

Associated Billing Center's
Newsletter

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A Message From Mona



photo: pixaby.com

Associated Billing Center, LLC is at it again. At this time of the year we survey our team members and select a charity and make a company donation. No matter your social status or financial ledger sheet balance at the end of the year, it always feels good to know that you took part in an effort to improve the quality of someone else's life. Wallethub reports that a third of all giving takes place in December and that the United States ranks fifth overall in the 2017 World Giving Index. Among the top 20 most charitable states: Utah, Maryland, Minnesota, Wyoming, Wisconsin, Washington, Virginia, South Dakota, Georgia and Oklahoma. Remember to check out charitynavigator.com before donating.

Best regards,

Mona



photo:pixaby.com

HEALTH INSURANCE CEO'S PAID VERY WELL

Health insurance premiums continue to rise well beyond the rate of inflation. And, given the uncertainty in the marketplace these premiums could increase exponentially in certain geographic locations. There is a plethora of contributing factors but the epicenter seems to be under the dome on Capitol Hill. Politicians debate ideology not practicality.

Now to the CEOs. No debate here. Despite the Trump administration's injection of uncertainty in the marketplace, most of the CEOs at eight of the largest publicly traded insurance companies received healthy pay raises last year. These eight executives made a whopping \$171.8 million in total compensation for 2016 according to a Modern Healthcare analysis of company proxy statements. The study reports that the compensation would be enough to cover the average annual premium for about 59-thousand people enrolled in the most popular plan on the exchanges before financial assistance. NPR reports that CEO compensation far outstrips the wage growth of nearly all Americans. Our Note: Many insurers refer to themselves as non-profits.



Kids & Cellphones: Parental Dilemma

Scott Steinberg, author of the book *Parenting High-Tech Kids: The Ultimate Internet, Web and Online Safety Guide*, says while sending children out into the tech wilderness seems scary, it's important to serve both as a mentor and digital bodyguard. A 2016 study from research firm Influence Central found the average age for getting a first smartphone is 10.3 years old, down from 12 in 2012. How can parents manage their kids' screen time? Steinberg tells USA Today that kids should initially get 30 to 60 minutes per day and then increase as they get older into the tweens and teens.

The Kaiser Family Foundation reports that 85% of those aged 14 to 17 have cell phones-69% of 11-14 year olds and 31% of kids aged 8-10. Cell phones are a wonderful invention. But, so too is the art of personal communication. It is at the epicenter of everything we do.

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



-Everyone is entitled to be stupid but some abuse the privilege.

Source: Unknown

-There is a new Barbie doll on the market-Chain Smoker Barbie-with the Surgeon General's warning on the box.

-There is a new Barbie doll on the market-Hockey Barbie-comes with a hockey stick and missing teeth.

-A therapist is at a party talking with a small group of people when a man comes up behind him and taps him on the shoulder. The therapist turns around and the man hauls off and decks him. The therapist gets up, brushes himself off, turns to the group and declares: "That's his problem."

-Why is therapy a lot quicker for a man then for a women? Because when it's time to go back to childhood, a man is already there.

Source: www.free-funny-jokes.com/funny-mental-health-jokes.html

-A patient complains to his therapist that his "fast food" restaurant never serves his food quickly. The therapist replied, "What do you mean?" To which the patient replied "I thought fast food meant the server would run to the counter when giving me my order."

Source: Gary R'nel



Associated Billing Center, LLC Therapist Feedback

It truly is amazing. Many therapists are telling me that it continues in many instances unabated. Patients are spending a portion of their sessions discussing the impact of Washington, DC politics on their personal and family lives. What is most interesting is that many spouses continue to feel that their relationships have been somewhat negatively affected by D.C. chaos. I cherish our conversations on the personal and professional level.

A Quick & Vitally Important Thought from Mona

"Effective communication is the key to enhanced personal and professional relationships. Maintaining the ability to communicate effectively is one of life's most important skills. Communicating with family and friends effectively leads to a more rewarding life."

Please check out our website: mentalhealthbillers.com for our News Blog updates

The Age of Digital Medicine: Privacy vs. Safety



The FDA has approved the first digital pill that can track whether a patient has taken prescribed medications. NPR reports the tablet embedded sensor is called Abilify MyCite. It is made by Japan based Otsuka Pharmaceutical and is the brand name version of aripiprazole an antipsychotic drug used for treating schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and in certain cases of depression in adults.

Here is how it works:

The sensor in the pill is about the size of a grain of sand. It is activated when it comes into contact with fluid in the stomach. The sensor detects and records the date and time the pill is ingested. The sensor transmits the information to a patch worn by the patient. NPR reports that the patch then sends the data to a smartphone application that can be shared with family and caregivers. The manufacturer says the pill should not be used to track ingestion in real time or during an emergency because detection may be delayed or not occur. There is also an injectable version of Abilify.

Immediate Concerns: Cost and Patient Confidentiality

NPR reports some experts were surprised that the first digital drug approved by the FDA is an antipsychotic, because some individuals who have schizophrenia experience paranoia and delusions that they are being watched. The list price for a month's supply of nondigital Abilify pills is around \$891 according to the Wall Street Journal. The smallest vial of the long-acting injectable has a list price of \$1,478.

Our Note: Wow! Ain't technology amazing? But there are concerns mental health professionals have expressed about this advancement; data security, the psychological affect on patients and the accuracy of the sensor device. Then there is the cost of the medication. Congress needs to legitimately address prescription prices which is another reason many individuals do not take what the doctor has ordered.

The editorial content of this newsletter is not intended to be professional advice. It should be considered informational and a venue for entertainment.

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Mona Ruback