

THE FRONT OFFICE

CYBERSECURITY

Components of securing data



BACKGROUND

Cybersecurity can be defined in terms of broad scope or specific technologies. Dentists tend to require more of the broad scope approach, but should be certain that their efforts to keep a practice safe from cyber threats are more than sufficient.

COMPONENTS NEEDED TO PROTECT DATA

The 3 aspects of cybersecurity a dental office should consider are confidentiality, integrity, and availability. First, digital confidentiality should include the limitation of data access to those team members who need the information to perform their duties. It should also be limited to just the information that is needed.

Second, the integrity of the data should be maintained throughout its storage life. The information that is entered into the system should remain unchanged when it is retrieved at a later date.

Third, the information is useless unless it can be retrieved as needed for the dental office to perform the duties required to accomplish patient care. Access should be as needed and when needed.

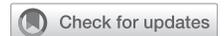
Clinical Significance

A clear understanding these 3 components of cybersecurity can guide the types, sources, assessment, and prevention of threats to the data stored by a dental practice. The patients expect that their data will be kept confidential, that its integrity will be maintained, and that it will be available when needed.

Wank DA: Dental data defense. *Dentaltown*, Sept 2018, pp 84-88
Reprints not available

INSURANCE

Taking a cue from Sun Tzu



BACKGROUND

The current reimbursement schedules from insurance for dental care are widely seen as insufficient. In addition, insurance carriers have used a number of tactics to keep dental practitioners from receiving reimbursement. These include constant claim denials, reduced fees, illegal or illegitimate audits, and even extortion. As a result, dental practices spend a great deal of time defending their claims rather than taking a more offensive action. The Chinese military general Sun Tzu has expressed some winning strategies in *The Art of War* that can profoundly alter business approaches, along with military and sports strategies. A few steps borrowed from Tzu may be helpful to dental offices faced with insurance claim problems.

CHALLENGING INSURANCE STRATEGIES

The insurance strategies are simple. They are designed to keep the dental office focused on defense by not paying claims and delaying payment for as long as possible. Tzu recommends that attacking the enemy's strategy is of supreme importance in war. This translates for dental offices to 3 basic approaches:

1. Seek preauthorization.
2. Engage the insurance commissioner to appeal denied claims.
3. Negotiate contracted fees.

Preauthorization

The power of preauthorization is seldom understood by dental practices. Preauthorization is not the same as predetermination.