

The Cincinnati Insurance Company

## Targeted Insurance Protection

# LOSS CONTROL FOR DENTISTS AND STAFF

Taking Precautions



When you have a patient who misses appointments, abuses your staff or cannot be satisfied, you may decide that, unfortunately, you must end your dentist/patient relationship. Telling a patient you no longer want to provide treatment is not easy. However, you can generally protect your business by following these tips:

- **Consult your attorney.** These general tips are important to keep in mind; however, each situation is unique. Always talk with your attorney about possible legal ramifications and to ensure you have a legally permissible reason for terminating the relationship.
- **Note the patient's behavior, at the time it occurs, in the patient's medical record.** Keep all comments professional and unemotional. Remember, your client and your peers may one day review the contents if the file becomes public during a lawsuit. Once you decide to end the relationship, record all the reasons for the decision in the medical record and in the notice to your client.
- **Complete any treatment plan that you started before terminating the relationship.** In case of a long treatment plan, such as a periodontal improvement plan, make sure your patient is in stable condition before terminating the relationship.
- **Give advance written notice to your patient or the patient's legal guardian.** In the notice:
  - after consulting with an attorney, include the reason for your decision to terminate care. Keep this brief and factual. Avoid comments that the patient could perceive as personal or insulting
  - state an effective date for the termination at least 30 days after the receipt of the letter or whatever time period is required or recommended in your jurisdiction, allowing the patient time to secure a new dentist
  - provide the name and phone number of a dental society to assist the patient in finding a new dentist
  - mention the patient's right to a copy of existing dental records and offer to transfer the records to another dentist after receiving the patient's written request and authorization
  - offer to provide emergency care during the notice period. If the patient calls and you are unable to provide treatment, refer the patient to the local hospital
  - send the notice via Certified Mail™ with Return Receipt service. Keep a copy of the letter and the signed mail receipt in the patient's file. If the letter is returned to you unopened, place the unopened envelope in the patient's file. You must take reasonable measures to contact your patient to inform him or her of your decision.

Thank you for trusting your agent and Cincinnati to protect your business.

For information, coverage availability in your state, quotes or policy service, please contact your local independent agent recommending coverage.



Everything Insurance Should Be®

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