



Dr. Marc Wallach is a general dentist practicing in a suburb of St. Louis, Missouri. As a DENTRIX user since 1998, Dr. Wallach has a history of embracing technology in the interest of improving productivity. Such was the case when the highly-demanded Questionnaires feature in DENTRIX G3 created a new bridge between DENTRIX and Dr. Wallach's eCentral Web site.

Like most dental practices, Dr. Wallach's office used a time-consuming manual process for inputting patient questionnaire information. Patients entering the practice would be handed a clipboard with multiple forms to complete. Completing the forms would take 10 to 15 minutes before being returned to the office staff. Then the information would need to be manually entered into the patient's file.

Dr. Wallach described the process as "...a big waste of time due to duplication. I would then have to wait until all the information was entered before I could begin the patient treatment". The process was improved somewhat by allowing new patients to download and print forms from the Web site prior to the appointment. However, it still required his staff to manually enter the information.

The process of entering new patients into the system wasn't the only inefficiency in regards to patient information.

Updating information for existing patients was also done manually, and it was inconsistent. "Sometimes patients updated their information when it changed, but more often they did not".

Despite the need for improvement, Dr. Wallach had some

initial concerns with adopting electronic questionnaires. Would the information be secure and would patients feel comfortable completing forms online? Would the information accurately and efficiently import into DENTRIX?

To begin using the new functionality, Dr. Wallach's office installed a patient kiosk at the front desk and began exposing patients to the system. The "soft opening" gave patients the ability to try the system and ask questions as the staff was becoming more familiar with it.

Dr. Wallach believes that since people are accustomed to using various types of computers for just about everything, there isn't much shock or resistance to a kiosk for patient check in. "As soon as we put the kiosk in the reception area, patients seemed to intuitively walk up to it and begin the login process".

To help patients that aren't as familiar with computers, Dr. Wallach installed an extra monitor that mirrors the check-in screen. The staff can watch as the patient completes the form and assist as necessary.

"I think everyone in my practice sees the benefits of going paperless. Again, with any new technology, it took quite a bit of patience to get to a comfortable place. In terms of time, I would say we have been working out the kinks for at least 2 months".

Now all of Dr. Wallach's new patients are directed to the practice Web site where they can access all the necessary forms. Patients complete the forms prior to their appointments. Then, after the sync with the DENTRIX server, Family File information can be imported directly into the patients' files. Copies of the completed forms are kept in the Questionnaires module for history and reference purposes.

New patients that don't have Internet access can complete the forms using the check-in kiosk.

"Patients are impressed with technology and rightfully assume that an office that invests in technology is also interested in investing in their dental health", says Dr. Wallach. He is now writing a newsletter to his patients, explaining the new questionnaire process in greater detail.

Dr. Wallach has been using the eCentral Web Site Manager since its inception. "My experience has been mostly positive, but with all new technologies there have been bumps along the way. It continues to evolve into a better product all the

time", said Dr. Wallach.

The same was true for the questionnaire enhancement. The initial setup was time-consuming for Dr. Wallach's practice and there are a few features that he would like

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to see changed. But, not having to manually enter all the information has saved a great deal of time.

While most of Dr. Wallach's early concerns were quickly mitigated, the syncing process, specifically the efficient importing of information, remained an area in need of improvement. That all changed recently with the latest release of eSync.

"The eSync is hands down the best application of this whole questionnaire process. It does a lot of things that improve work flow." eSync eliminates timed or manually-initiated syncs that were often slow. Now when the patient submits a completed questionnaire, the information is imported instantly. Dr. Wallach is able to access the patient's medical history immediately and see the patient without delay.

It's too early to know what the total impact is to the practice's profitability, but electronic questionnaires has allowed the staff to concentrate on more productive tasks that do positively affect the bottom line.

Dr. Wallach tells other DENTRIX practices in regards to the new questionnaire feature, "Although it might be a struggle at first, the rewards will be worth it!"

Thanks in part to Dr. Wallach's efforts, the implementation and use of a patient check-in kiosk in your office will be much smoother and faster. Read the next edition of The Computerized Dentist for details on a new kiosk solution that allows DENTRIX customers to better use the questionnaire functionality.