

Associated Billing Center's  
**Newsletter**

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**A Message From Mona**

One sixth of our economy is affected by healthcare. Yet, the manner in which our lawmakers continue to debate the future of health insurance in the United States is appalling and embarrassing. I am extremely concerned about the lack of intellectual honesty concerning this issue particularly as it affects those most in need. The insurance lobby is among the most omnipresent in Washington. It is crucial that we contact our elected representatives to register our opinions and also to focus on mental health as it relates to reform. Every year nearly 50-million Americans suffers from some form of mental illness. Approximately 1 in 25 adults experiences a serious mental illness that substantially interferes with or limits major life activities. The numbers for adolescents are similar. Our lawmakers need to have a discussion on improved healthcare not based solely on political ideology but instead focused on the patient.

Best regards,

*Mona*



**Opioid Use and Mental Health Disorders**

Researchers at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center and the University of Michigan suggest that people who suffer from anxiety and depression are consuming a disproportionate share of prescription pain killers. The Washington Post reports that the study found that nearly 19 percent with those two common disorders received several prescriptions for opioids during the course of a year.



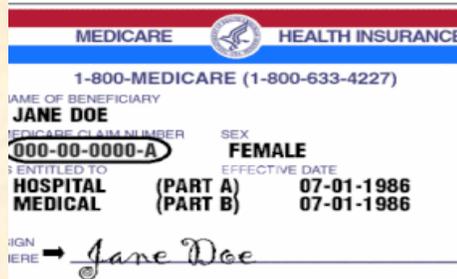
Brian Sites, Professor of Anesthesiology and Orthopedics at Dartmouth's School of Medicine, says that their mental condition may cause them to feel pain more acutely or be less able to cope with it leading to demand for more medication. "Pain that you may report as two out of ten, someone with mental health disorders-depression, anxiety-may report as a ten out of ten."

Fact: About half of all opioids are prescribed by primary care physicians who also manage most routine anxiety and depression.

Our Note: It might be a better idea to leave the treatment of these mental health disorders to those who are mental health professionals.

Fact: In 2015, 91 people died each day of overdoses of prescription painkillers, heroin, fentanyl and other opioids. Since 1999, prescriptions for opioids nearly quadrupled.

## Fraud Prevention at Medicare



The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services is out with a long-awaited and overdue announcement. It will remove Social Security numbers from Medicare cards to combat fraud and illegal use.

The new cards will use a unique, randomly-assigned number called a Medicare Beneficiary Identifier (MBI). CMS will begin mailing the new cards in April 2018 and meet the congressional deadline for replacing all Medicare cards by April 2019. There will also be a 21-month transition period where providers will be able to use either the MBI or the HICN further easing the transition.

A growing and large number of seniors are experiencing identity theft. Seniors can be especially vulnerable to this life-altering crime.

Our Note: a LONG OVERDUE change.

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

A therapist was visiting a mental health clinic when he entered a patient's room. He found patient #1 sitting on the floor, pretending to saw a piece of wood in half. Patient #2 was hanging from the ceiling by his feet. The therapist asked Patient #1 what he was doing. The patient replied, "Can't you see I'm sawing this piece of wood in half." The therapist inquired of Patient #1 what Patient #2 was doing. Patient #1 replied, "Oh. He's my friend, but he's a little crazy. He thinks he's a light bulb." The therapist looks up and notices Patient #2's face is going all red. The therapist tells Patient #1, "If he's your friend, you should get him down from there before he hurts himself." Patient #1 replies, "What? And work in the dark?"

Source: [free-funny-jokes.com/funny-mental-health-jokes.com](http://free-funny-jokes.com/funny-mental-health-jokes.com)

One day at a trial, an eminent psychologist was called to testify. A severe no-nonsense professional, she sat down in the witness chair unaware that its rear legs were set precariously on the back of the raised platform. "Will you state your name?" asked the district attorney. Tilting back in her chair she opened her mouth to answer, but instead catapulted head-over heels backward and landed in a stack of exhibits and recording equipment. Everyone watched in stunned silence as she extricated herself, rearranged her disheveled dress and was reseated on the witness stand.

"Well, doctor, continued the district attorney without changing expression, to which the psychologist replied, "We could start with an easier question."

Source: [broadcaster.org.uk](http://broadcaster.org.uk)



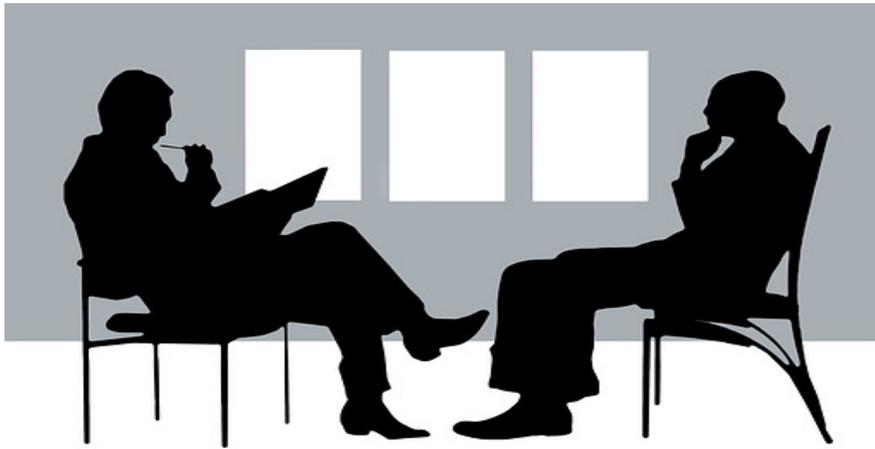
## We Need to Get This Right. Lawmakers Need To Actually Speak With Each Other

The health care reform bill recently pulled by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell gives mental health professionals and those suffering from a mental health disorder or addiction a reprieve. The bill proposed steep cuts to Medicaid, the single largest payer of mental health services in the United States. The new bill would have also allowed states to apply for waivers, removing essential benefits under the ACA. It is extremely important that we get a bill that protects mental health services through Medicare, Medicaid and the private market place.

## A Quick & Vitaly Important Thought from Mona

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

Please check out our website: [mentalhealthbillers.com](http://mentalhealthbillers.com) for our News Blog updates!



### **Come On Guys-Reach Out For Therapy**

For some men, the male ego simply cannot digest the idea. The idea of actually seeking out a mental health professional for counseling.

Some males learn from their fathers that, "Real men don't need go to a therapist." Unfortunately, their fathers would have never offered this advice had they sought out therapy themselves. Recently, male celebrities are speaking out in an attempt to lessen the stigma surrounding men seeking out therapy. At times, this stigma is more often than not created by the individual contemplating therapy rather than society.

The Huffington Post reports that Brad Pitt spoke about his experience with therapy, including the extremely relatable experience of seeing several mental health professionals before finding the "right fit." Singer Zayn Malik opened up about his experience with an eating disorder and anxiety earlier this year. "How To Get Away With Murder" star Matt McGorry recently tweeted about the power of going to therapy as part of May's Mental Health Awareness Month. Even hit television shows like "This Is Us" and "You're The Worst" are tackling storylines about men dealing with mental health issues like anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder. NFL player Brandon Marshall discussed how seeking help for borderline personality disorder transformed his life.

The American Psychological Association reports that men are less likely to seek treatment for mental illness. "Try to imagine the Marlboro man in therapy. The image just doesn't compute, does it? The Marlboro man wouldn't admit needing help. The Marlboro man wouldn't talk about his emotions. For that matter, the Marlboro man might not even recognize the he has emotions." Remember the Virginia Slims ad that imparted the message to women, "You've come along way baby." Hey guys, you have come a long way and seeking therapy no longer has that ubiquitous attachment of a male associated stigma.

### **Tipper Gore Continues Advocacy**

Tipper Gore has long championed for expanded mental health treatment. The former Second Lady announced this week a \$1 million dollar donation to the National Alliance on Mental Illness to help expand its outreach to teens. Gore says she plans to promote its "Ending the Silence" program, which aims to end the stigma attached to mental illness among young people. Gore made public her personal struggle with depression and spoke frequently on the topic. Tipper and the VP split in 2010.

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