



NEW PATIENT PHONE CALL

The handling of new patient phone calls by your receptionist should be done honestly while effectively guiding the conversation.

When a new patient calls, whether FFS or PPO, their attention is typically on money. Your receptionist needs to move a patient's attention off of money and onto why they really called: The patient's actual need.

Pro Tip: Avoid the word "No". Words matter. When a patient hears the word "No" they mentally check out. It is not logical but it's true.

Out of Network Example

New Patient: "Do you take my insurance?"

Receptionist: "Actually, whether you are in or out of network we'll process your claim. In fact, many of our patients are out of network because, with some plans, there's little difference. If I can ask you a few questions we can see if our practice is a good fit for you."

Of course, you would only say the above if it's true. If they ask about an HMO or Medicaid, the answer is generally "No" in which case treat the caller with respect and courtesy but, politely use the word "No".

Fee for Service Example

New Patient: How much do you charge for a cleaning?

Receptionist: \$150.00

NP: That's more than I thought!

Receptionist: “Yes, well as my mother always says, “You get what you pay for” but on a personal level I can tell you Dr. Smith is not just a great boss but she’s the best dentist I’ve ever had. My friends and family think so too. She really cares about her patients and always make sure she uses the latest technology, the best materials and she’s always going to continuing education to stay on top of the latest technology. And she has great coffee! By the way, were you referred to us?”

The answer above has to be from the heart. It has to be real. You can’t fake sincerity. Your receptionist needs to be “sold” on the doctor(s) and hygienist(s). If they are, it’s easy. And a little humor is always good.

If the patient is a “price shopper” so be it but, still treat the patient with courtesy however, time is money, so on to the next call.

Scheduling and Law of Probability

- a. The probability of a New Patient cancelling or no showing increases in direct proportion to how far out the NP is scheduled.
- b. NPs need to be scheduled within 1-2 weeks. Ideally within 48 hours.
- c. Adequate NP slots need to be available or blocked out each week. The number of slots is based on your average number of NPs from the previous six months i.e. if over the past six months you worked an average of 16 days and averaged 24 NPs per month, you need 1.5 NP slots per working day.

New Patient and Verification Forms

Your receptionist, without rushing or multitasking, focuses exclusively on the caller and does the following:

- Thanks the new patient for calling.
- Introduce themselves.
- Is interested in the patient’s “story”.
- Is friendly, confident, competent and professional.

A New Patient Form is used to guide the conversation, establish the patient’s need and gather needed data.

For insurance patients, a comprehensive Verification Form is filled out after completing the New Patient Phone call.

You will receive both forms separately.