



OFF-SITE AUDIT

Dr. Machen will spend approximately one hour on the telephone with you and learn about your specific practice and your goals for the audit. Dr. Machen and his co-principal, Hollie A. Bernstein Machen, Esq. will discuss the information obtained and design a specific, comprehensive and customized Risk Management Audit program, that will include preparing the materials, sending the surveys, evaluating the returned surveys, discussing the surveys, reviewing all records, correspondence samples, charts, documentation, procedures and protocols, along with completed questionnaires and all other information.

Then, you and Dr. Machen will have one or more telephone discussions regarding the materials submitted. Next, a detailed Audit Report will be prepared and submitted for your review. The report will include a thorough analysis of the risk management risks that face the practice and give suggestions for eliminating these as well as suggestions for providing optimal patient care and increasing referrals, while enabling you to practice in a stress-free environment. The report will also include a suggested implementation schedule for the suggestions made.

The following checklists along with others that RMC has created are used in a manner similar to a flowchart for the patient proceeding through treatment in your practice. RMC in conjunction with orthodontist will develop answers to questions in a manner that allows the diagnosis of obvious and not so obvious potential problem areas. Together we will evaluate each office encounter in a manner similar to that which a patient would follow. For example,

- First patient contact
- First office visit
- Medical and dental histories
- Clinical examination protocols and forms
- Survey of exam patients
- Diagnostic procedures and protocols
- Treatment planning procedures, protocols and forms
- Informed consent conference procedures, protocols and documentation
- Surveys of patients/parents not initiating treatment
- Conflict resolution is evaluated and analyzed at each stage
- Patient inter-personal relationships with practitioner, staff and other treating practitioners.
- Correspondence with patient and other treating practitioners
- Records and records management
- Treatment notes and documentation/correspondence
- Surveys of patient in active treatment, at each stage of treatment
- Mini-consultations
- Progress evaluations, reviews, communication and documentation
- Pre-finishing checklists, procedures and protocols Post-treatment protocols and procedures Surveys throughout and after treatment
- Doctor-staff interactions
- Staff-staff interactions
- Organizational architecture
- Incentive compensation State board compliance issues
- Malpractice insurance issues
- Negative patient comments
- Previous malpractice claims
- Previous requests for fees to be returned
- Previous complaints made to the practitioner and/or the professional boards
- Practice areas which may be associated with higher litigation risk
- And so many more.

When this foundation is combined with a thorough review of the forms, patient and other practitioner correspondence, records and record-keeping practices, the diagnostic procedures, the treatment planning and informed consent protocols, as well as treatment progress monitoring, progress review protocols, pre-finishing and post-treatment procedures, the information that will be obtained will create a level of understanding of your practice dynamics that will eliminate negative patient comments and/or a professional negligence lawsuit, optimize patient care and increase referrals and referrals sources. Implementation of the necessary procedures and protocols not only becomes imperative but also logical and elegantly simple.

For group practices, one practitioner should oversee the audit process but each group member should follow the process and complete questionnaires. The one who is overseeing then compiles these checklists and reviews them to determine what, if any, consensus has occurred. It is startling to see the results from groups of practitioners. It is often as they were practitioners in different practices! That is a signal that something could be in need of revision and might be a potential litigation exposure area.

Orthodontists at every stage of practice will benefit from an Off-Site Audit. RMC is available to discuss how new practices, seasoned practices and practices about to enter or in-transition can add value and create and enjoy a stress-free practice environment.