Dentists, you now have the ability to treat migraine pain caused by TMD and to receive payment for the treatment through medical insurance. One of the most exciting and profitable indications for the NTI-tss device is the approval by the FDA for prophylactic treatment of medically diagnosed migraine pain. Some patients who have suffered debilitating migraines for most of their adult lives are experiencing true pain relief. Unlike rescue medications used to combat migraines while they are occurring, such as Imitrex, the NTI-tss device actually works to prevent the onset of migraine headaches. Because the FDA approved the NTI-tss for migraine pain, patients are able to use their medical insurance coverage to pay for treatment. The essential steps for obtaining medical reimbursement for migraine therapy are:

1. Appropriate patient history
2. Confirmation of medical insurance coverage and limitations
3. Confirmation of medical diagnosis and medication history
4. Collection of subjective and objective examination data
5. Assessment and Diagnosis
6. Submission of medical claim and narrative
7. Appeal letter follow up (if necessary)

To simplify the process, the steps can be further organized into three areas; pre-clinical, clinical, and post-clinical. In each step, be aware the information collected will be used to diagnose and treatment plan for the patient. Organized into the standard SOAP (subjective, objective, assessment and plan) format, narratives can easily be generated for insurance claims submission. My partner and wife, Jeanine McDonald, DDS, and I have developed forms to help simplify obtaining patient information and reimbursement from medical insurance.

Pre-clinical
The forms associated with the pre-clinical phase of data collection are the Migraine Patient Call Sheet and the Medical Insurance Information sheet. (These forms are available on the NTI-tss website, www.nti-tss.com.) The patient call sheet is designed for new patient calls, but can also be used for existing patients as you incorporate NTI-tss Migraine therapy in your practice. Steps 1-3 from the above list are addressed by these two forms.

Clinical
The form used during the clinical phase of data collection is the Migraine Initial Interview & Clinical Examination form. This form facilitates the collection and organization of additional subjective as well as objective data. An assortment of the most commonly used ICD diagnostic codes are also included in the assessment area of the form. (The list of codes is intended to be an organizational aide and not a limitation of the possible diagnosis). The clinician should now have sufficient information to recommend treatment (the Plan component of the SOAP format.) In my experience, the NTI-tss is generally coded using one of the following:

- CPT 21110-52 Interdental Fixation Device: This code is the most commonly used in our practice for NTI-tss therapy.
- CPT D7880 Occlusal Orthotic Therapy: This code has been recommended for submission to BCBS.

Perhaps at some point the groundbreaking nature of the NTI-tss may warrant a new code for submission. For now, dentists must work with the codes available.

Post-clinical
At this point, either submit for reimbursement or preauthorization of treatment from the patient’s medical insurance company. This may depend upon the limitation or requirements of coverage, the patient’s desires or individual office policies. While a number of policies require pre-authorization, approval can be obtained immediately by phone and fax or within 7 to 10 days. The remainder of the claims may be submitted after treatment is completed. Reimbursement may be directed to the patient or to the provider’s office, again depending upon individual office policies.

Having followed the pre-clinical and clinical protocols described above, the actual submission of the medical claim is easily executed. The submission should contain two essential items; a detailed narrative letter and a claim form. It is important to use the medical insurance forms (from HCFA-1500). My office has found the traditional claim form is not well received by medical insurance companies and often leads to requests for additional information, delays and, in a few cases, flat out denials due to it being “dental”. The medical forms may be obtained from the patient, the patient’s Human Resource Officer at their place of employment or, in some cases, generated by dental management software.

The properly written narrative letter can facilitate rapid approval of the claim. A poorly written, vague narrative can doom the claim to denial and a potentially time consuming appeal process. A field specific form letter which has been coordinated to the intake forms which we developed can be found on the NTI site as well, or you may choose to design your own.

Conclusion
Medical claims submission for migraine therapy with the NTI-tss device is neither complicated nor mysterious. By following these simple steps, you can provide your patients with a higher level of service and help them get the most out of their insurance benefits. Be honest and be diligent. We have the opportunity to pave new ground in the treatment and claim submission for our patients.

Dr. Michael Melkers is a 1994 graduate of the Marquette University School of Dentistry. He and his wife, Jeanine McDonald, practice general dentistry in Spokane, WA with an emphasis on comprehensive and restorative care. Michael has been a guest presenter on NTI therapy at PAC–live’s Ultimate Occlusion course. He can be contacted at drmelkers@aol.com.