

A Message From Mona

A Time to Reflect

Just prior to the publication of this Newsletter we were informed about the mass shootings in El Paso and Dayton. I found out about the El Paso shooting while my daughter and I were shopping in a mall. My first reaction was to become much more aware of my immediate surroundings.

My daughter and I discussed the incident over a cup of coffee in the food court. She asked me if America would ever be able to find a solution to the problem of mass shootings. My response was that we needed Democrats and Republicans to come together and pass legislation that could possibly save even one life.

We very often hear about the mental health component. Some members of Congress are calling for expanded government financial support for counseling services. We need a more comprehensive system for reporting mental illnesses and how to avoid putting guns in the hands of people who pose a threat to themselves or others.

This Newsletter solicits provider feedback on many topics to be utilized in a future editions. Contact us with your suggestion on the following: What protocol could be implemented in our schools and elsewhere that would help us to discover individuals in need of counseling to help prevent future tragedies. Do we need improved Red Flag reporting? Your thoughts are always welcome. Send them to me to: mona@assocbillingctr.com

This may sound like a cliché-but our profound prayers and condolences to the families and friends of those who lost their lives.

Best Regards,

Mona



Education Box-You Need to Know



Meeting a Deductible-Clearing up the Confusion

My patient comes in for therapy and tells me his deductible has not been met. He then writes me a check for the contracted full amount. Associated Billing Center, LLC submits the claim and the EOB maintains that the patient should have only paid the co-pay or co-insurance. What? How come? Why?

The answer lies in the difference between an individual and a family deductible. If the family deductible is met (as it was in this case) health plan benefits kick in for every member of the family whether or not the individual has met their own deductible.

If your patient has any question on this issue please have them contact us. Understanding the deductible issue as it applies to individual/family is an important component of the revenue cycle.

Maintaining a Profitable Practice

Providers often ask Associated Billing Center, LLC how they can improve their revenue cycle and grow their practice. We offer the following suggestions:

- ✓ Offer after hours virtual visits where it is appropriate to do so.
- ✓ Advertise and market your practice using both print and social media. Even a small box ad in a weekly newspaper can be a call to action for a prospective patient.
- ✓ Improve the collection of your office co-pays. Statistics show that many professionals only collect 60 percent what is due.
- ✓ Build an online presence. 72 percent of patients now consult the internet seeking a provider and 62 percent use online reviews.
- ✓ Submit your practice to online directories. Also, expand your messaging to several social media platforms.
- ✓ Optimize your appointment schedule.
- ✓ Renegotiate your payer contracts.
- ✓ Add a cancellation policy with a fee. (Yes, there are exceptions.)

We are here to help. Call us with any questions.

Mental Health Day-Not Just for Adults



CNN reports that a new Oregon law will let students take 'mental health days'. The law, proposed by a group of high school students, will allow them to take the day without the risk of being assigned an unexcused absence.

Many of the state's high school students attended a leadership camp where the idea was discussed. Halley Hardcastle, one of the student advocates, said mental health problems could be just as dangerous as physical ailments and should get the same consideration.

Students are allowed up to five excused absences in a three month period. It is being reported that teachers will allow students to make up tests and other work for the excused mental health days. Some students say that kids are already "skipping school" for mental health reasons and the law will remove this layer of stress.

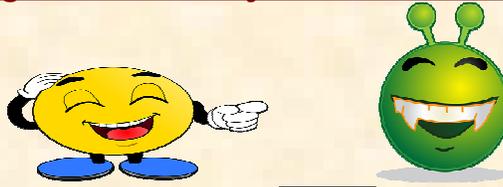
Mental Health therapists hope that, by allowing students to ask for a mental health day, their parents will become more aware of their personal challenges. This in turn could lead to increased therapy for students.

The National Education Association reports that, by high school, many students have run out of steam. Anxiety-the mental health tsunami of their generation-has caught up with them. A recent Pew Survey found that 70 percent of teens say anxiety and depression is a major problem among their peers.

Kathy Reamy, a school counselor in Maryland, says, "I've seen more students this year hospitalized for anxiety, depression and other mental health issues than ever." In 2016 nearly two thirds of college students reported overwhelming anxiety. Utah enacted a similar law last year.

Source: Gary R'nel

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



I was recently diagnosed with "A.A.A.D.D." -

Age Activated Attention Deficit Disorder. This is how it goes: I decide to wash the car; I start toward the garage and notice the mail on the table. OK, I'm going to wash the car. But first I'm going to go through the mail. I lay the car keys down on the desk, discard the junk mail and I notice the trash can is full. OK, I'll just put the bills on my desk and take the trash can out, but since I'm going to be near the mailbox anyway, I'll pay these few bills first. Now, where is my checkbook? Oops, there's only one check left. My extra checks are in my desk.

Oh, there's the coke I was drinking. I'm going to look for those checks. But first I need to put my coke further away from the computer, or maybe I'll pop it into the fridge to keep it cold for a while. I head towards the kitchen and my flowers catch my eye. They need some water. I set the coke on the counter and uh oh! There are my glasses. I was looking for them all morning! I'd better put them away first. I fill a container with water and head for the flowerpots.

Aaaaagh! Someone left the TV remote in the kitchen. We will never think to look in the kitchen tonight when we want to watch television, so I'd better put it back in the family room where it belongs. I splash some water into the pots and onto the floor, I throw the remote onto a soft cushion on the sofa and I head back down the hall trying to figure out what it was I was going to do?

End of Day: The car isn't washed, the bills are unpaid, the coke is sitting on the kitchen counter, the flowers are half watered, the checkbook still only has one check in it and I can't seem to find my car keys! When I try to figure out how come nothing got done today, I'm baffled because I KNOW I WAS BUSY ALL DAY LONG!!! I realize this is a serious condition and I WILL get help, but FIRST I think I'll check my e-mail...

A few warning signs of good health: Regular flare-ups of a supportive network of friends and family, chronic positive expectations, compulsion to contribute to society, tendency to adapt to changing conditions, repeated episodes of gratitude and generosity, craving for peak experiences and persistent sense of humor. Source: bouldertherapist.com



Inhale & Exhale-Taking Time to Take Care of Yourself

We have heard it often. If you are on an airplane and the oxygen masks are deployed, put yours on first or you cannot help anyone else. This maxim can be applied in many areas of our lives particularly when carving out time to nourish our mind, body and spirit. New research finds that 62 percent of Americans feel guilty when pampering themselves and when scheduling the time to do so. A survey conducted by OnePoll reveals that time is the biggest impediment to self-care. One quarter of Americans are not tending to their own refueling efforts and when they do, it amounts to about one time per week. Four in five people surveyed said they wish they had more time for personal care. Neil Fiore, Ph.D. says consider this: Devoting more time to what you love can help you get more done overall. Plus, being a little selfish will help keep you from becoming burned out or cranky. Other suggestions for making more time for yourself: accept not doing things perfectly, schedule free time, change up your routine, and this may be the most difficult of all-put down the electronics.

How do Americans define self-care? 56 percent say exercising, 42 percent napping or sleeping, 38 percent say taking a long bath and 36 percent say going for a massage. Source: Gary R'nel

Revealing Your Debt

A survey of 2,000 adults sponsored by SelfLender finds that many of us feel the need to hide personal debt from individuals we are attempting to form a relationship with. Nearly 25 percent have lied to a potential new partner about their level of debt and spending habits while three in ten admit they lied about their salaries. Studyfinds.org reports that more than 25 percent said they have hidden their spending habits from current and potential partners. Fifty percent of adults say bad credit card debt is a major cause for concern in a relationship.

Forty-six percent also reported that a potential love interest that is perceived as being "cheap" is a major turnoff. According to the survey, most people wait about six months before revealing their true debt situation.

Source: studyfinds.org Gary R'nel

Stories You Simply Need to Know About



✓ It all comes down to this. Many elderly couples embrace the idea of companionship. In fact, they are big fans of falling in love and enjoying each other's company. But there is a caveat. They want the benefits of a relationship while living under separate roofs. They are highly committed to each other but desire personal space and independence. With the doubling of the divorce rate for those 55 and older many are looking for a new long-term partner without the financial entanglements and relationships with adult children. Susan Brown is co-director of the National Center for Family and Marriage Research at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. Hot Air reports that Brown surveyed over two-thousand adults ages 50 to 65 with one third reporting being in a long-term relationship but living apart. Many couples are in LAT relationships. Living Apart Together. On another note: There are couples engaged in LAT relationships who do so to save their marriage and to help them explore their own identities.



Melinda Jones

✓ When ordering a birthday cake for a child, parents take a considerable amount of time thinking what exactly should be inscribed on the cake. Imagine Melinda Jones' reaction when she went to pick up her daughter's cake and discovered the following written on top: **Happy Birthday Loser**. It should have said **Happy Birthday Lizard**-a nickname for her daughter. What was the mom's reaction? Was she angered or frustrated? No, she says. At first she was a little shocked and speechless but quickly started laughing. Jones said her daughter cannot read yet and she doesn't even know what a loser is. The family proudly ate the loser cake and then went back to the bakery to tell them what happened. The mother was given a complimentary cake with the words **Happy Birthday Elizabeth** on it. You might say the family not only had its cake but ate two of them.



✓ Ever get stuck in the middle seat on an airline? I have heard passengers say that next to water boarding it is among the most painful and stressful of all experiences. Now, according to published reports one manufacturer is taking action to help rectify the situation. Molon Labe Seatings's new S1 "Space Seat" design arranges its rows of economy airline seating so that the middle seat is slightly staggered behind, and below the seat on either side. Molon says the seats would allow passengers to more easily share the middle armrests that offer the two-level design. If you're thinking about booking a middle seat (you may need counseling) do not rush. These seats will not become available until next year at the earliest.

Source: Gary R'nel

Refer us to a colleague. We appreciate it!

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