

Thank you for your
dedication to the children
of the Commonwealth!

With your support of the *Smiles For Children* program,
many MORE children are receiving the dental care
they desperately need.

Broken appointments are a major concern for Doral, the
Department of Medical Assistance Services, the Virginia
Dental Association, and the Old Dominion Dental
Society. We appreciate the impact broken appointments
have on you and your practice. We are hopeful that this
document can help alleviate some of the issues related
to broken appointments and treatment compliance.



Telephone: 888-912-3456

12121 North Corporate Parkway
Mequon, WI 53092



Best Practices

For Reducing Broken Appointments

So much **MORE** than...

ADMINISTRATION

OUTREACH

INNOVATION



The following list contains office policies which have helped to reduce broken appointments and the effects of broken appointments in other dental practices.

- Develop a Broken Appointment policy that is for ALL patients.
- Have a contract that patients sign that spells out their rights and responsibilities.
- Confirm appointments after hours when the patient is likely to be home to answer the call.
- Confirm all appointments, including recall and hygiene appointments, the day before the appointment.
- Consider telling patients they must confirm their own appointment the day before the visit, or their appointment slot will be lost.
- If a patient has a broken appointment history or is a new patient, it is recommended that you attempt to speak directly with the patient for the appointment confirmation.
- Continuing care appointments made for three to six months ahead should be reserved for patients of record with no history of broken appointments.
- Patients with a history of broken appointments or that did not schedule a continuing care appointment, should receive a postcard asking them to call to schedule an appointment.
- Many emergency patients will not keep future appointments if scheduled on the day of emergency treatment. These patients should be called later during the week to schedule follow-up treatment.
- When a procedure needs to be completed at a subsequent appointment, send information home with patients about that next appointment. The information should stress the importance of such a procedure and indicate possible outcomes if it is not completed within the designated timeframe.
- Maintain a list of patients that can be contacted to come in on short notice; this will allow you to fill gaps when late notice cancellations occur.
- Many patients site daytime obligations such as work or childcare as significant contributing factors to missing appointments. Having extended hours on selected days of the week or occasional weekend hours can alleviate this barrier to accessing dental care.

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Smiles For Children[™]
Improving Dental Care Across Virginia

We make government dental programs work

Doral is the leader in government program dental administration, contracting with managed care organizations and state governments and serving more than 10 million members. We believe that through efficient administration and a commitment to improving access to preventive oral health care, we can help improve the oral health of our members.

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