

Dental IT Rate Guide 2026

Real pricing data — managed services, break-fix, and project costs
for dental practice technology

- ✓ Monthly managed IT costs by practice size
- ✓ Per-device and per-user pricing models compared
- ✓ Hidden fees to watch for (after-hours, HIPAA audits, imaging support)
- ✓ How to negotiate better rates with dental IT providers

How Dental IT Billing Works

Dental IT billing comes in two primary models: managed services (monthly subscription covering all or most support) and break-fix (pay per incident). Most practices are better served by managed services, but understanding both models — and what's included vs. extra — is essential to controlling costs.

Billing Model Comparison

Model	How It Works	Typical Cost	Best For
Managed Services (MSP)	Flat monthly fee covers monitoring, maintenance, help desk, security	\$500–\$2,500/mo (small practice)	Practices wanting predictable costs and proactive support
Break-Fix	Pay per incident when something breaks	\$100–\$250/hr	Very small practices with minimal technology
Hybrid	Low monthly base + per-incident for major issues	\$300–\$800/mo + hourly	Practices transitioning to managed services
Project-Based	Fixed fee for specific projects (network build, migration)	\$5,000–\$45,000 per project	New office setup, major upgrades

Quick Budget Reference

- Solo practice (3-5 workstations): \$500–\$1,200/month managed IT
- Small practice, 1-5 chairs (5-10 workstations): \$800–\$1,500/month
- Mid-size practice, 6-10 chairs (10-20 workstations): \$1,500–\$2,500/month
- Large practice / DSO location (20+ workstations): \$2,500–\$5,000+/month
- Full new-office IT setup (cabling, server, workstations, imaging): \$20,000–\$45,000

Managed Service Pricing Models

MSP Pricing Models — How Dental IT Providers Charge

Dental IT managed service providers use three main pricing models. Understanding which model a provider uses helps you compare quotes apples-to-apples and spot hidden costs.

Pricing Model	Rate Range	What's Included	Watch Out For
Per-device/ month	\$35-\$80/ device	Monitoring, patching, antivirus, basic help desk	Imaging equipment and servers may be priced separately
Per-user/ month	\$110- \$400/user	Everything per-device covers + email, cloud apps, user support	Higher per-seat cost but more comprehensive
Flat monthly fee	\$500- \$5,000/mo	All-inclusive based on practice size assessment	Scope creep exclusions in fine print

Add-On Service Pricing

Service	Typical Monthly Cost	Notes
HIPAA compliance management	\$100-\$300/mo	Risk assessment, policy management, training
Cloud backup & disaster recovery	\$249-\$400/mo	Offsite backup, tested recovery procedures
Network security (firewall + WAP)	\$110-\$175/location/mo	Managed firewall, intrusion detection, WiFi security
Email security / anti-phishing	\$3-\$8/user/mo	Advanced threat protection, spam filtering
24/7 monitoring & alerting	\$50-\$150/mo	Real-time server and network monitoring
Dental imaging support	\$75-\$200/mo	CBCT, panoramic, intraoral sensor integration

Sources: Pact-One Solutions 2026 dental IT pricing guide, Travel Tech, industry surveys.

Key Rule of Thumb

Dental practices should budget 2-6% of annual revenue for IT, including managed services, software licensing, and hardware replacement. A practice producing \$1M/year should budget \$20,000-\$60,000/year for technology.

New Office IT Setup Costs

Building a Dental Office From Scratch — IT Cost Breakdown

Installing IT infrastructure during construction saves 30-40% compared to retrofitting after walls are up. Plan your technology alongside your office design, not after.

Component	Cost Range	Key Variables
Structured cabling (Cat6, per operatory)	\$3,500-\$5,500/operatory	During construction; 2x if retrofitting
Full IT package with security (per operatory)	\$5,500-\$8,000/operatory	Includes cameras, access control, enterprise WiFi
Server (on-premise)	\$3,000-\$8,000	Practice management + imaging database host
Workstations (per unit)	\$1,000-\$2,500	Clinical vs. front desk specs differ
Dental imaging integration	\$2,000-\$10,000	CBCT, panoramic, intraoral sensors
Network switches and firewall	\$1,500-\$4,000	Business-grade managed switches, HIPAA-compliant firewall
WiFi access points	\$500-\$1,500	Enterprise-grade, separate patient/staff networks
UPS / battery backup	\$300-\$800	Server room + clinical workstations
VoIP phone system	\$1,500-\$5,000	Handsets + cloud PBX setup
Total (5-operatory office)	\$25,000-\$45,000	Excludes practice management software licensing

Construction Savings Tip

Coordinate IT cabling with your general contractor during the rough-in phase. Running Cat6 before drywall costs \$3,500-\$5,500/operatory. Retrofitting after walls are finished costs \$7,000-\$11,000/operatory — and the cable runs are surface-mounted.

Practice Management & Imaging Software Costs

Software Licensing

Software	Monthly Cost	Notes
Dentrix (by Henry Schein)	\$300-\$600/mo	Most widely used; server-based or Dentrix Ascend (cloud)
Eaglesoft (by Patterson)	\$250-\$500/mo	Strong imaging integration; server-based
Open Dental	\$179/mo (unlimited users)	Open-source; highly customizable; lowest cost
Curve Dental	\$350-\$500/mo	Cloud-native; no on-premise server needed
Dentrix Ascend (cloud)	\$400-\$700/mo	Cloud version of Dentrix; newer product
Dexis imaging software	\$100-\$200/mo	Standalone imaging; integrates with most PMS
CBCT software (Carestream, Planmeca)	\$200-\$500/mo or one-time license	3D imaging viewer and analysis

Software + Hardware Dependency

Your practice management software choice drives your server requirements. Dentrix and Eaglesoft require on-premise servers (\$3,000-\$8,000). Cloud-native options (Curve, Dentrix Ascend) eliminate the server but require reliable, fast internet with a wired backup connection.

Hidden Fees & Add-Ons

Always get an itemized service agreement. The monthly MSP fee rarely covers everything. Budget 20-30% above the base managed service cost for add-ons and project work.

Add-On	Typical Cost	When You Need It
After-hours / emergency support	\$150-\$350/hr (or +50-100% premium)	Server crash during patient hours, ransomware incident
HIPAA security risk assessment	\$2,000-\$5,000/year	Required annually by HIPAA Security Rule
HIPAA compliance remediation	\$3,000-\$15,000	Fixing findings from risk assessment
New workstation setup	\$200-\$500/workstation	Adding chairs, new hires, hardware refreshes
Imaging sensor integration	\$500-\$2,000/sensor	New intraoral, panoramic, or CBCT sensor installation
Practice management software migration	\$5,000-\$20,000	Switching from Dentrix to Eaglesoft (or vice versa)
Server replacement / migration	\$3,000-\$10,000	End-of-life server hardware (every 5-7 years)
Staff cybersecurity training	\$500-\$2,000/year	Phishing simulations, HIPAA awareness
Vulnerability scanning	\$500-\$2,000/year	Required every 6 months under updated HIPAA rules
On-site visits	\$150-\$300/visit or \$200-\$500/mo retainer	Hardware installs, imaging troubleshooting
Ransomware recovery	\$10,000-\$50,000+	If backups fail or are encrypted — prevention is cheaper
IT project management	\$100-\$200/hr	Office expansion, multi-site rollouts

Request a complete service catalog from any MSP prospect — a one-page list of exactly what is and isn't covered in the monthly fee. If they can't produce one, their billing will surprise you.

How to Negotiate Better Rates

Numbered list

- 1 Compare dental-specialized vs. general MSPs.** Dental-specialized IT providers understand Dentrix, Eaglesoft, imaging integration, and HIPAA requirements out of the box. General MSPs are often cheaper per-month but charge premium hourly rates for dental-specific work they have to learn.
- 2 Ask about multi-year discounts.** Most MSPs offer 10-15% discounts for 2-3 year agreements vs. month-to-month. Only commit to multi-year if the provider has strong references from other dental practices.
- 3 Bundle HIPAA compliance.** HIPAA risk assessments, policy management, and staff training purchased as a bundle with managed services typically cost 20-30% less than a la carte.
- 4 Negotiate on-site visit limits.** Some MSPs include 1-2 on-site visits per month; others charge \$150-\$300 per visit. If your practice requires frequent on-site support (imaging issues, hardware refreshes), negotiate included visits.
- 5 Clarify imaging support scope.** CBCT, panoramic, and intraoral sensor support is specialized. Some MSPs exclude imaging from standard contracts and charge \$75-\$200/month extra. Get imaging support in writing.
- 6 Time hardware purchases strategically.** MSPs often markup hardware 15-30%. Ask for cost-plus pricing (their cost + fixed margin) instead of retail pricing on workstations, servers, and networking gear.
- 7 Leverage DSO buying power.** DSO administrators managing 5+ locations can negotiate 15-25% discounts on per-location managed services rates through volume agreements.
- 8 Get three quotes.** Dental IT pricing varies 30-50% within the same market. Always compare at least 3 providers with dental practice experience.
- 9 Negotiate transition costs.** When switching MSPs, the new provider should include transition costs (documentation, handoff, credential transfer) in their proposal — not bill it separately at hourly rates.

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Require SLA guarantees with teeth. Negotiate response time SLAs (e.g., 15-minute response for critical issues, 4-hour resolution for non-critical) with financial penalties or service credits for misses.

Budget Planning Worksheet

Use this worksheet to estimate total dental IT costs. Print and fill in for your practice.

Line Item	Monthly Cost	Annual Cost
Managed IT services (MSP fee)	\$ _____	\$ _____
Practice management software	\$ _____	\$ _____
Imaging software licensing	\$ _____	\$ _____
Cloud backup & disaster recovery	\$ _____	\$ _____
HIPAA compliance management	\$ _____	\$ _____
Email security / anti-phishing	\$ _____	\$ _____
Network security (firewall/WAP)	\$ _____	\$ _____
Cybersecurity awareness training	\$ _____	\$ _____
Phone system (VoIP)	\$ _____	\$ _____
Internet service (primary + backup)	\$ _____	\$ _____
Hardware replacement fund (servers every 5-7 yrs, workstations every 4-5 yrs)	\$ _____	\$ _____
Annual HIPAA risk assessment	—	\$ _____
Annual vulnerability scanning	—	\$ _____
20% contingency buffer	\$ _____	\$ _____
TOTAL ESTIMATED	\$ _____	\$ _____

Complete this worksheet before requesting proposals. Knowing your full technology footprint — number of operatories, workstations, imaging equipment, and HIPAA status — helps MSPs give accurate all-in pricing and prevents surprise invoices.

CTA box

Need a sanity check on your IT budget? Email this worksheet to contact@chairsideit.com or browse vetted dental IT providers at chairsideit.com

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