



## Dental School's Patient Database Gets a Check Up with Data Quality Suite



From reminder cards and promotional materials to important billing statements, mail correspondence is an integral form of communication for most medical offices. The University of Iowa's College of Dentistry is no exception. With more than 174,000 patient visits in the years of 2016-2017, retaining accurate contact information for patients is of utmost importance. However, the university encountered a problem — too many patient address errors plagued their database, having a tremendous effect on the communication between patient and clinic.

### **"ADDRESSING" THE ROOT CAUSE**

These errors occurred in a number of ways. When a patient enters the university's dental clinic, they are required to fill out registration cards in order to either initially input their information into the

database or to update their current records. Then, the clinic's administrative clerk will manually type in the patient's personal information.

Most of the clinic's database errors typically occur between these steps. The errors are either caused intentionally by the patient through fictional billing information, or the administration has difficulty reading the hand-written patient forms, or simply makes a clerical mistake when typing.

"Lack of adequate controls on address input created too many address errors," said David Reynolds, the dental school's project leader.

It was imperative for the university's clinic to find a solution that would verify and correct addresses and contact information in real-time during data entry in order to maintain contact with their patients as well as receive payment from them.

## RINSING OUT BAD DATA

The university recognized this need and decided to seek the help from Melissa's Data Quality Suite. This solution solved these errors with its toolkit of customizable APIs that verify, correct and standardize contact data (street address, phone number, full name and email address) in real time, as it is entered.

This solution also reduced fraudulent entries and caught data-input errors at point-of-entry or in batch. It also fully automated the data cleansing process and standardized data for fast, efficient database management and processing.

The clinic mainly uses the suite's CASS™ Certified address correction component – Address Object – to clean up their database of incorrect, incomplete and undeliverable addresses in real-time.



## A BRIGHTER DATABASE

By verifying patient addresses in real-time, service becomes more accurate and increasingly more efficient.

Utilizing the solution has helped the dental school save wasted time, production and resources on sending materials to inaccurate or nonexistent addresses. "We have less returned mail as a result of address cleaning," Reynolds said.

In the near future, the clinic also will tackle verifying addresses in batch mode for the occasional address that by-passed online verification. Reynolds said, "we are striving for as accurate data at the point of capture as possible, and for as little subsequent management as possible ... we expect further time savings by using address forwarding updates [such as NCOA<sup>Link®</sup>] in the near future."

“Real-time verification allows immediate feedback to the clerk and the opportunity to interact further with the patient, if there were address errors”

– DAVID REYNOLDS, PROJECT LEADER FOR UNIVERSITY OF IOWA.

### About University of Iowa:

For more than 125 years, the College of Dentistry has been an integral part of The University of Iowa and a resource to the state of Iowa. The College of Dentistry is currently the only dental school with advanced programs in all recognized specialty areas. Outreach programs focus on children, special needs patients, and seniors, including a national award-winning Geriatric Mobile Dental Unit.

### About Melissa:

Since 1985, Melissa has specialized in global intelligence solutions to help organizations unlock accurate data for a more compelling customer view. Our breadth of data and flexible API technology integrates with numerous third-party platforms, so it works for you and makes sense for your business. More than 10,000 clients worldwide in key industries like insurance, finance, healthcare, retail, education and government, rely on Melissa for full spectrum data quality and identity verification software, including data profiling, cleansing, matching and enhancement services, to gain critical insight and drive meaningful customer relationships.

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