

Quality quizzical quandary

A wise Amishman recently described quality to me.... “If you want clean, healthy, wholesome, and nutritious oats, you gotta pay a premium price when you see them. If you want cheap oats, all you need is a shovel and to know someone with a horse.”

Recently, my family and I had the opportunity to drive across the United States for a family vacation. It was truly amazing to me how many billboards brag about “lowest fees” for dentures, crowns, lasik eye surgery, breast augmentation, tattoos, etc. In fact, my wife and I began to play a game, keeping track of and counting the signs...34 signs about cheap dentures from Denver to St. Louis, for example. We chuckled about whether or not we could find a sign for discounted cardiac bypass surgeries. Then reality set in for us. Sadly, lower fees must by simple mathematics require a reduced quality of service.

All businesses operate on a profit margin. In dentistry, for example, overhead involves staff wages, costs to maintain and upkeep equipment and



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facility, costs for billing and collection, materials for performing procedures, outside laboratory fees, fees for offering financing options, etc. All of these factors put together can be described as the “break even point”, or basic cost per hour to keep the business open. Since dentists typically do not work for free, the owner clinician’s wages then would be anything brought in over the break even point.

When a business owner chooses to discount fees, the break even point must be substantially reduced so that the proprietor can still make a reasonable wage. Therefore, by default, quality must be sacrificed through purchasing cheaper materials, paying lower staff wages, minimizing facility expenses, etc.

Although there probably are times when excessive

fees are charged for services that are less than par value, the old adage runs true most of the time: “you get what you pay for.” Buyer beware.

If it seems like something is too good to be true, it probably is. When it comes to seeking quality healthcare, it probably is not the wisest choice to price shop. Rather, seek your care based on referrals of friends, family, and other healthcare professionals who can vouch for the quality and integrity of the clinician from personal experience.

Typically, ethical clinicians charge fair fees, even though they may be significantly more than advertised by others on billboards.

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For questions about dental health or to schedule a complementary consultation, call 330-364-2011, visit www.doctorhuff.net, or ask your regular dentist.