

## A Message From Mona

Wow! I cannot believe the month of August is upon us. So many of us ask ourselves the same questions: What happened to July? Why is this summer moving at such a quick pace? What happened to the past six months? How about the past six years? Time has a tendency to move at the speed of light. I spent a day with myself (pretty good company-though we had some disagreements) at the Jersey shore recently. Then, along with the crash of the next wave, it hit me. We need to pause and appreciate the day before us (realizing that some personal challenges may make this difficult to achieve) and use it as a template for an even better tomorrow. I truly cherish my family and friends and the relationships I have built with so many of you. They are all important to me. I need to mention my team here at Associated Billing Center, LLC. What a group! There is a great camaraderie between us. I guess I am truly blessed to have good health and wonderful friends.

The key to a great relationship is effective communication. Please call me anytime with questions. Constant communication is vitally important.

Best Regards,  
Mona



## And the Beat Goes On



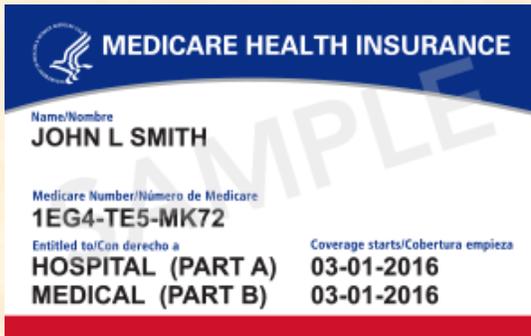
pixabay.com

We are aware that we include stories concerning opiate addiction often in this newsletter. We are also aware that many of our providers offer addiction counseling and we hope that the information provided will be useful. Another reason we write so frequently concerning drug addiction is that nearly half of Americans have a family member or know someone who is afflicted with this disease. Here are the latest stats from the National Institute on Drug Abuse:

- Everyday more than 115 people die after overdosing on opioids.
- Roughly 25 percent of patients prescribed opioids for chronic pain misuse them.
- About 80 percent of people who use heroin first misused prescription opioids.
- Opioid overdoses in large cities increased by 54 percent in 16 states from July 2016 through September, 2017.
- Overdoses increased 30 percent in the same time period in 52 areas in 45 states.

The President has declared the opioid epidemic a Public Health Emergency. Had it been designated a National Emergency, more funds would have been forthcoming for research and rehabilitation. We urge you to contact your lawmakers to secure increased funding for this disease. Also, family members can contact [familiesanonymous.org](http://familiesanonymous.org) for support. This is not a Democrat or Republican issue, it is an American crisis.

Source: Gary R'nel



## Providers: Update Your Patient Information With Us

New Medicare cards have been received by eligible enrollees or will soon arrive in their mailboxes. CMS is removing all Social Security Numbers to better protect patient identity and to reduce the frequency of fraud. A new Medicare Beneficiary Identifier (MBI) will replace the SSN. Patients will automatically receive their new cards as long as their address is up to date.

CMS is mailing the cards using "State Waves" as a guideline. Patients can visit [medicare.gov](http://medicare.gov) for more information.

During the transition period through 2019, providers can use the MBIs or their current Medicare ID. Patients should provide you with their new Medicare ID upon receipt. This will assist in a smooth transition.

Our Note:  
The law mandating the changes was written in 2015. It is incomprehensible that it took this extended period of time to write such legislation.  
Source: Gary R'nel

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



- Patient to Therapist: I keep thinking I'm a bell.  
Therapist to Patient: Well, just go home and if the feeling persists just give me a ring.
- Patient to Therapist: I feel like a pack of cards.  
Therapist to Patient: I'll deal with you later.
- Patient to Therapist: I'm manic depressive.  
Therapist to Patient: Calm down, Cheer up, Calm Down cheer up, calm down...
- Patient to Therapist: I think I'm a cat.  
Therapist to Patient: How long has this been going on?  
Patient to Therapist: Oh, since I was a kitten!
- Patient to Therapist: I keep thinking I'm a dog.  
Therapist to Patient: Lie down on the couch and I'll examine you.  
Patient to Therapist: I can't, I'm not allowed on the furniture.

Source: [bouldertherapist.com](http://bouldertherapist.com)

Our Note: OK, keep the groaning to a minimum in reaction to these jokes. We realize that you will not have to buckle up so as not to fall off your chair from hysterical laughter. But, they're still pretty good.



## New York & Virginia Mandate Mental Health Education

Yes, it could be a trendsetter. New York and Virginia are the first states to enact laws requiring schools to include mental health education in their curriculums. Both states have individual requirements and time commitments to the program. New York law is not specific about curriculum content but does specify that mental health falls under the purview of the state's overall health curriculum. Virginia law requires the state Board of Education to collaborate with mental health professionals to update education standards. Students will learn about mental health services, diseases and discuss the stigma surrounding the topic. Mental Health America reports that as recently as last year, 11 percent of youth ages 12 to 17 reported experiencing at least one major depressive episode. Our Note: We hope that this ideology is contagious among other state legislatures and they include mental health in their yearly curriculums. Source: Gary R'nel

## Associated Billing Center, LLC ↔ Therapist Feedback

The American Psychological Association recently found that almost two-thirds of Americans listed the "state of the nation" as their primary source of stress, above money and work. The Pew Research Center reports that almost 70 percent of Americans feel a sense of "news fatigue". I have had many discussions with providers who wish that a new ICD-10 code would be created for someone suffering from this type of emotional stress. Reality television viewing based on anything but politics is exponentially on the rise.  
Source: Gary R'nel

## Stories You Simply Need to Know About



✓ Sky News reports that a van driver has been sacked for deliberately drenching pedestrians in Ottawa, Canada. The driver was filmed veering toward large puddles when he saw pedestrians nearby. A short clip has been watched hundreds of thousands of times online. The driver's employer said his actions were unacceptable. As of this printing, police have not pressed charges.



✓ Crocs are now available in "high heels" in many styles. Reaction to the shoes on social media has been broad in range from "horrifying" to "gorgeous, and they're comfortable too." Crocs maintains you can get all the fashion without sacrificing the comfort. If you or someone you know has purchased a high heel croc-let us know. We want to know if they are as comfortable as they are advertised to be.

✓ A study from Researchers at the University of Florida says that physicians give a patient an average of just 11 seconds to describe their issue before cutting them off. The study showed that just a third of physicians give patients adequate time to explain why they are actually there. The results showed that just 36 percent of doctors ask questions that allowed the patient to set the agenda, but two-thirds of those patients were interrupted after responding.

✓ If you have flown you must wonder if the planes are cleaned between flights and to what extent. The consensus is that the bathrooms get the most attention. But, that does not mean an anti-bacterial wipe down (Lysol) in all cases. First flight of the day is the cleanest because there is time on board without passengers and many germs have time to die. A deep cleaning on an aircraft can take place several times a year. Not several times a week or month. Oh, and if you ask for a blanket (Do they still give those out?) make sure it is wrapped in plastic. Otherwise, someone on a previous flight probably used it.

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

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