# Dentist's Advantage

Professional Liability in the Dental Practice: Lessons Learned from Closed Claims

A report from the Dentist's Advantage Program in partnership with AIG

Academy of General Dentistry Annual Meeting San Francisco, CA June 18, 2015

Presented by:



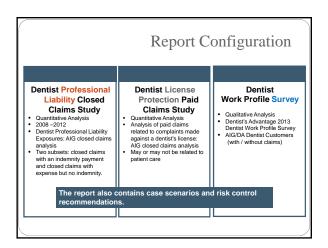
Mark J Buczko, CPCU, CIC, RPLU Vice President, Affinity Insurance Services Dentist's Advantage Program

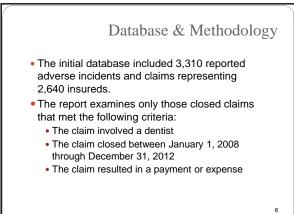
# **Presentation Objectives**

- Identify the type of allegations and indemnity payments that are most frequently associated with professional liability claims against dentists
- Identify the type of allegations that are most frequently associated with license protection/regulatory Board claims asserted against dentists
- Identify key risk control strategies that dentists can incorporate into their practice to improve patient satisfaction and decrease liability exposures

#### **Presentation Objectives**

- Discuss the facts of selected dentist claims
- Provide participants the interactive opportunity to discuss the claim resolution
  - -Consider whether negligence has occurred
  - -Indemnity payment
  - -Expense costs





#### Database & Methodology

- The final database set was comprised of 1,805 closed claims which resulted in three data subsets:
  - · Professional liability claims with indemnity
  - payments (N=600)
  - Professional liability claims with expenses but no indemnity payment (N=872)
  - License Protection claims (N=333)

# **AGD** Members



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- AGD member insureds represent approximately 14 percent of Program membership
- Of the 600 claims in the indemnity data subset, 9 percent (54 of 600) were associated with AGD member insureds.
- AGD member insured-associated claims for expense only and license protection data subsets were slightly higher at 11.7 percent (102 of 872) and 13.2 percent (44 of 333), respectively.
- · Median indemnity amount was similar for AGD member insureds (\$8,273) compared with non-AGD insureds (\$10,427).

# **AGD** Members



- In comparing expense amounts in the indemnity claims subset for both groups, results failed to reach significance
- Number of months from incident to claim closure for indemnity claims was similar for AGD member insureds versus non-AGD insureds (20.4 vs 21.7).
- Results were similar for the expense only and license protection data subsets
- Patient age was similar between AGD member insureds and non-AGD insureds across all three claim payment data subsets (indemnity, expense only, license protection).

# Measuring Claims

• Frequency

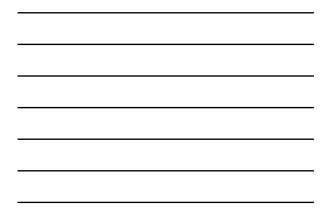
- How often does something happen?
- · Generally expressed as a percentage of total claims

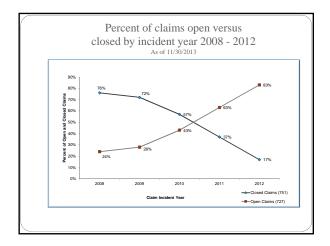
Severity

- When it does happen, how much will it cost?
   Focus will be on average severity
- Incurred losses
- Indemnity amount paid to patients on your behalf
- Expenses amounts paid to defense attorney, expert witnesses, court costs, etc.

Claim Report for Dental Liability, 2008-2012 Professional Liability Claims <u>With</u> an Indemnity Payment

				oility Close ssociated E		
Claim Incident Year	Indemnity Claims (N)	Mean Indemnity	Mean Associated Expense	Total Indemnity Paid	Total Expense Paid	Total Paid
2008	152 (25.3%)	\$49,830	\$26,236	\$7,574,139	\$3,594,271	\$11,168,410
2009	224 (37.3%)	\$33,543	\$16,041	\$7,513,738	\$2,967,668	\$10,481,406
2010	121 (20.2%)	\$28,492	\$15,187	\$3,447,530	\$1,290,858	\$4,738,388
2011	75 (12.5%)	\$32,445	\$4,937	\$2,433,361	\$202,410	\$2,635,771
2012	28 (4.7%)	\$16,727	\$2,604	\$468,368	\$33,856	\$502,224
TOTAL*	600 (100%)			\$21,437,137	\$8,089,062	\$29,526,199

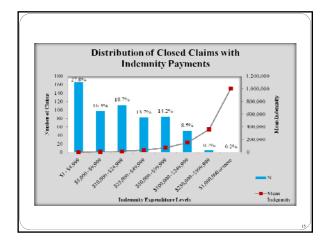




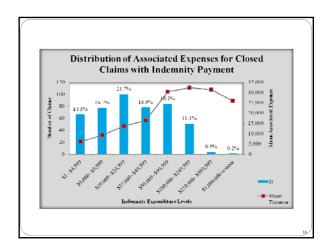


Average Months F	rom Incidence	to Close	
By Expenditure level	% of Total Claims	Average Months	
\$1 to \$4,999	27.8%	13.6	
\$5,000 to \$9,999	16.3%	19.8	
\$10,000 to \$24,999	18.7%	22.8	
\$25,000 to \$49,999	13.7%	25.7	
\$50,000 to \$99,999	14.2%	29.4	
\$100,000 to \$249,999	8.5%	27.7	
\$250,000 to \$999,999	0.7%	36.2	
\$1,000,000 or more	0.2%	14.4	











	ution of Prof			•	,	
by Alle	gation Class	ification - In	demnity and	d Associate	d Expenses	
Allegation Classification	Closed Claims N (%)	Mean Indemnity	Mean Expense	Maximum Indemnity	Maximum Expense	Total Paid
Error/Improper						
Performance	442 (73.7%)	\$44,045	\$18,171	\$1,007,095	\$186,452	\$26,427,40
Failure to Take						
Appropriate Action	29 (4.8%)	\$31,471	\$18,668	\$185,567	\$97,416	\$1,416,71
Unnecessary/Contraindic						
ated Procedure	7 (1.2%)	\$27,264	\$19,204	\$82,235	\$73,623	\$325,27
Continuity of Care/Care						
Management	4 (0.7%)	\$25,216	\$9,540	\$52,369	\$27,745	\$129,48
Behavior/Legal	22 (3.7%)	\$11,974	\$13,543	\$50,000	\$38,190	\$534,28
Delay In Performance	1 (0.2%)	\$6,546	\$504	\$6,546	\$504	\$7,05
Allegation Not Otherwise Classified	95 (15.8%)	\$5,208	\$9,563	\$186,313	\$75,559	\$685,97
Total	600 (100%)	\$35,729	\$17,547	N/A	N/A	\$29,526,19


Distribution of Professional Liability Claims by General Treatment Classification - Indemnity and Associated Expense						
General Treatment Classification	Closed Claims N (%)	Mean Indemnity	Mean Expense	Maximum Indemnity	Maximum Expense	Total Pai
Implant related	101 (19.5%)	\$37,121	\$19,540	\$221,006	\$111,382	\$5,234,
Restorative related	96 (18.5%)	\$21,366	\$19,075	\$102,794	\$186,452	\$3,367,
Oral surgery related	94 (18.1%)	\$71,189	\$19,233	\$1,007,095	\$84,110	\$8,211,
Endodontic related	88 (17.0%)	\$23,776	\$12,915	\$169,610	\$131,557	\$3,047,
Prosthodontic related	55 (10.6%)	\$29,749	\$19,863	\$159,058	\$87,195	\$2,589,
Other (e.g., first aid)	40 (7.7%)	\$23,192	\$13,165	\$201,419	\$75,559	\$1,309,
Diagnosis related	16 (3.1%)	\$28,302	\$14,200	\$159,058	\$44,960	\$637,
Preventive related	11 (2.1%)	\$13,565	\$17,726	\$62,627	\$72,245	\$291,
Orthodontic related	11 (2.1%)	\$52,430	\$32,655	\$302,129	\$110,913	\$870,
TOTAL	518 (100%)	\$36,027	\$17,822	n/a	n/a	\$25,951,3



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# **Case Study - Surgery**

- General dentist extracts all four third-molars on a 30 year old male
   #17 and #32 were partially bony impacted,
   #1 and #16 were fully erupted

 $\sum$ 

- Following procedure patient complains of numbness on left side
- General dentist consults with oral surgeon who suggests mapping the tongue to asses progress
- Patient requests a copy of records, consults with his own oral surgeon and files a claim

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# **Case Study - Implants**

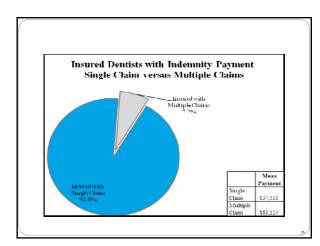
- Prosthodontist places six maxillary implants and designed a full upper denture for a 66 year old female patient – a lifelong smoker
- Following procedure patient complains:
   Could not keep the implants properly cleaned
   Denture was too wide for her mouth
- Implants ultimately failed due to peri-implantitis
- Patient required reconstruction of upper jaw
- and a new denture
- Patient brought a lawsuit against the prosthodontist

Distribution			•	aims by Ge Associated 1		ment
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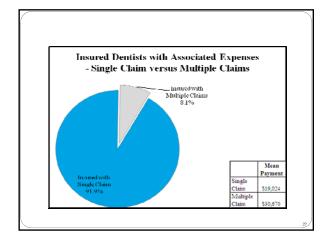


# **Case Study - Endodontics**

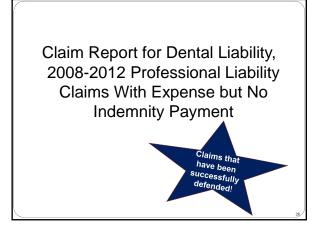
- A 26 year old patient presents to a general dentist with pain in the area of #18
- Dentist determines that RCT on #19 is needed
- Dentist discusses referral to an endodontist with patient, but patient wants dentist to perform the procedure
- Following RCT patient complains of swelling and pain
- Patient sees specialist who determines the lingual aspect of #19 was perforated
- The patient filed a claim against the dentist







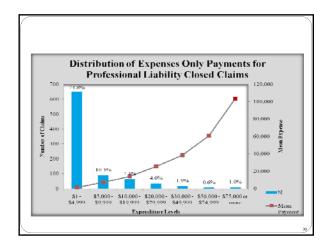






Distribution of Professional Liability Closed Claims with Expense Only Payment						
Claim Incident Year	Expense Only N (%)	Mean Expense Only	Total Paid			
2008	228 (26.1%)	\$8,797	\$2,005,615			
2009	269 (30.8%)	\$6,594	\$1,773,762			
2010	210 (24.1%)	\$4,842	\$1,016,872			
2011*	128 (14.7%)	\$2,320	\$296,954			
2012*	37 (4.2%)	\$1,303	\$48,204			







#### **Case Study – Defense Verdict**

- A 50 year old female requests to have six amalgam fillings removed and replaced due mercury concerns
- Despite any mercury issue, the dentist determines that the age and condition of the fillings supported their removal and he places composites in their place
- Post procedure patient advises severe pain 24/7 due to allergic reaction to acrylic in the composites
- Patient sues dentist demanding \$50,000

Claim Report for Dental Liability, 2008-2012 License Protection Claims

# Licensure regulation principles

- The board is not your friend
- The board is not there to be an advocate for:
  - the licensed professional
  - the profession as a whole
- The board's sole mission is to protect the public
- Investigations by the board are adversarial
- You must be represented by competent counsel
- Many boards publish their minutes and/or decisions on the Internet
  - · Ohio, Tennessee, North Carolina and many others

#### Licensure Defense Claims

- License protection claims represent only the cost of providing legal defense for the dentist
- An action taken against a dentist's license to practice differs from a professional liability claim in that it may extend beyond matters of professional negligence and involve allegations of a personal, nonclinical nature, such as billing practices to breaches of confidentiality to substance abuse
- These allegations may be brought to the licensure board by <u>anyone</u>

# Who can file a complaint?

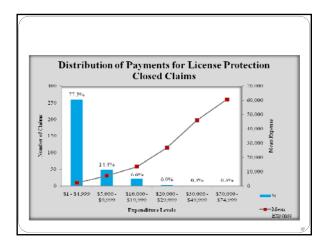
Complaints to the Board can be made by anyone, including:

Patients

- •Patients' family members
- •Employers or co-workers
- •Family members or friends
- •Regulatory agencies, including Board investigators
- •Law enforcement agencies

Distribution of	of License Prot	ection Close	d Claims	
Claim Incident Year	License Protection Claims N (%)	Mean License Protection	Total Paid	
2008	78 (23.4%)	\$3,584	\$279,518	
2009	103 (30.9%)	\$4,553	\$468,921	
2010	76 (22.8%)	\$4,709	\$357,885	
2011	52 (15.6%)	\$4,013	\$208,690	
2012	24 (7.2%)	\$2,010	\$48,241	
TOTAL	333 (100%)	\$4,094	\$1,363,254	







#### Common Issues/Complaints

- Professional misconduct
- Unprofessional conduct
- Scope of practice
- Failure to supervise
- Out-of-state disciplinary action
- Criminal activity
- Moral fitness (social media)
- Substance abuse/impairment
- Unsafe practice

# Common Issues/Complaints

- Mandated reporting
- · Falsification of business/medical records
- Violation of agreement or settlement
- Dishonesty in application, registration, renewal
- Fraud or misrepresentation
- Abandonment patient or employer
- DUI/child support/taxes/student loans
- Continuing education requirements





# License Protection Myths and Realities

#### MYTH

 Won't be sued or reported to board if you are a good provider

#### REALITY

- Perfection in clinical practice impossible – even skilled providers make human errors
- Must defend against allegations even when believing they have no merit

# License Protection Myths and Realities MYTH REALITY re likely to be • Insurance

- More likely to be sued if insured
- sued if insured than if not insured
- Insurance information not known until after suit is filed – is part of discovery
  Patients won't defer suit for insurance status if they think you injured them

## License Protection Myths and Realities MYTH REALITY • Have no assets, can't get anything even if I lose • Unsatisfied judgment →liens, destroyed credit, garnished wages, seized assets, licensure discipline

# License Protection<br/>Myths and RealitiesMYTHREALITY• Am retired or not<br/>currently in<br/>practice• Retirement is the end<br/>of work, not the end of<br/>liability<br/>• Will be held to the

- standard of a professional, not a lay person
- May still need to defend against licensure complaints

#### Licensure Protection Risk Recommendations

- Treat people kindly & with respect
- Make sure Policies and Procedures manuals reflect current practice & follow them scrupulously (*keep old ones*)
- Stay informed on evidence-based standards & incorporate into usual & customary practice
- Document consistently, legibly & in accordance
   with Policies and Procedures
- Sequester records after worrisome incidents

#### Licensure Protection Risk Recommendations

- Zero tolerance policies
- Know practice act in every state in which you practice
- Embrace transparency
- Stay educated
- Recognize fatigue and respect your physical limits
- Partner with patients, have patient-centered focus
- Monitor the performance of staff

#### Licensure Protection Risk Recommendations

- Keep copies of:
  - performance appraisals
  - recommendation/reference letters
  - thank you cards
- Maintain CDE certificates of completion
- Belong to at least 2 professional organizations
- Subscribe to at least 2 professional journals
- Learn new equipment & techniques

# What to do if you are named in a Board complaint...

- Notify your liability carrier
- Notify your employer
- Stop talking
- Immediately retain counsel
- Do not keep journals, diaries, logs, personal copies of documents
- Do not conduct independent research or review documents without legal advice

## Actions the Board Can Take

- Revoke your dental license
- Suspend your license
- Put you on probation
- Supervised practice only
- Formally reprimand you
- Mandate additional training
- Mandate additional continuing education

#### Other consequences

Additional consequences could include:

- Malpractice claims
- •Other civil or criminal penalties
- Personal liability
- •Employment termination
- Damaged reputation

# **Case Study – Licensure Defense**

- Following a treatment plan for restoration with dentures and implants in the upper and lower jaw spanning 15 months, a 46 year old female patient filed a complaint to the state dental licensing board alleging:
  - Substandard practice,
  - Abuse,
  - Poor communication, and
  - Abandonment

# Claim Report for Dental Liability, 2008-2012 Highlights from the Qualitative Work Profile Survey

# **Purpose of the Survey**

- Examine the relationship between professional liability exposure and a variety of demographic and workplace factors
   We surveyed two groups
  - those who had experienced a professional liability claim resulting in loss that had closed between 2008 and 2012
  - those who had never experienced a claim
- Interpretation of Results
  - The survey findings are based on self-reported information
  - 95% confidence level

	cy Kcs	ponse	e Rates
	Claims	version	Non-claims
	Print	Online	TOTAL
Initial deployment	9/9/2013	9/9/2013	10/3/2013
Reminder #1 sent		10/1/2013	
Field closed		11/11/2013	
Initial sample size	1,3	590	10,000
Undeliverable/Opt out		18	117
Usable sample	1,	572	9,883
# of respondents	3	01	976
Response rate	10	.2%	9.9%



	urvey Der Gender	r and Ag	
		Claims (%)	Non-Claims (%)
Gender	Female	26.4	39.3
	Male	73.6	60.7
Age	20-29	0.0	3.2
	30-39	9.4	26.1
	30-49	25.2	28.5
	50-59	33.9	26.9
	60-69	23.5	11.7
	70 years or older	8.1	3.6

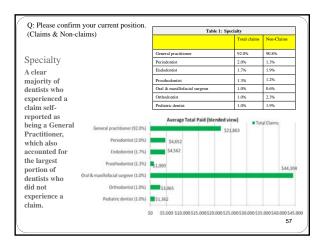


Survey l Location	0	-
	Claims	No Claims
U.S.	86.1	89.1
International	11.5	9.4
U.S. Territory	21	12

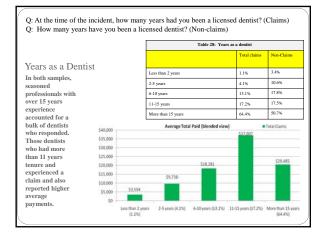
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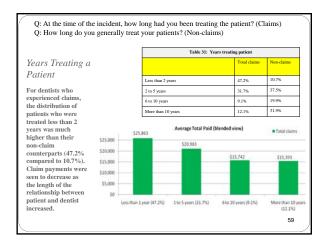
Canadian



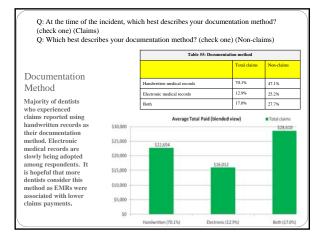




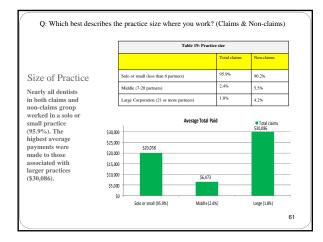




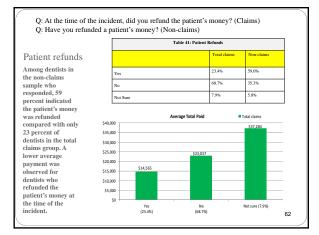




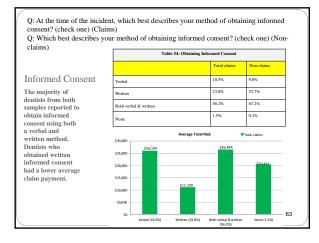














# Claim Survey – Summary of Findings

- Those dentists who experienced a claim offer a variety of procedures
- Most respondents mentioned they work in solo or small private practice
- Dentists who experienced a claim reported the majority of their patients are under 65 years of age
- Dentists who did **not** experience a claim were willing to provide their patients with a refund for services
- More than 79 percent were "very satisfied"

Recap

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- Be Prepared for Your Exposures
- · Communicate with your patients and staff
- Recognize Your Limitations

Acknowledgements – Dentist's Advantage would like to thank the following organizations for their contribution to this project:

Without the complete support of the management of AIG as well as the expert statistical analysis of the AIG team this study would not have been possible.

Dentist's Advantage appreciates the willingness and eagerness of the Academy of General Dentistry to get involved in the crafting of the survey questions and the (upcoming) clinical review of the case studies.

As the claims administrator of the Dentist's Advantage professional liability insurance claims, Intercare Insurance Services, Inc., is the archivist of Program claim data. Their cooperation in compiling this claim data is appreciated.

We appreciate The National Society of Dental Practitioners for providing the impetus and the funding to get this project off the ground.

# Cyber Liability ~ An Emerging Risk for Dentists

Academy of General Dentistry Annual Meeting San Francisco, CA June 18, 2015

#### Goal of this Presentation

To provide you with the *education* you need to:

- 1. Understand the cyber exposures you face every day
- 2. Implement some control over these exposures
- 3. Determine your appetite for risk

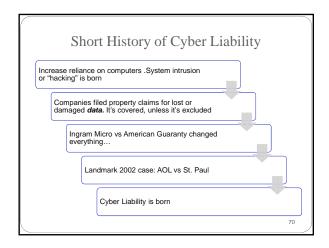
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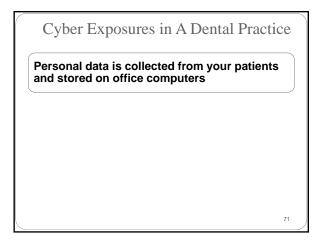
# Understanding Risk Management

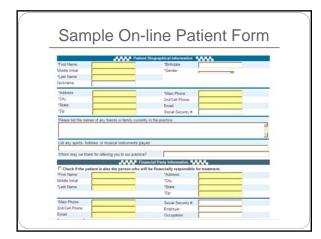
#### A COMBINATION OF ACTIVITIES OR PROCESSES THAT HELP YOU MINIMIZE YOUR LIABILITY EXPOSURE

- Accept the risk
- Avoid the risk
- Reduce the negative effect of risk
- Transfer the risk











# Cyber Exposures in A Dental Practice

Personal data is collected from your patients and stored on office computers

Personally identifiable information is transmitted between parties (e.g. to or from referring dentists)

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# Cyber Exposures in A Dental Practice

Personal data is collected from your patients and stored on office computers

Personally identifiable information is transmitted to third parties (e.g. referring dentists)

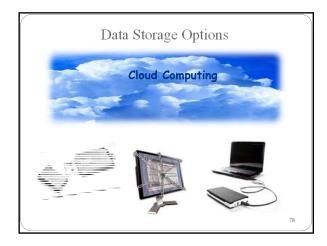
Automated processes are used for things like billing, making an appointment or other notices

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	Cyber Exposures in A Dental Practice
	Personal data is collected from your patients and stored on office computers
	Personally identifiable information is transmitted o third parties (e.g. referring dentists)
10	Automated processes are used for things like billing, making an appointment or other notices
	System backup data is stored offsite
	7.



# Cyber Exposures in A Dental Practice

Personal data is collected from your patients and stored on office computers

Personally identifiable information is transmitted to third parties (e.g. referring dentists)

Automated processes are used for things like billing, making an appointment or other notices

System backup data is stored offsite

Credit card transactions are processed either directly or through a vendor

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PCI – Data Security Standards

Build and Maintain a Secure Network

Protect Cardholder Data

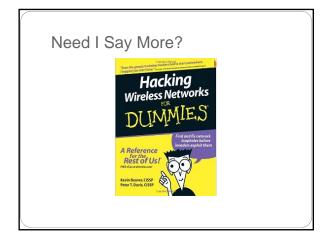
Maintain a Vulnerability Management Program

Implement Strong Access Control Measures

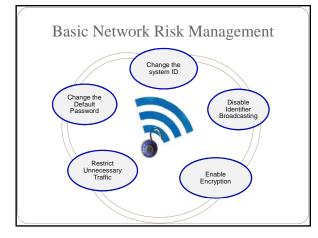
Regularly Monitor and Test Networks

Maintain an Information Security Policy

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System backup da	ta is stored offsite	
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Automated process other notices	ses are used for things like billing, making an appointment
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Credit card transac directly or through	tions are processed either a vendor
The office maintain	s a wireless network







Does this really happen?				
Date	State	Event	Patients affected	
10/4/2009	CO	computers stolen	2,500	
6/5/2010	IL	theft of paper reports	657	
6/13/2010	CA	computers stolen	10,100	
6/15/2010	MD	e-mail breach	692	
8/5/2010	TX	laptop and servers stolen	4,700	
10/15/2010	TX	computers stolen	800	
12/16/2010	TX	computers stolen	800	
5/4/2011	AL	stolen server	20,744	
5/22/2011	CA	stolen server	10,190	
12/20/2011	FL	laptop stolen	2,200	
12/22/2011	CA	unauthorized access	11,646	
5/12/2012	CA	theft of flash drive	1,112	
5/17/2012	OR	unauthorized server access	4,354	
7/12/13	OR	theft of desktop computer	3,269	



# You're Responsible

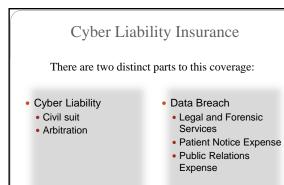
- As of 1/12/15, 47 states have laws regulating your response to a data breach
- You will be required to provide a letter of notice to your patients affected by the breach including
  - A description of the breach
  - The type of information breached
  - The day/time of the breach
  - Toll-free phone numbers and addresses to major credit reporting agencies
- You may also be required to notify
  - The state's Attorney General's Office
  - The US Department of Public Health

As of December, 2014, the *average* cost of a data breach was \$201 per record!\*

\*Ponemon Institute, Global Cost of a Data Breach Study

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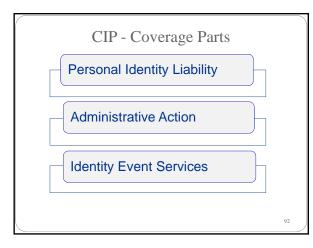


# Cyber Liability Insurance for Dentists?

- Prior to 2010 Cyber Liability available only to large retail, financial or medical organizations
- About 2010 insurance companies began to realize that small businesses had a need for Cyber Liability coverage as well
- Still a rare commodity in the small business arena

# ONE OPTION: COMMERCIAL IDENTITY PROTECTION

Dentist's Advantage worked with AIG to develop this important product to meet the needs of our clients...









# Typical Underwriting Guidelines

Designated individual responsible for information security

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Anti-virus software

Scheduled software update processes

Corporate firewall

Regularly scheduled network scan

User awareness training program

