

Associated Billing Center's  
**Newsletter**

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**A Message From Mona**



Recently, I had the very good fortune to attend an event sponsored by Clear Focus-a financial planning firm-featuring the Community Food Bank of New Jersey. Its mission is to fight hunger and poverty in the state by assisting those in need and seeking long-term solutions. The CFB engages, educates, and empowers all sectors of society. The organization strives to fill the emptiness caused by hunger with Food, Help and Hope.

Recent economic news would have us believe that all individuals across every socio-economic boundary are benefiting from the *Bull Run* on Wall Street. Unfortunately, statistics prove otherwise. Data from the Urban Institute finds that 40-percent of Americans struggle to pay for at least one basic need like food.

No, I am not endorsing any particular political ideology or viewpoint-I am just suggesting that many of our fellow citizens need support from organizations like the CFB. More information is available at [www.cfbnj.org](http://www.cfbnj.org)

The irony of the day is that there were financial planners speaking to families about funding college, retirement, and investment portfolios, while the CFB provided support and information to less fortunate members of the community offering vital information on available resources. It truly was a terrific day and I thank the CFB and Clear Focus for their collaborative effort.

Every state hosts community food banks. It is advisable to check [www.charitynavigator.org](http://www.charitynavigator.org) when donating to any charitable organization.

Best Regards,  
Mona



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**Workplace Anxiety: A Costly Affair**

CNBC reports that the amount of money employers are spending on employees experiencing stress and anxiety issues is growing exponentially. Annual costs are growing twice as fast as other medical costs over the past two years according to Aetna. The consulting firm Willis Towers Watson reports that employees suffering from bipolar disorder, depression and substance abuse make six times as many ER visits compared to the overall population.

Interesting Stats from Willis Towers Watson:

- People suffering from depression submit an average of \$14,967 per year in claims, compared with nearly 6-thousand dollars per year for the total population.
- According to a recent survey of 687 companies by the benefits consulting firm-57 percent said they plan to focus more on mental health disease treatment and prevention over the next three years.

Jeff Levin-Scherz, co-leader of Willis Tower Watson says "Employers need to be able to identify who needs help. Some companies are eyeing chatbot services that employees can text when they're feeling depressed, anxious or depressed. One, called Tess, was built by psychologists and uses artificial intelligence to coach users."

Workplace stress is one of the most pronounced reasons for worker burn-out. Employers are realizing that investing in mental health therapy increases worker productivity, improves the quality of life for the employee, and keeps that employee focused on the company's goals. It truly is a win-win for both the company and employee. Businesses are also training managers to recognize when a member of the team needs help.

In addition to expanding EAP services, many employers are offering subscriptions to relaxations apps like Headspace and Calm. And, corporate benefit managers are expanding mental health services in company benefit portfolios.

Source: Gary R'nel



The National Alliance on Mental Illness recently named a new President. Adrienne Kennedy, MA for the remainder of this year and 2019. Kennedy says she discovered NAMI in 2005 with her son experiencing serious mental illness. Kennedy and her family literally "jumped through hoops" in an attempt to obtain coordinated care for her child's specific problem in the ensuing years.

Kennedy stated "Our son's death has only heightened and galvanized my resolve to fight fearlessly and advocate across all platforms for a system that effectively serves all people with mental health conditions, irrespective of age, diagnosis or severity of symptoms. One of my resounding goals as President of NAMI is to establish and solidify a unified national advocacy movement." She believes the following five priorities are essential for improving mental health care:

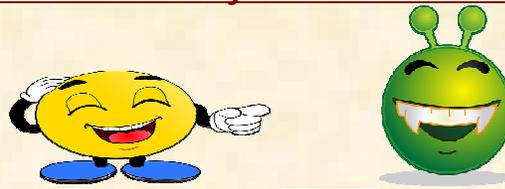
1. Expand coverage for mental health and substance abuse disorder care in private insurance, Medicaid and Medicare.
2. Implement first episode psychosis programs on a nationwide basis.
3. Decriminalize mental illness. People with mental illness continue to be incarcerated at high rates.
4. Increase supportive housing.
5. Continue efforts to educate communities and the public about mental illness and the importance of compassionate responses.

Kennedy's story can be read by linking to [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)

NAMI is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness.

Source: National Alliance on Mental Illness

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



- I was arrested after my therapist suggested I take something for my kleptomania.
- Why did the banana go to the therapist? Because it had a split personality.
- The forensic psychologist was irritable because judges and juries tried his patients.
- The insane are crazy about fruit cakes.
- When the artist tried to draw a cube he had a mental block.
- He's a Freud of psychoanalysis.
- Dr. Jekyll's more successful second formula turned him into a world-class sprinter rather than a violent psychopath, proving that you can run but you can't always Hyde.
- There was a colorful restaurant called the Psycho Deli.
- People are choosing cremation over traditional burial. It shows that they are thinking outside the box.

Source: punoftheday.com



## Recent Notifications

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is alerting mental health therapists that they could be in receipt of a letter from a company called eGlobalTech. CMS has contracted with the company to produce and distribute information about Medicare billing in the form of Comparative Billing Reports (CBRs). CBRs compare the billing practices of providers within the same state and nationwide based upon the common services they furnish. CBRs have long been available to providers on request but in recent years CMS has been proactively distributing the information. The CBRs are not limited to mental health professionals. eGlobalTech has acknowledged that billing patterns may differ for a variety of reasons that are not apparent by just looking at data. Mental health therapists who receive the letter are not required to respond. Source: APA Practice Organization

Attention: New Jersey Providers-Recently, Governor Murphy signed an Out-of-Network Consumer Protection Act. The act aims to increase transparency for patients about out-of-network costs. Additional information is available by clicking on [www.niconsumeraffairs.gov](http://www.niconsumeraffairs.gov) For more information it is suggested you contact the New Jersey Psychological Association or the NASW-NJ. Source: Gary R'nel

## Associated Billing Center, LLC ↔ Therapist Feedback

A reminder to all our providers: If you are planning on moving your office and/or changing your mailing address for checks, it is vitally important that you notify the insurance company as soon as possible so as not to experience a delay in getting paid for services rendered. Please advise your account representative or me so we can update your data base in our system. We need to know the date of the move, the place of service address and the mailing address.

On another note: It seems that there are more carve outs for mental health each time we turn the calendar page. NO Worries. It is our responsibility to ascertain the proper submission information for your Dates of Service (DOS).

Thanks, Mona

## Stories You Simply Need to Know About



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✓ A newly published report from Brigham and Women's Hospital shows that a quarter of college students are exhibiting some form of depression. While some students easily adapt to the college experience others navigate through periods of a constant struggle relating to academics and/or social adjustments. The studies lead author, Dr. Cindy Liu, associated with BWH, says "Colleges and family members who are sending students off to college need to remember that this is a phase of life where young people are confronted with expectations from new relationships and living situations and other encounters that are stressful." The full study was published in the September 6, 2018 journal of Depression and Anxiety. Source: Gary R'nel



✓ The Veterans Administration is announcing that the overdose antidote Narcan is being added to its automated defibrillator cabinets. VA authorities reason that if defibrillators can save the life of a heart attack patient-why not also have Narcan immediately available to prevent death from a fatal overdose. The VA is reportedly adding naloxone kits to the AED cabinets in its buildings across the country. The cabinets must be sealed and alarmed, checked daily, and refilled when the kits expire. Vets have nearly twice the risk of overdose compared with civilians. It's being reported that other places of public accommodation (schools, churches, airports) are adding Narcan to their AED cabinets. More than 72-thousand Americans died from drug overdoses in 2017 including illicit drugs and opioids. More than 90 Americans die from opioid overdose on a daily basis. While thousands of lives have been saved by Narcan, statistics show a small percentage of individuals feel less threatened by the possibility of dying from an overdose because of the growing availability of the injection. Source: Gary R'nel



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✓ The National Alliance on Mental Illness has filed a lawsuit in partnership with the Association for Community Affiliated Plans and others to invalidate the federal short-term limited duration insurance plan rule issued recently by three federal agencies under the Trump administration. These plans would only be in effect for a period of less than one year, would be less expensive, but in many ways are similar to catastrophic health insurance. The plans deny coverage for pre-existing conditions including mental illness. In fact, insurers could charge higher premiums for people with a history of mental health issues. The short-term plans would not cover mental health and substance abuse disorder treatment and deny coverage of services resulting from self-inflicted injury. A recent survey reported that 81 percent of Americans feel that insurance companies should not have the legal right to deny this type of coverage. Analysts say young healthy people will opt for the plans because they are less expensive. But, there will be one illness, one heartbeat, one anxiety ridden episode of depression away from actually inflicting higher costs to the system and themselves.

Source: NAMI Gary R'nel

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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**"BUILDING OUR REPUTATION ONE CLIENT AT A TIME"**



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