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Associated Billing Center's  
**Newsletter**

## Exclusively Serving Mental Health Practices

### A Message From Mona



#### April Designated Stress Awareness Month

Wow! You might refer to it as the perfect storm: Covid-19, the political landscape, the divided country and economic and personal challenges have contributed to this year's designation.

#### **NASW Supports Interstate Licensure Compact**

The National Association of Social Workers recently reported on the U.S. Department of Defense, as part of an initiative to promote licensure portability for military spouses, has awarded a \$500,000 grant for the development of an interstate licensure compact for social workers. Currently, licensed social workers must seek and receive licensure in each state in which they wish to practice. The compact legislation must then be enacted in each state that wishes to participate. NASW chapters will play a key role in advocacy efforts to enact compact legislation in the states. An interstate licensure compact would:

- Improve client access to therapy services.
- Increase opportunities to practice across state lines.
- Improve continuity of care.
- Preserve and strengthen the state licensure system.

We will follow licensure portability closely and keep our providers informed on legislative action.

**STAY SAFE. STAY HEALTHY.**



Best Regards,  
Mona

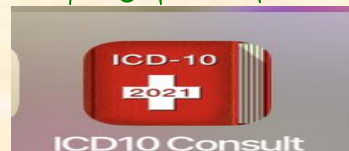
### Education Box-You Need to Know



#### Medicare Update

2% Payment Adjustment (Sequestration) Suspended Through December 2021. An Act to Prevent Across-the-Board Direct Spending Cuts, and for Other Purposes was signed into law on April 14, 2021, extending the suspension period to December 31, 2021. Medicare Administrative Contractors will: Release any previously held claims with dates of service on or after April 1. Reprocess any claims paid with the reduction applied

#### Keeping You Informed



Download the ICD 10 consult App for continuous and up to date diagnosis codes. It is the ICD 10 CM expert code book at your fingertips.

#### Aetna/Medicare

If your patient has an Aetna Medicare Advantage plan, some patients will be issued new 12-digit ID cards. Please obtain new ID information from any patient receiving those new cards.

#### Additional Reminders

- When submitting day sheets, please specify whether the therapy session was in office or virtual.
- Please remember all patient payments should be reported on your day sheet.
- Patient DOB is ALWAYS required for benefits and claim submission.

#### Renegotiate Your Rate

Providers do have the option of attempting to renegotiate their reimbursement rates with insurance. Ask us for advice.

## Managing Your Mental Health Practice



I have many conversations with providers concerning the efficient operation of their mental health practice. The following suggestions may not be applicable to your practice or you may not feel comfortable with some of these ideas. Nonetheless, here are some topics in discussion:

- Texting Appointment Confirmations-This could dramatically reduce your missed appointments and the effort requires a minimal investment of time on your part. This could also help to eliminate the phone tag game when a patient is attempting to confirm a therapy session.
- Patient Intake Forms-You can send your patients their intake forms via email. When they return them, you can submit patient data to us prior to their first appointment. We can provide you with our [Patient Information Benefit Profile Page](#) establishing fiduciary responsibility for each session.
- Modify your communication methodology-Consider using HIPAA compliant secure email to communicate with your patients. This avoids the constant "returning phone calls" syndrome.
- While you may be listed in several professional directories, so too are many of your peers. If you maintain a website, you can effectively utilize it to communicate your specialty and market to prospective patients in a more personal manner. Keep the content simple, targeted and easily navigable. Apply the principles of the Hick-Hyman law named after two psychologists who examined the correlation between the number of stimuli presented and reaction time. Keep It Simple.

**Providing quality care to your patients is your main goal. One important way to accomplish this is to always be looking for ways to maintain and improve your profitability.**

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



**>The U.K. is officially changing its name in honor of mental health awareness. The new name being "U.O.K.?"**

**>I hate the stigma around mental health. Immediately when I get medication for schizophrenia, my friends won't talk to me anymore.**

**>The problem with treating mental health is that it's all in our head.**

**>My mom wanted me to see the therapist for my mental health but the couch convinced me not to go.**

**>We all have to be careful because people are facing mental health issues from being isolated for so long:**

**"I didn't mention anything to the washing machine as she puts a different spin on everything. Certainly not the fridge as he has been acting very cold and distant."**

**"The toilet looked a bit flushed when I asked for his opinion. He didn't say anything but the doorknob told me to get a grip. The front door said I was unhinged and the curtains told me to pull myself together."**

**"In the end, the iron straightened me out. He said everything will be fine and no situation is too pressing!"**

**>Apparently people who exercise have been shown to recover better and be less at risk from mental health issues...So who said you can't run away from your problems.**

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

## Supporting the Immigrants' Mental Health Act

The American Psychological Association supports the reintroduced Immigrants' Mental Health Act and is seeking to engage broader support for the legislation. The APA reports that the bill expands access to trauma-informed mental health care for immigrants and educates Customs and Border Protection agents working with immigrants. U.S. Rep Grace Napolitano (D-CA-32) says the legislation is the product of Congressional delegation trips to CPB facilities, visits to local Office of Refugee Resettlement shelters and ICE detention centers. The bill calls for confidential therapy session notes not to be used in deportation proceedings against immigrant children. The Senate sponsor is Jeff Merkley (D-OR). Merkley stated, "No one, including the kids in our custody along the southern border, should be punished for accessing support from a social worker or therapist."

## Heal Thyself Along with Your Patients

Forbes Magazine published the following in an article concerning mental health. Therapy is one of the few professions where one of the most important tools you have at your disposal is your own self-awareness. Having the opportunity to get therapy allows you to explore your own personal issues. Knowing what is "your stuff" is essential to being able to work with "other people's stuff." Therapy can also help prevent professional burnout or "compassion fatigue".



## Stories You Simply Need to Know About

# DOLLAR GENERAL®

✓ Trying to spend one-million dollars in a Dollar General store is not an easy thing to do. Two women in Tennessee tried but not in the way you might imagine. They allegedly tried to pay for several gift cards with a counterfeit \$1 million dollar bill at a Dollar General in the Knoxville-Maryville area. The story was first reported in the Daily Times. One woman claimed to have received the bill in the mail from a church, but could not provide the church information according to a police report. She claimed to be using the money to buy items for care packages to give to the homeless and in her shopping cart were, reportedly, various items, among them gift cards to different businesses. Despite the incident's "fraud by false pretenses" classification, the two were not arrested, though the bill was confiscated and put into evidence. A verbal no trespass warning was issued for the pair in relation to the store. The U.S. Department of the Treasury says it has gotten "many inquiries" about whether a \$1 million bill has ever been officially produced. Though they haven't, such bills were produced as part of an art series. While they didn't violate U.S. law, they're not redeemable.



✓ We have all read and heard reports in the media that many Americans are feeling that the worst of the pandemic may be coming to a close. There is one piece of evidence that indicates many Americans are, in fact, feeling this way. Sales of toilet paper dropped over 30% in the 12 weeks ending April 3<sup>rd</sup> from a year ago according to market research firm NielsenIQ and a report on CNN. In the same period, purchases of paper towels fell over 18% and multipurpose wipes were down over 15% from a year ago. You may have noticed also that price gouging on hand sanitizer has begun to dissipate. Toilet paper was the flashpoint indicator as the pandemic unfolded that "hoarding & panic" were a reality for many Americans.




✓ Starbucks is taking recycling to a new level. It is introducing the "borrow a cup" program at select locations. Customers can order their drinks in a reusable cup and pay a \$1 refund deposit. When the customer is done with their drink, they return their cup and receive a \$1 dollar credit as their refund plus 10 Bonus Stars for their Starbucks rewards account. If the customer takes the cup home, a company will pick up the cup from your home. Each cup is then cleaned and sanitized and put back in rotation for another customer to use. Just curious as to your reaction and if you would participate? Let us know!


Source: Gary R'nel

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