must be complete and accurate so it is clear who is scheduled and for what treatment.
Making Appointment Book and Appointment Card Entries (Cont.)

- Generally the appointment book entry includes:
  - The patient’s name
  - The patient’s business and home telephone numbers
  - An abbreviated code for the treatment to be provided
  - The length of the appointment
  - Special notations such as whether the patient is new or requires premedication
Special Considerations for Scheduling

- Difficult procedures, such as extensive crown and bridge preparation, implants, or surgeries, require careful scheduling, especially if the patient has been premedicated
  - These types of procedures often are scheduled in the morning, when the dentist and staff are at their highest energy levels
- Scheduling also must be engineered so as to allow for efficient use of “idle” time for greater productivity
Daily Scheduling Rules

- Do not schedule too many difficult procedures close together
- Allow time for treatment area cleanup
- Educate patients about treatment times
- Protect the appointment book from eyes of others; this is private information
Additional Considerations for Scheduling

- **New patients**
  - Schedule them as soon as possible after they call

- **Scheduling for the dental hygienist**
  - Work out a list of average times required for certain types of hygiene visits

- **Recall patients**

- **Children**
  - Younger children should be scheduled in the morning; school breaks are also a good time for appointments
Additional Considerations for Scheduling (Cont.)

- Emergency patients
  - See them as quickly as possible, using buffer time

- Scheduling an appointment series
  - Must know:
    - How many appointments will be required
    - How long will each appointment take
    - How many laboratory working days must be allowed between appointments
Scheduling for the Expanded-Functions Dental Assistant

- When scheduling for an expanded-functions dental assistant, entries in the appointment book are made “by the chair”
- To do this, a separate appointment book column is designated for each operatory
- Appointments must be planned so that only one patient is scheduled per chair and per expanded-functions assistant
Confirmation of Appointments

- Confirm all appointments by telephone the day before the appointment.
- Confirmation prevents many cancellations far enough in advance to allow for the time to be used effectively.
Patient Circumstances

- Late patients
  - An office that consistently runs late is disrespectful of its patients’ time

- Canceled appointments
  - If a patient has not appeared within 10 minutes of the appointed time, the patient should be contacted immediately

- Short-notice appointments
  - It is to the office’s advantage to maintain a list of patients who are available to take an appointment on short notice
Daily Treatment Area Schedule

- Appointment book information for the next day is transferred to the daily schedule form
  - A sufficient number of copies are printed or posted electronically so that it can be posted in each treatment area (away from patients’ view), the laboratory, and the dentist’s private office

- This list is updated throughout the day as changes are made in the schedule
  - A check mark is placed to the left of the patient’s name when the appointment has been confirmed
  - A circle around the time indicates that the appointment has not been confirmed
Preventive Recall Programs

- Regularly scheduled preventive care is important for a patient’s dental health
Types of Recall Systems

- **Continuing appointment system**
  - The patient is given a specific appointment time and date for the next recall visit

- **Written recall notification**
  - A recall card or postcard is mailed to remind the patient to return for continuing care

- **Recall by telephone**
  - A list of the names and telephone numbers is maintained for the month
Inventory Management

An adequate quantity of all necessary dental supplies is essential for the smooth functioning of the practice

- An inventory system should be simple, readily workable, and kept up-to-date at all times
- Of major concern are expendable and disposable items that are used up in a relatively short time and must be reordered regularly
Inventory Management (Cont.)

- Maintain the following information for ordering a product:
  - Full brand name of the product
  - All applicable descriptive information
  - Reorder point
  - Purchase source
  - Any necessary catalog numbers
  - Quantity purchase rates and reorder quantity
Computerized Inventory System

- A computer software program that tracks inventory and creates an automated replenishment order
- When an item is removed from inventory, the staff person scans the item using the barcode technology for dental supply items
Guidelines for Ordering Dental Supplies

- Supplies may be ordered:
  - Through a dental supply sales representative
  - From a catalog by telephone, fax, mail order, or bar code scanning
  - Online

- When you are ordering and managing dental supplies in the office, it is important to keep all items in one central storage place
  - This eliminates the need to look through several places in the office to locate a needed product
When Ordering Supplies

- **Be prepared**
  - Have a want list ready and check with the dentist
- **Be specific**
  - Know what you want and how much is needed
- **Be alert**
  - Be on the lookout for “specials” and authentic savings
- **Be informed**
  - Be alert for new products and ideas
Reorder Point

- The reorder point for any given item is the minimum amount that represents an adequate reserve for that product.
- The reorder point is based on two factors:
  - The rate of use of the product on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis.
  - The lead time necessary to order and receive a new supply of the product; this time estimate should allow for delays in ordering or shipping or the possibility of backordering.
Marking the Reorder Point

- The reorder point should be clearly marked on the supply of that item
  - This task can be accomplished with reorder tags
- The reorder tag is attached to the minimum quantity of the item with a rubber band or tape, or is placed into a stack of a flat product
  - When the reorder point is reached, this tag is removed and is processed immediately for reordering
Automatic Shipments

- Many suppliers offer dentists the advantage of bulk quantity pricing with automatic shipments of a portion of the total order.
- This ensures the practice a constant supply of the amount of a product necessary to meet the practice’s need.
Quantity Purchase Rate

- A savings that can be attained by purchasing a product in larger quantities
  - The price break is the point at which the greater savings becomes effective
  - It also is necessary to take into consideration the available storage space in the office and the rate at which a product is used
Reorder Quantity

The reorder quantity is determined by:

- Rate of use: How often is the product used?
- Shelf life: When is the expiration date?
- Availability of storage space: Do you have room?
- Availability of proper storage conditions
- Best quantity purchase rate: Is it a good buy?
- Investment involved: Do you have the cash flow?
Backorders

- When an item is not available for delivery with the rest of an order, it is placed on backorder and will be delivered as soon as it becomes available.
- If sufficient lead time has been allowed, a backorder does not create a major problem.
- If the item is in critically short supply, it may be necessary to purchase it elsewhere.
- In this case, to avoid duplication, the backorder must be canceled.
Order Exchange, Return, or Replacement

- Sometimes it is necessary to exchange, return, or replace an ordered product
- This can occur due to a variety of factors, including:
  - The wrong item was ordered
  - The right item was ordered, but the wrong item was shipped
  - The size, color, or quantity was wrong
  - The product was broken or damaged in shipment
Requisitions and Purchase Orders

● In a large group practice, institution, or clinic with a central supply source, dental supplies are obtained by requisition
  ➢ The requisition form usually is completed in duplicate
  ➢ One copy is submitted to procure the supplies, and the person who requests the supplies retains the other copy

● In institutions with central purchasing, a requisition may be submitted to the purchasing agent, who in turn issues a purchase order
Dental Supply Budget

- **Consumables and disposables**
  - Supplies are those “used up” as part of their function
  - Disposables are used once and then discarded

- **Expendables**
  - Materials of relatively low cost that are used up in a short time

- **Nonexpendables**
  - Smaller pieces of equipment or instruments that will eventually be replaced

- **Major equipment**
  - Larger pieces of equipment that are costly to purchase and will depreciate
Equipment Repairs

- When a new piece of equipment is purchased, the following information should be entered on a service record:
  - Date of purchase
  - Name of supplier
  - Expiration date of manufacturer’s warranty
  - Model and serial numbers

- Warranty
  - A written statement that outlines the manufacturer’s responsibility for replacing or repairing a piece of equipment over a limited time
Service Contracts

- Some dental equipment is protected by a service contract
- Under the terms of this contract, emergency repairs and possibly some routine maintenance are provided on a fixed-fee basis
Service Call

- The expense of service calls is high because the cost is based on mileage, time, the expertise of the technician, and the materials and parts involved.
- If a piece of equipment does not work, there are several points that can be checked before calling for repair service.
- If you must call for service, be prepared to give complete information available.
Questions?