Implant dentistry requires a high degree of collaboration between restorative and specialty practices. Without a strong focus on communication, the treatment process can easily break down between the referral, the consultation and the surgical appointment.

Due to their cost, implants have a steeper acceptance curve than other services. Anything that interferes with a motivated patient’s ability to begin implant treatment as quickly as possible needs to be eliminated or minimized.

Levin Group recommends scheduling the implant consultation at the surgical practice within seven to 10 days after a patient is referred for implant treatment.

When it comes to a major expenditure, people can lose motivation quickly. That’s why it’s so critical that restorative offices and surgical practices work together to design a consultation scheduling system that works for everyone involved — patients, the dentists, the surgeon and their teams.

At a recent seminar, I spoke with a group of implant surgeons who acknowledged that it is essential to have the implant consults as quickly as possible.

In a team approach, both teams have to follow similar rules. If one team member feels that speed of treatment is important and the other group cannot accommodate that philosophy, there is going to be a problem. Either the restorative clinician will find another implant surgeon or simply stop referring implants — as is too often the case.

Critical questions
In a team approach, clear communication is essential. Answer the following questions:

• What are the guidelines for the team to work together?
• Who will provide which parts of the implant services?
• Who will provide case planning?
• Who will present fees to the patient?
• When the situation is appropriate, who will arrange patient financing for patients?
• How will communication occur between the restorative practice and the implant surgical practice?
• How soon can the surgical practice accept a referred patient for an implant consultation?
• How soon can the patient expect to start implant treatment when a case is presented and accepted?

These questions will help you and your referring practices reach a better understanding of each other’s expectations and commitment to implant dentistry. A strong team approach requires communication and cooperation throughout the entire treatment process from referral to restoration. When both practices are on the same page, an outstanding experience is the result for patients, referring dentists and implant surgeons.

Trying to decide how to improve the referral process? Implant Tribune readers are entitled to receive a 50 percent courtesy on a Levin Group Practice Potential Analysis — an in-office evaluation designed to identify the true potential of your practice. Call (888) 973-0000 and mention “Implant Tribune” or e-mail customerservice@levingroup.com with “Implant Tribune” in the subject line. For more information on Levin Group seminars and programs, go to www.levingroupimplant.com.

Working better together for implant success

About the author

Dr. Roger P. Levin is chairman and chief executive officer of Levin Group, a leading implant practice management firm. Levin Group provides Total Implant Success®, the premier comprehensive consulting solution for lifetime success to implant clinicians in the United States and around the world.

Levin Group
10 New Plant Court
Owings Mills, Md. 21117
(888) 973-0000 or (410) 654-1254
customerservice@levingroup.com
www.levingroupimplant.com

Dr. Roger P. Levin, DDS

Implant Tribune | February 2010
Practice Management 11