

# ADLibs

Peterson Area Dental Laboratory Information Letter

April 1999



## CHALLENGES

Area Dental Laboratories are an integral part of the USAF dental service. In addition to producing dental prostheses, ADLs are a reservoir of laboratory expertise, where NCOs and airmen learn to manage USAF dental laboratories for future assignments throughout the world. Part of the management process is benchmarking. Peterson Area Dental Laboratory must use the private sector as a performance benchmark. To that end, dental laboratory operations must change in three major ways.

1. We must perform technical procedures more efficiently. Peterson ADL is currently incorporating Productivity Training Corporation practices. **A bonus of technical efficiency is reliable turnaround times.** For the past 3 months Peterson ADL has turned around, on average, at least 95% of one to three unit cases in 14 days, 4-6 unit cases, PLVs, and Empress in 20 days, and larger cases in 25 days. Using FedEx or UPS to control transit time to the ADL will allow you to schedule insertion appointments on the day you prepare teeth. Please note: we will ship your case to you using the

same method you used to ship your case to us. Let us know the insertion appointment date in section 26 of the DD Form 2322 so we can plan to meet your deadline.

2. Our accounting systems must change. In order to compare apples to apples (i.e., a more accurate business case analysis) and to parallel the accounting system used on the clinic side of the house, the Tri-Service dental laboratory consultants developed a plan to convert CLVs to Dental Laboratory Weighted Values (DLWVs) some time in fiscal year 2000. The appropriate approval authority is currently reviewing the plan. We'll inform you if, and when, the new accounting system is deployed.
3. Finally, dental laboratory services must change their business and technical policies to more closely resemble private enterprise. This new paradigm has clinical and business case analysis implications. We, as dentists, must become more cost conscious in our prescription writing. The principle is simple: If the prescription is complex, the laboratory "bill" will be more costly, the turnaround time may be longer, and your clinic's "profitability" will be less. Please use the ADL's Default Standards as an aid to laboratory prescription writing. Most notably, our civilian counterparts, as well as many military doctors, prescribe porcelain occlusal surfaces for their metal-ceramic restorations. Because of the high prescription rate for this type of restoration, the Peterson ADL default standard will be a "POC" (porcelain occlusal).

## QUALITY CONTROL

On the Provider Feedback section of the yellow quality control card we send with each fixed prosthodontics case, there is a list of six product quality areas we ask you to score: interproximal contacts, seating, occlusion, contours, margins and esthetics. This scoring process will be most helpful and effective if we are all using the same scoring criteria and tools. Tolerances for margins, interproximal contacts, and occlusion are easier to measure than seating, contours, and esthetics. This is how we assess the products before we ship them:

**Margins:**

Clinical acceptability for margin openings is 0-100 micrometers (May, KB et al., J Prosthet Dent, 80 (4),p 394-404 1998 Oct). We measure margins under a measuring microscope.

**Interproximal contacts:**

Ideally, one piece of shimstock should pass through the contact, and two pieces should hold in the contact between the prosthesis and the adjacent tooth on a solid cast (Boice, PA et al., J Oral Rehab 1987, v 14, p 91-94; Campagni, W.U., J of Ca Dent Assoc, 1984, v 12, p 21).

**Occlusion:**

Cusps should be placed in fossae or on marginal ridges. Unusual cases may require different alignment. Smaller cases with relatively few units should drag shimstock when the casts are articulated, while natural teeth on each side of the prostheses should hold shimstock. Larger, more extensive cases should hold shimstock when articulated on an articulator. Natural teeth should also hold shimstock.

**SUBMISSION  
STANDARDS**

Attached is a "quick-look", one-page version of the ADL submission standards. Since the dentist is both the supplier and the customer of the fabrication process, following these guidelines will help us fabricate the quality product you desire.

**ADL WORKSHOP  
2-4 NOV 99**

Peterson ADL will host the annual Area Dental Laboratory Workshop 2-4 Nov 99.

**Squadron commanders**, please remember this meeting is a great continuing education bargain. Plan to send at least one officer and one laboratory technician.

Lecturers are still needed. This is a great opportunity to share ideas and techniques, not to mention a great bullet or two on your OPR or EPR. If you have a prosthodontically related topic you would like to present, please contact Doctor Curtis at DSN 843-1621.

Colorado is a great place to visit in the fall. The weather is normally very stable with temperatures in the 50s or 60s. Hiking, rock climbing, sightseeing, fishing, and hunting will be at their prime.

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