

Associated Billing Center's  
**Newsletter**

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**A Message From Mona**

A template has “leaked” from the White House concerning President Trump’s proposal for replacing the Affordable Care Act. It proposes cuts to federal payments to states that have expanded Medicaid and dramatically cuts benefits for many individuals. In addition, reform legislation would dismantle the ACA’s essential health benefits requirements, which mandated that health plans cover 10 categories of health care services. Also at risk is the current requirement that insurers cover mental health (parity) and substance abuse therapy. The Washington Post reports that the opioid epidemic could turn into a pandemic if we’re not careful. By 2015, deaths due to opiate overdoses surged to about 62 per day. Americans consume 81 percent of oxycodone and almost 100 percent of hydrocodone available worldwide. Additional funding is also scheduled to be reduced.

Yes, we need reform. This newsletter addresses that issue as well. Your comments and thoughts are always warmly received.

Best regards,

*Mona*



**Stress: The American Landscape**

What stress factors seem to be among the most prevalent? For the past decade, The American Psychological Association has been conducting its “Stress in America” survey. According to respondents, the three major factors contributing to stress are money, work and the economy (we think relationships should be added as a fourth major cause of stress).

Young Americans who attended college are predominately worried about college debt, the elderly about retirement and everyone else about the economic prospects for the next generation.

Respondents with incomes below \$50,000 reported higher stress levels than those with higher incomes. The result of the January, 2017 poll show a statistically significant increase in stress for the first time since the survey was first conducted in 2007.

At 57 percent, more than half of respondents said the current political climate was a very or somewhat significant source of stress. Stress levels were comparatively worse than in August, in the midst of one of the angriest and most contentious campaigns in U.S. history.

Our Note: Conversations with many of our providers confirm the APA survey results. Many of you are telling us that some of your patients continue to exhibit stress directly related to our national politics.

Source: Newsmax/Bloomberg News

**Laugh a Little or Maybe A Lot:  
It's Good Therapy**

"If you think you are a set of curtains, either see a therapist or pull yourself together."

"The therapist told the genie his emotions were all bottled up."

"If you get a fruit basket from your therapist it will probably be shrink-wrapped."

"Therapists like Kentucky Freud Chicken."

"The Mideast does not need any therapists because there are *nomad* people."

-Jordan-Swanee, GA

Source: punoftheday.com

Quotable Quote: "Do not fear to be eccentric in opinion, for every opinion now accepted was once eccentric."

Source: guy-sports.com

"Stay lucid at your own risk."

Source: Anonymous

**Can a Healthier Diet Help to Treat Major Depression?**

A new trial study from Deakin University has shown that improving the quality of your diet can assist in the treatment of major depression. The Director of Deakin's Food and Mood Center, Professor Felice Jacka, says "We've known for sometime that there is a clear association between the quality of people's diets and their risk for depression." Jacka reports that much more study on the issue needs to be completed.

The dietary group received information and assistance to improve the quality of their current diets, with a focus on increasing the consumption of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, fish, lean red meats, olive oil and nuts while reducing their consumption of unhealthy 'extras' foods, such as sweets, refined cereals, fried food, fast-food, processed meats and sugary drinks.

Professor Jacka, President of the International Society for Nutritional Psychiatry Research, maintains the findings offer an important new strategy. The study suggests the possibility of adding clinical dieticians to mental health care teams and making nutrition support available to those experiencing depression.

Source: Deakin University/Australia



**Debating President Trump's Mental Health**

There is much discussion among the President's critics concerning the state of his mental health. Is he a textbook narcissist, is he merely unstable, an egomaniac, or merely a politician following through on his campaign promises? While commentators continue to engage in the conversation, the country's mental health organizations have long abided by a self imposed dictum to not evaluate the mental stability of a public figure. Do not expect a representative of such an organization to publicly comment on the issue. Maybe.

**A Quick & Vitally Important Thought from Mona**

**"Effective communication is the key to positive personal and professional relationships. Possessing the ability to communicate effectively could possibly be one of life's most important skills."**

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# THE STATE OF MENTAL HEALTH IN AMERICA 2017



## Prevalence Of Mental Illness

- Approximately 1 in 5 adults in the U.S.-43.8 million, or 18.5%, experience mental illness in a given year.
- Approximately 1 in 25 adults, 10 million, or 4.2%, experience a serious mental illness in a given year that substantially interferes with or limits one or more of major life activities.
- Approximately 1 in 5 youth aged 13-18 (21.4%) experiences a severe mental disorder at some point during their life.
- Among the 20.2 million adults in the U.S. who experienced a substance abuse disorder more than 50 percent had a co-occurring mental illness.

Source: NAMI

### Sue Klebold Reflects On Columbine

Sue Klebold, the mother of Dylan Klebold remembers first hearing about a shooting at Columbine High School on April 20, 1999 and wondering if her son, Dylan, was safe. It was in fact her son Dylan and accomplice Eric Harris who were responsible for the death of 13 people and the injuring of 24 others. She has been repeatedly questioned as to how “she could not know about her troubled son”. Read more about her latest thoughts on the subject at: [huffpost.com](http://huffpost.com)

### REPEAL AND REPLACE THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT? WHAT’S AT STAKE

The ACA dramatically changed the healthcare industry by doing away with pre-existing conditions and allowing parents to keep their children on their policies through the age of 26. President Trump had promised that *Repeal & Replace* would take place simultaneously. Now, the President is saying that the repeal of the ACA and its replacement will happen gradually and not all of its parts simultaneously. Katie Sola writes in Forbes magazine about her concerns for a program that encompasses nearly one-fifth of the U.S. economy.

Sola reports that critics on both sides of the aisle are warning that repealing the law without offering a clear alternative could throw insurance markets into chaos and leave millions of Americans without health insurance. Sola reports: 1 in 10 Americans could lose their health insurance. The Urban Institute reports that up to 29.8 million people could lose their health coverage by 2019. 82% of the newly uninsured would be in working families and 38% would be aged 18 to 34. Deductibles and maximum out-of-pockets could be recalculated and adjusted for a reduction in taxes used toward subsidies and elsewhere.

Our Note: There is universal agreement that the ACA needs a certain amount of reform. We do need increased and unfettered competition across state lines. Many Americans, despite receiving subsidies, still find it challenging to afford “Affordable Healthcare” because of increased deductibles and out of pocket limits.

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Mona Ruback