

## **INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT**

### **USUAL, CUSTOMARY AND REASONABLE CHARGES**

There are several types of dental insurance available. One type of plan is the indemnity plan which is also called UCR programs (usual, customary, and reasonable). In these programs you may find a dentist of your choice and a dentist that is paid on a traditional fee for service basis. Monthly premiums are paid to the insurance company by employers and then the insurance company pays the customary 50% to 80% of their UCR fees, leaving 20% to 50% or more of the total fee to be paid by you. We are seeing less and less of these types of plans.

Most people assume that insurance companies have gathered statistics and that these statistics are the basis for UCR fees. In most cases this isn't true. These UCR fees are not representative of local dentists fees. They are often fees arbitrarily set by the insurance company. In fact, it is not unusual for the same insurance company to pay different UCR fees to the same dental office depending on the plan purchased by different employers. Because of this, different insurance companies often have different UCR fees for the same geographical area and for the same group of dentists. This also means that the contract you and your employer have with your insurance company almost always covers lower quality materials and services which may not be the best treatment choice for you and your family. That is why it is very common for patient's to choose dental treatment that their dental insurance will cover.

Dental insurance just hasn't kept up with the times. The annual maximum limit for dental insurance has hardly budged in forty years. Back in 1960, a typical annual maximum was \$1000.00. Fifty five years later, it still sits at approximately \$1000.00 despite inflation and cost of living increases. To stay up with inflation, that \$1000.00 in 1960 would have had to increase to \$5000.00 today. The benefits remain the same, yet the fees for procedures have tripled or even quadrupled. Most insurance plans often exclude new treatment they can label as discretionary, even common treatments such as implants, veneers, white fillings, bonding and whitening. In many cases, your insurance company only wants you to consider the cheapest dental procedures, but we want you to have the best, most durable treatment and materials for you and your family. The agreement of the insurance company to pay for your dental care is a contract between you and your insurance company. You are responsible for payment in full regardless of any insurance companies determination of usual, reasonable, and customary charges.