How to Renegotiate Your Insurance Contracts, With Sandi Hudson from UnlockthePPO.com

In this guide, we cover:

- How to prepare for the negotiations
- How to make the phone calls to the insurance companies
- How to make sure you are maximizing your contracts

Preparing for Negotiations

Step 1 – Create Your Fee Schedule Hit List
Breakdown your annual productions into a specific subgroup of codes to target for raising fees in your specific office.

Your goal is not to have an across the board increase but specific increases to your highest volume codes.

This is your “Fee Schedule Hit List”.

It’s typical that 30 codes make up 90% of a practice’s production.

**Step 2 – Create Your Insurance Provider Callsheet**

Breakdown your annual production into different insurance providers so that you know the source of the majority of your production.

The four insurances that don’t typically renegotiate contracts are Delta, Metlife, Blue Cross, and United Concordia. So you can likely exclude these insurances from your call-sheet.

If you are in an area that doesn’t have a lot of coverage by a specific insurance, you may be able to get a better deal. The insurance company may give you more incentive to accept their policy.

**Step 3 – Familiarize Yourself with Your Direct Contracts, Shared Network Contracts, and Third Party Administrators**

Analyze your direct contract rates for each insurance company versus the possible shared network contracts’ fee schedules. The Direct Contract takes place over the Shared Network Contracts if you have multiple in play.

You want to make sure the Direct Contract is the highest fee so that you are paid your highest possible fee.

For example, Connection Dental’s shared network contract fee schedule may or may not be a better fee schedule based on your “Fee Schedule Hit List” than the direct contract.

Be sure to understand the intricacies of any third party administrators.

It’s possible that what you originally agreed to may not be what you are receiving from your third party administrator. You can check your explanation of benefit statements to see if you are using a third party administrator/agreement.

**Step 4 – Know Your Timeframes and What’s Allowed**

A lot of insurance companies require a 24 month wait between contract changes.

Certain insurance companies allow auto-increases and others allow you to use your “Fee Schedule Hit List” to really optimize your fee schedule and production. **Quicktip:** Setup calendar reminders to remind you when you can ask for increases.
Step 5 – Know Your State’s Laws

Find out if you are in a state that allows you to charge your full fee for non-covered services.

This is really important to know before going into negotiations so that you can make accurate decisions on what codes to focus negotiations on.

For example if you are in a state that allows you to charge your full fee on non-covered services and veneers are on your “Fee Schedule Hit List”, you don’t want to be negotiating veneers as they wouldn’t be covered anyways.

If you are in a state that does not allow for the charging of your full fee for non-covered services you are still bound by the PPO fee even if the procedure is non-covered, so it’s worth it to keep it on your “Fee Schedule Hit List”.

Making the Phone Calls

Step 1 – Use Your Call List

Take your list of insurance providers that do renegotiate and that are in the timeframe of being eligible to renegotiate.

Step 2 – Call the Provider Relations Line for the Insurance Provider

Be prepared to have to dig through the company’s infrastructure to find the correct person and agent. Each insurance company will have different preferred methods of communication and procedures for starting the negotiations. This can sometimes take 5-10 phone calls. It’s important to take notes so that you’ll know the next time you contact the company, you’ll know precisely what to do.

Step 3 – You May Have to Wait

Be prepared to wait an additional four to six weeks to be assigned an agent or rep if you’ve not been assigned one or don’t know who to contact directly.

Step 4 - Build a relationship with the agent.

Remember, these agents are not customer service and are not connected to claims.

Your complaining about the way a claim was handled will not help your position.

Over time you will learn the best way to speak and relate with each agent so that you can efficiently renegotiate and go through the hoops with the insurance company. It is very likely you will deal with the same agent/rep the next time you renegotiate with the practice.

Step 5 – Be prepared to wait.
The process after the request has been made can take anywhere from a few weeks to a few months before knowing if the negotiations have come through.

**Step 6 – Set calendar reminders**

It is very important to remember the next time you will be eligible for renegotiations. Set as many reminders as possible to be sure to know the next time to contact the company for any contract changes. Any notes you have made about the process and/or the agent you will want to save a copy of as well with the reminder so that you can skip some of the preparation the next time you contact the company.

**Step 7 – Rinse and Repeat**

Go back to step 1 and move onto the next insurance provider until you’ve finished your list.

**Deciding on Working with New Insurance Plans**

**Step 1 – Prepare a demographic report**

This is a snapshot to look at the major employers in your area and which insurance companies are tied to those employers.

**Step 2 – Prepare a write off comparison report**

Look at your insurance providers to see if any significant providers make up a significant amount of your production but have higher than average write off percentages.

**Step 3 – Look at alternatives**

Look at smaller alternative plans in your area that may have a lower write off production and see if you can possibly add multiple small plans to add to your patient base and start weeding out the plans that have the higher write offs.

**Step 4 – Prepare a Competition Report**

Look at how many other dental practices are in your area that are participating in any potential insurance plans so that you can see if the insurance provider may be saturated in your area.

Thanks to Sandi Hudson and Lisa Weber from Unlock the PPO for providing the details to this fantastic step by step guide on how to Renegotiate Your Insurance Contracts.

Sandi and Lisa have been helping dentists from across the nation for the past five years and have grown to two separate locations with offices in both Colorado and Virginia.

You can check out their website at [http://unlocktheppo.com](http://unlocktheppo.com) to find more information on how to maneuver and research sources for these steps.
If you’d prefer to save yourself countless hours and potentially have Unlock the PPO complete all of these steps for you, check out their Contact Us Page to contact Sandi for a complimentary 20 minute phone call to see if they can handle this entire process for you.

You can also contact them by phone at 855-327-9125.