

Softwords

A&L Computer Software Limited

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Educate Yourself...

... And Take Nothing For Granted

Recently one of our A&L Hero* client's experienced intermittent problems with their EDT transmissions, which resulted in slow connections and incomplete modem communications. With A&L Computer Software's assortment of additional services, the client requested to have an A&L service technician come to their office to examine their systems setup.

After a careful evaluation process it was determined that their problems were due to a recently installed high-speed DSL phone line connection for shared Internet access in the office. DSL lines allow for voice, web and fax capabilities on the same line at the same time. However, if you intend to use these lines for regular modem dial-up connections you will require a 'High-Speed By-Pass Filter', which should be provided by your DSL provider. The filter aids in removing line noise, which can adversely affect any data transmissions via modem or fax.

With this scenario in mind, you should always ensure that the primary functions of your A&L Hero* for Windows, A&L Medical Systems and A&L Document Console software are maintained.

The popularity of the Internet, office networking, smaller hardware devices and the need to utilize space has placed an enormous demand on computing hardware. Various types of Internet setups such as High-Speed Internet (DSL), Cable Modems, and Shared Internet Access (using modem pooling) are known to cause unfavorable results with EDT. If you intend to use any one of these devices you should contact A&L Computer Software Limited, first to know what may occur, and to determine if there are any steps that can be taken to lessen the impact of any problems.

Furthermore, third party items such as faxing programs, memory intensive software, programs with active TSR's, incompatible hardware and computer

viruses can unknowingly play havoc with a client's system, which may affect your medical billing software in an abnormal way.

One of the more common problems that affect computers is the lack of regular computer maintenance. It is astonishing that large portions of the general public, who purchase new vehicles, do not spend the time to read their automobile user manual. In the automobile documentation you will find vital information on the motor vehicle requirements, specifications and recommendations.

Likewise, our body is an important mechanism and we should know what aids in our physical human development. With annual physicals and checkups, sound eating habits and regular exercise we can help to ensure a well-maintained and healthy body.

The same fundamental principles, of caring for something important to you, ought to apply to your computer. The Microsoft Windows family of operating systems (9x, ME, NT, 2000, etc.) comes with numerous maintenance utilities for keeping your computer up-to-date and efficient. It is important to perform these utilities on a regular basis to ensure the proper operation of your software.

Sluggish and slow software are often victims of operating systems that have not been maintained properly. With old temporary files, fragmented drives and invalid folders it is no wonder many see the ever dreaded "Blue Screen on Death", which causes frustration and aggravation.

The Microsoft Corporation has developed and provided basic tools to help keep your computer in tune. These tools are included with most Windows operating systems and they are known as the Scandisk, Disk Defragmenter and Disk Cleanup (for Windows 98 or later) utilities.

These are basic utilities that can help to correct potential problems and software

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This is one of a series of articles by Don Price on Practice Management which have been appearing in recent issues of Softwords. Don Price, B.Sc., M.B.A., is a Practice Management Consultant based in Ottawa, Ontario. He travels extensively throughout Canada helping physicians and their staff tune up and revitalize their offices through consultations and seminars. In addition, Mr. Price publishes workbooks and two bi-monthly newsletters for physicians and medical office staff. He can be reached at 1-800-458-1900 or fax (613) 247-8706.



From a patient's perspective, Dr. K's office is well organized. The staff greet patients with a smile, the reception area is attractively decorated and always tidy, and there are fresh flowers on the front counter. Dr. K himself likes to escort patients to the exam room. He uses this time for social chatter, he says, so that once the exam room door is closed he can get straight down to the reason the patient is there.

Dr. K says that he sees as many patients each day as he can fit in without rushing, but still feels that he is not operating at peak efficiency. When asked to describe a typical day, the problem soon becomes apparent.

The doctor is leaving his exam room on average three times in every four or five patient visits to find supplies, equipment, a form or a relevant educational handout. This shouldn't be a problem, Dr. K feels, as he knows exactly where to go to find the needed item. Supplies are kept in a well-stocked supply cupboard down the corridor from the exam rooms. Equipment is usually in one or another of the three exam rooms, and educational handouts are kept in a rack in the main reception area.

The only other reason he leaves the exam room during a patient's visit is to pass on a request to a staff member concerning that patient, and this is usually done at the end of the visit anyway. However, as Dr. K acknowledges, he usually goes back to his office before he brings the next patient up to write notes or make a quick phone call, and this alone probably accounts for between three and five minutes between each patient.

It's a rare physician who never has to leave the exam room during patient visits, but it should become the norm. With proper staff training, everything the doctor needs should be at his or her fingertips in the exam room.

Equipment and supplies:

A list should be posted in each exam room showing all equipment and supplies that may be needed each day. One staff member should be responsible for checking the list off against available supplies on a daily basis. Sometimes the purchase of a duplicate piece of equipment can be well worth the extra expenditure. By stocking all exam rooms as identically as possible, the time spent locating a particular item can be eliminated.

Supplies of forms and samples that are dispensed to patients should also be placed in each exam room. A designated staff member should check an on-going inventory list of these

items each day.

Scheduling:

Staff should always ask patients the reason for their visit when making appointments. Although some people may be reluctant to tell a staff member this information, the doctor can assist by letting patients know that the staff asks the reason as a way of ensuring the doctor is fully prepared for the patient's visit. If a patient is coming in for a reason that will necessitate a special piece of equipment or a form, for instance, the staff should ensure that this is available in the exam room., or immediately outside in the case of larger equipment, when the patient registers.

Patient preparation:

Although some doctors enjoy the social contact they have with patients if they do the escorting to exam rooms themselves, it is much more efficient to leave this to staff. Staff should be instructed by the doctor precisely how each patient type should be prepared, with all the necessary details written in the Procedures Manual. This should ensure that patients are undressed, or have their shoes off, or are weighed, etc., before the doctor comes into the exam room to begin the visit.

Communication:

Only in very urgent or emergency situations should doctors have to go to the front office to pass on requests to staff. All other requests should be handled through Activity Slips, which list all common instructions and requests. The doctor simply checks off the appropriate action., fills in the patient's name and deposits the slip in a special message box outside the exam room. The staff will pick up the activity slip the next time they escort a patient.

Educational Handouts:

A supply of educational handouts should be kept in a rack on the back of each exam room door. Alternatively, if the staff knows the reason for the visit, the appropriate handout can be placed inside the patient's chart for the doctor to hand to the patient during the visit.

One Minute Meeting:

The most useful technique to ensure the doctor will not have to leave the exam room is for doctor and staff to meet at the start of each session for one minute. At this meeting they should go over the schedule and check that everything needed for each visit is in the exam room, or easily available. They can also decide in which exam room to place certain patients if some equipment is not readily transportable between exam rooms.

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User's Corner

A further one-minute partway through each session can be used to pass on urgent messages or discuss any problems that have arisen during the previous patients' visits.

It may not seem to take up much time whenever he leaves the exam room, but if Dr. K were to add every minute spent away from his patients receiving something that could have been available, he might be surprised at exactly how much time is wasted over the course of each day.

By following the above strategies, Dr. K will find that he has several extra minutes available each day in which he can see extra patients or complete paperwork and phone calls. He will even have time for the social chat he enjoys with his patients.

*(This article first appeared in **The Practice Manager**, a newsletter published by Don Price & Associates.)*



related issues from occurring. Please note that these utilities do not guarantee a problem free computer. However they may reduce the number of problems that may occur. For additional information on these tools refer to your operating systems user manual, Microsoft's website or even consult a local technician.

There are also additional software tools available from Symantec's Norton Utilities, McAfee Virus Scan and various software vendors who specialize in computer software maintenance. Furthermore, Microsoft provides software tools for keeping your programs up-to-date with software patches, bug fixes and the new updates.

As with an automobile or your own body, no one likes when something goes wrong that was preventable. Keeping your computer running smoothly will ensure that your office is without unwanted and expensive interruptions. A&L Computer Software Limited constantly endeavors to do our utmost to provide assistance with any problems our clients may be experiencing and we are generally able to analyze a problem following through a 3-step evaluation method.

Please contact A&L Computer Software Limited for a wide range of additional services that are available, at a low competitive cost, to our A&L Medical Systems, A&L Hero* and A&L Document Console clients.

Once again its time to update your Schedule of Benefits Fee Schedule for April 1, 2001. A&L takes great pride and pleasure in staying a step ahead! For those on Software Maintenance, you should have already received notification of your update. For A&L DOS users, we have already sent you an update disk that contains the changes in the fee schedule. And for the A&L HERO* users, you should have already received the fee schedule update through your modem.

In each case, please be sure to update them according to your instructions. A&L has made some changes to other files that MOH has sent out Bulletins and notices for, so please do not run the MOH disk. However, MOH Bulletins are sent out to notify you specifically of changes that may affect your discipline. The most recent one we know of is MOH Bulletin 4367.

Although we endeavor to keep those changes up to date as well, we do not always receive notification of these changes from MOH since they are directed and sent to you, the physician. Ultimately, you are responsible for updating your fee schedule file. If you require assistance, please do not hesitate to call.

Thanks to your help, we have detected and identified service codes that may have to be updated manually on your system. In each case, they are services based on percentage premiums. We have notified MOH of the discrepancies and have asked if there are others they know about. Of course we will notify you as soon as we hear anything.

The service codes that may have NOT been updated are as follows:

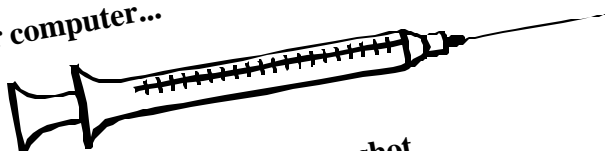
E400, E401, C995, K995, C997, K997, E409, E410, E411, E977

If you do not use these service codes, you can disregard this notice but it would be prudent to update them anyhow in the event your billing pattern changes in the future.

According to the Ministry of Health, the 2.0% increase will be applied automatically to all claim submissions for services provided on or after April 1, 2001 regardless, if you have updated your files or not (for now).



Give your computer...



...a shot

S'port For Kids 2nd Gala Dinner

The S'port For Kids Foundation's second benefit gala dinner event, S'port For Kids Ball 2001, took place on May 4, 2001. The medical community were strong supporters of the cause. Many of our clients and medical professionals joined us at the gala or made generous donations in lieu of attending. Included were Dr. K.S. Amankwah, Dr. J.Y. Chan, Dr. H.S. Eng, Dr. M.L. Go, Dr. C.A. Jyu, Dr. R.C. Kung, Dr. S.Y. Leung, Dr. C.W. Lynde, Dr. W. Love, Dr. P.S. McElgunn, Dr. G. Ng, Dr. D.N. Sauder, Dr. C.Y. Tse, Dr. F. Weksberg and Dr. C.K. Wong. Also attending were Mr. Peter Berwick, director of OMA and Mr. Tom Magyarody, CEO of Ontario Dental Association. Dr. Karen Scully, a long time client of A&L and a director of S'port For Kids was the fundraising co-chair, S'port for Kids Ball 2001. The S'port For Kids Foundation thanks you all for your support.

The event was jam-packed with activities. The auction items included a 3 litre bottle of Remy Martin XO Special, an IBM Pentium III computer, and a getaway weekend for two at the Windsor Arms Hotel. We also had a Jump Parachuting Course and several laser skin procedures donated by Dr. Charles Lynde and Dr. Fred Weksberg. There were 60 NBA basketballs as table prizes. General Mills donated \$7,500 to S'port For Kids at the dinner to support the cause; they also donated cases of Granular Bars for table prizes. Our feature performer was one of the original Platters, the legendary Bobby Soul with his haunting magic of such top 10 hits as: *The Great Pretender, Twilight Time, Only You, Smoke Gets in Your Eyes and My Prayer!*

Among the S'port For Kids supporters are Canadian Olympic athletes Curtis Hibbert (Gymnastics), Vice-president of Sport and Athletes for the 2008 Toronto Olympic Bid and first Canadian gymnast to win a World Championship Medal; Peter Fonseca, (Marathon) 1996 Canadian Olympic athlete and Canadian Marathon record holder; Joe Ng, (Table Tennis) three-time Canadian Olympic Team Member; and Tracey Wilson, Canadian Olympic Bronze Medal dance champion and TV figure skating sportscaster.

Other sport champion supporters include hockey legend and

former MP "Red" Kelly, Andrea McLaughlin Kelly, World Free Skating Champion and Toronto Raptor Vince Carter (on video). Keynote speaker and Canadian Olympic Water Polo medalist, George Gross Jr. addressed the value of sport as training ground for personal and professional success. Mayor William (Bill) Bell of Richmond Hill, honorary chair of the Foundation, greeted the athletes and dignitaries.

Even though S'port For Kids Ball 2001 raised a net of \$60,000, we are still miles away from our target. The 2001 S'port grant recipients are the Toronto City Mission, and "Stay in School and Keep the Peace Basketball" organization, established by the Toronto Police Service and Regent Park Community Centre. The Grants will give financially deprived children from "at risk" families

a chance to learn fundamental life skills through team sports and provide desperately needed sporting equipment for community organizations.

There are countless numbers of children still living in poverty. In the past we heard that increasing numbers of kids were dropping out of school but now we are hearing that rising numbers of kids are getting involved in violent activities including gang fights, and shooting incidents.

S'port For Kids Foundation is using sports activities as a vehicle to help children develop their physical and emotional skills. All kids like to play and therefore team sports can be used to develop discipline, responsibility, commitment, and social skills. What better way is there to help our young people become good team players in the corporate world and, most importantly, better citizens? The Board of Directors of the S'port For Kids Foundation is

committed to giving our children a chance for a brighter and promising future and the success of the second annual S'port Ball Gala was a giant leap towards that goal.

A&L hopes more doctors and friends will be able join us in this cause. Thanks to all who attended and thoughtfully donated time and money to make the second S'port Ball Gala such a spectacular occasion. More information on S'port For Kids Foundation can be found at www.sportforkids.on.ca.

Sport fosters a multitude of positive qualities in kids: self-discipline, leadership skills and responsibility. In addition to celebrating wins, it allows them to learn from losing and congratulating opponents. It contributes to all aspects of a child's development. It's also just plain fun. Most of us take it for granted that we and our children and grandchildren will play one or many sports, either individually or on teams. Yet for thousands of kids in Ontario, being involved in sports is not a reality. Individuals and families may not have the means, and funds may not be available to rent skating rinks and baseball diamonds, hire coaches and buy equipment. Especially for the kids at beginner levels, not having a team to play on denies them a vital part of growing up.

That is where S'port for Kids comes in. S'port for Kids Foundation is a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote the wholeness of individuals by facilitating and supporting the physical, emotional and social development of youth through their involvement in organized sports. The Foundation's funding allows kids to join teams, play sports and develop essential life skills. It provides sports activities for our less privileged youth and helps new Canadians integrate into society through sports participation.

Your support will make a difference. Thank you for helping shape today's kids into tomorrow's leaders.

**Dr. Karen Scully, Director & Fundraising Co-chair,
S'port for Kids Ball 2001**

