

# Growth Strategies:

## Don't Let Uncollected Production Sit Idle on Your Books

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Bottomline: it's not really production or revenue until the money is collected and is working to help you meet your practice and personal goals. Here are three tips to help you minimize A/R and maximize cash flow.



### Start With a Plan

It's important – especially when you are growing or have new team members – that you have a detailed and effective collections and financing arrangement guideline for the office. This is an internal document designed to drive consistency in patient communication and payment behavior. The policy should include:

1. When payment is collected, which ideally would be as the appointment is set or at check in.
2. All payment options available to patients.
3. Your guidelines for patients who pay in full prior to the appointment.
4. Your check policies. Consider setting a maximum amount you will accept using this tender type.
5. Financing options available through your third-party financing partner.
6. Which patients are credit worthy and have an impeccable payment history.
7. Your past-due account collection strategy.

If you choose to extend credit, it's important to review the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act report with the team and keep it for future reference.



### Discuss Financial Arrangements When the Dentistry Is Scheduled

Once the value of care has been communicated and the patient is interested in moving forward with treatment, it's important they understand their financial investment and payment options before they reserve time on the schedule. No one likes surprises when it comes to their mouth or money. If the patient out-of-pocket cost is more than \$300, here's how the conversation might go:

*"After your insurance benefits contribute to the cost of care, your portion is \$850. We can collect this now or when you arrive for your appointment. We accept cash and credit cards, including the CareCredit credit card with flexible financing for your convenience. Which will work best for you?"*

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If the patient expresses cost concerns, it's important to be ready with a solution. It is rarely in the practice's best interests to extend credit to patients. This courtesy should be reserved for long-term patients with a stellar payment history. If patients ask to make payments, don't dead end the conversation with a "no" — give them options.

*"Yes. We accept the CareCredit credit card. If approved, you can use CareCredit to pay over time with promotional financing available on purchases of \$200 or more. Would you like to know more about this option?"*



## Know Your Last Resort Payment Options

Even though you have the financial conversation when the appointment is scheduled, it's inevitable that a few patients will be unprepared to pay when they arrive at the practice. Having financing available if the patient is unable to pay cash or use their general purpose credit card is one way to help them move forward with care and improve cash flow. But what if the patient is not approved for credit? You can choose to extend credit and bill patients but this should truly be your last resort because it not only impacts cash flow but may impact the patient relationship.

If you do choose to extend credit, be sure to provide patients with a written agreement that details the payment requirements.

When you start with a plan, have team alignment and have payment options available that enable you to collect at time of treatment. Your revenue will be able to work for you instead of your team having to work to collect accounts.

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