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A closer look at digitisation of dental records

Grace Schneider of Storetec examines the advantages of keeping digital patient records in a paperless dental practice

Dental record scanning is the conversion of paper-based dental patient records into digital patient records, making it easier to access and manage patient information. The Care Quality Commission has recently shared guidance for dental practitioners for managing their dental records. Dental professionals are required to make and keep accurate dental records of care provided to patients.

One of the fundamental criteria used to manage risk in a dental practice is keeping good quality clinical records. During inspections the CQC may ask to see parts of a dental care record to corroborate evidence of what staff and patients tell them about the quality of care. Would you be able to find a specific patient record in your practice?

The link between comprehensive patient care and digital dental records cannot be overstated. While the process might seem intimidating or unnecessary to some, scanning dental records offers numerous benefits that contribute to better patient care, streamlined practice operations, and improved communication between healthcare providers. This article aims to debunk myths surrounding scanning dental

records and shed light on why it's essential for both dentists and patients.

SEVEN BENEFITS OF A PAPERLESS DENTAL PRACTICE

1. Accessibility & efficiency

Digital dental records can be accessed instantly from any location with secure online access. This accessibility is especially valuable in emergency situations or when coordinating care with other healthcare providers. Additionally, practitioners will be able to promptly access any files requested by CQC in their inspection.

2. Data security & backup

Storing dental records digitally allows for secure backups and protection against physical damage, loss, or theft. Encryption and secure storage systems ensure patient privacy and compliance with data protection regulations, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

3. Improved patient care

Digital records provide a comprehensive overview of a patient's dental history, enabling more informed treatment decisions. Dentists can easily track changes, monitor progress, and identify potential



"SCANNING SOLUTIONS ENABLE YOU TO CAPTURE AND ROUTE DATA, BUT THEY ONLY SOLVE ONE PIECE OF THE PUZZLE. THE ABILITY TO CAPTURE DATA FROM YOUR EMAIL CLIENT, OFFICE ENVIRONMENT, THE WEB, ERP, FINANCE, CRM AND CUSTOMER SERVICE APPS IS ESSENTIAL. A SYSTEM THAT CANNOT ACCEPT DOCUMENT DATA FROM ALL YOUR BUSINESS SOLUTIONS WILL NOT DELIVER THE EXPECTED BENEFITS TO THE BUSINESS. SYSTEMS INTEGRATION IS THEREFORE A MUST."

issues that might not be apparent in isolated paper records.

4. Enhanced communication

Collaborating with other healthcare providers becomes seamless when sharing digital records. Specialists can access relevant information quickly, leading to more coordinated and effective treatment plans. Patients often expect to access their records online, which is in line with regulatory requirements that typically mandate record retention for a minimum of two years.

5. Reduced administrative burden

Retrieving, updating, and organising paper records in the field of dentistry can be exceptionally time-consuming and prone to errors. For instance, consider the process of filling out comprehensive patient information forms, including X-rays and tooth diagrams for dental work, only to have them filed away in a large cabinet, which introduces numerous possibilities for human error, misplacement, or damage to vital records.

Such paper-based medical record processes can be a significant

administrative burden, diverting valuable time and resources away from patient care. This is why medical record scanning offers a practical solution to these challenges.

6. Eco-friendly approach

Going paperless reduces paper waste, contributing to a more environmentally sustainable practice. By embracing digital records and processes, paperless dental practices significantly reduce paper waste, minimising their carbon footprint. Becoming a paperless dental practice not only conserves precious natural resources but also reduces the need for storage space, cutting down on physical clutter within the office. This paperless transformation enables dental teams to work more efficiently, providing patients with faster and more streamlined services while contributing to a greener and more eco-conscious healthcare approach.

7. Future-proofing

The future of digital patient records holds tremendous promise within evolving healthcare systems. As technology continues to advance, digital records, with their inherent flexibility, can seamlessly

adapt to new software platforms and evolving industry standards. This adaptability ensures that patient data remains accessible and relevant, even as healthcare technology undergoes rapid transformations. Moreover, the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning into digital record systems opens up exciting possibilities, such as predictive analytics for disease prevention and personalised treatment recommendations.

In conclusion, the belief that traditional paper-based dental records are sufficient is no longer accurate in today's healthcare landscape. Dental record scanning brings numerous advantages, from improved patient care to enhanced practice efficiency and security.

Embracing digital records allows dentists to stay at the forefront of healthcare technology, providing the best possible care for their patients and aiding in CQC audits. As the dental industry evolves, adopting a digital approach is not just a convenience, but a necessity for optimal patient care and practice success. Get in touch today to discuss our dental record scanning services.

More info: www.storetec.net

DEBUNKING DENTAL RECORD STORAGE MYTHS

Myth 1: Traditional Paper Records Are Sufficient

Contrary to the belief that traditional paper-based dental records are sufficient, the reality is that these records can be susceptible to damage, loss, or misplacement. Paper records are also more challenging to access and share among healthcare providers, potentially leading to delays in treatment or complications in emergencies.

Scanning dental records into a secure digital format addresses these issues by providing a convenient, easily accessible, and searchable database that enhances patient care and practice efficiency.

Myth 2: Scanning Dental Records Is Time-Consuming and Complicated

Some dentists may resist digitising their dental records due to the misconception that the process is time-consuming and complicated. However, advances in technology have simplified the scanning process significantly.

Modern scanning equipment and software make it easier than ever to convert paper records into digital files. Additionally, once the initial scanning is complete, managing digital records is more efficient, saving time for both dentists and their staff.