

Associated Billing Center's  
**Newsletter**

- Volume 61

- November, 2021

**Exclusively Serving Mental Health Practices Nationwide**  
**Building Our Reputation One Client at a Time**

Web: [mentalhealthbillers.com](http://mentalhealthbillers.com)

### A Message From Mona



#### **With Gratitude**

I want to express my gratitude and appreciation after receiving many congratulatory notes concerning our 60<sup>th</sup> edition of the **Associated Billing Center** Newsletter published last month. Also, we are receiving story ideas and topic suggestions frequently and this helps to ensure that our publication focuses on issues that are most helpful and germane to the successful operation of your practice. Thanks!

In these still somewhat uncertain times, **Associated Billing Center** Account Managers and support staff take pride in the fact that we continue to provide you with the service you expect from us unabated. We have lengthy discussions with our business consultant on what truly gives the competitive edge to one service business in comparison to another. The answer is simply defined in four words. Timely response to inquiries.

#### **Marketing Tip:**

Spy on your competition within your marketplace. Yes, it's ok. It's ethical. Your peers are spying on you. OK, spying may be too harsh a word. Visit provider websites and check out their social media interactions, read through their online reviews, discover their digital marketing techniques and utilize those that you consider to be applicable to your practice. Facebook, Twitter & YouTube are the three most common platforms utilized by mental health professionals.

Our ever-popular **Associated Billing Center**, LLC pocket calendars will soon be arriving in your mailbox. Speaking of calendars, I am always available to schedule a zoom meeting or an in-office visit.

STAY SAFE. STAY HEALTHY.



Mona

### Education Box-You Need to Know



#### **News & Notes**

- Aetna Medicare Advantage plan will no longer cover out of network telehealth after January 16, 2022.
- If you are an in-network provider, remember to complete any attestation or revalidation request you receive. If you do not update, they will drop your network status.
- Remember, it is vitally important to distinguish between therapy sessions in office and those conducted via telehealth. This will avoid delays in having claims reprocessed. Please continue to notate on your day sheets.

#### **F-Y-I**

- **Associated Billing Center**, LLC has learned that many insurance companies are reviewing their telehealth claims processing since the inception of Covid-19. If you receive any inquiries, please forward them to us. These reviews are reportedly routine activity.

#### **Medicare/2022**

- The annual deductible for all Medicare Part B beneficiaries will be \$233 in 2022, an increase of \$30 from this year. A reminder that deductibles must be satisfied prior to benefits being paid.

#### **Reminder**

- If your patient is utilizing an EAP benefit for therapy, there is no copay or deductible payment required. EAP benefits may be available to family members as well depending on the insurance benefit plan.

#### **Credentialing Assistance**

- Looking for a great credentialing person? We can recommend Kellie Goodroe/CEO, Affordable Physician Services, LLC 765-692-0887  
[Kroodroe@affordablephysicianservices.com](mailto:Kroodroe@affordablephysicianservices.com)  
Advise Kellie that you are a client of **Associated Billing Center**, LLC

## Mental Health Telehealth Trends



**TAKE NOTE:** We have gotten several inquiries from providers who noted that Cigna Behavioral Health has changed its name to Evernorth Behavioral Health. Be advised that all current patient insurance plans and benefits remain the same and that you can continue to see your Cigna patients with no disruption of service. Also, insurance ID's and cards remain active and unchanged.

**MENTAL HEALTH STAT:** Prior to the pandemic, the CDC released data showing that only 17 percent of U.S. adults were in optimal mental health. The immense popularity of telehealth and the reduced stigma in seeking therapy (Covid-19 impact) have prompted more individuals to engage in therapy. Many practices have realized a reduction in cancellations and no-shows when utilizing this technology. Telehealth has afforded practices wishing to expand their patient rosters the "perfect storm" of an opportunity.

**Associated Billing Center, LLC** continues to closely monitor modifications in telehealth regulations as they apply to your patients and their benefits. Going forward, many payment questions will be determined through payer policies and contract negotiations. Please call us with any questions concerning telehealth. We are here to help!

The biggest issue in telehealth reimbursement remains. This is whether providers will continue to be paid at in-person parity for a telehealth visit. The National Alliance on Mental Illness believes policymakers should strengthen and expand telehealth coverage for mental health across all settings and forms of health coverage, including allowing reimbursement for new patients using telehealth. **Associated Billing Center, LLC** is a regular contributor to this outstanding advocacy organization for providers and patients.

A bipartisan group of Senators are introducing legislation to make telehealth reimbursement permanent. Sens. Steve Daines (R-Mont.), Tina Smith (D-Minn.), Jerry Moran (R-Kan.) and Jacky Rosen (D-Nev.) introduced the "Expanded Telehealth Access Act" according to The Hill.

**Reminder: Your Practice is Your Business**

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



### *Christmas Carols for the Psychologically Challenged*

- \*Schizophrenia---Do you hear what I hear?
  - \*Amnesia---I Don't Know if I'll be Home for XMAS
  - \*Narcissistic---Hark the Herald Angels Sing About Me
  - \*Manic---Deck the Halls and Walls and House and Lawn and Streets and Stores and Office and Town and Cars and Buses and Trucks and Trees and Fire Hydrants and...
  - \*Paranoid---Santa Claus is Coming to Get Me
  - \*Borderline Personality Disorder---Thoughts of Roasting on an Open Fire
  - \*Full Personality disorder---You Better Watch Out, I'm Gonna Cry, I'm Gonna Pout, Maybe I'll Tell you Why
  - \*Obsessive Compulsive Disorder---Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells
  - \*Agoraphobia---I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day. But, wouldn't leave my house
  - \*Senile Dementia---Walking in a Winter Wonderland Miles from my House in my Slippers and Robe
  - \*Pyromaniac---I saw mommy kissing Santa Claus so I Burned Down the House
  - \*Social Anxiety Disorder---Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas while I sit Here and Hyperventilate
- Source:bouldertherapist.com

### *More Mental Health Humor*

Two therapists meet for dinner with one beginning the conversation by saying, "It has been a crazy day" to which his friend responds, "Thank goodness, how do you think I was paying for this dinner tonight?"

Source: Anonymous

Insane people are always sure they are fine. It is the sane people who are willing to admit they are crazy.

Source: Nora Ephron



## Mental Health Practice Notables/4 Reasons Why Mental Health Practices Can Lose Money

- >In-house staff does not exercise due diligence in collecting co-pays (these can be waived with a hardship waiver on file) and balance billing patients. >Unclean claims submissions and delay or no follow-up on unpaid claims. >When staff takes a vacation or is absent, the loss of continuity in the billing process can be extremely disruptive and negatively affect Revenue Cycle Management.
- >Your office staff may not stay current on swiftly changing insurance billing requirements and procedures. Practices often lose revenue because there is a lack of time to properly attend to back-office support. We can help!

## Mental Health Practice News & Notes



### Telehealth Patient Utilization

The Department of Health and Human Services reports that 84 percent of telehealth patients received their services from providers with whom they had an established relationship. At the same time, a wholesome 16 percent received services from a provider with whom they had no prior relationship. Telehealth can lead to practice expansion.

### Avoiding Insurance Requests for Money Back

For Mental Health Professionals it is as unpleasant as going to the dentist to have a root canal. What are we talking about here? When insurance companies request a takeback on claim payments. There are several defensive strategies that can help dramatically reduce these requests. On your patient intake form always request if the patient has a secondary insurance, remind your patients that if insurance requests a COB, Coordination of Benefits, this is something they cannot ignore. Except in cases of fraud, health plans are allowed to seek reimbursement from a provider for overpayment of a claim, so long as the plan sends a written request for reimbursement to the provider in compliance with the state's recoupment laws.

Reminder: Providers always maintain the option to appeal a takeback request.

## Stories You Simply Need to Know About



✓ **Inflation-When Dollar Tree announces it's going to raise prices 25 percent. The company recently announced it will increase prices on a majority of its products by the first quarter of 2022. Selling stuff strictly for \$1 hampered Dollar Tree, the company said, and forced it to stop selling some "customer favorites". Raising prices will give Dollar Tree more flexibility to reintroduce those items, expand its selections and bring new products and sizes to its stores. Many Americans rely on the store for purchases they consider necessary yet are increasingly unaffordable in the inflationary environment in which we reside. Dollar Tree has sold products for \$1 for 35 years. There are some individuals who will definitely experience heightened anxiety due to the price change.**



✓ **Students at one school district in New Jersey are getting a break on what some consider to be excessive homework assignments. Students in Wayne are now embracing "wellness weekends" in which students are given a complete break from school assignments. A recent study by the American Journal of Family Therapy asserted that, at the elementary school level, too much homework leads children to dislike school, in addition to taking a toll on their social skills and self-confidence. Teachers are being encouraged to communicate with each other concerning the aggregate length of homework assignments.**



✓ **High school sports can be as brutal off the field as on. Referees can be the recipients of nasty profanity laden jeers and even the threat of physical violence. Parental harassment has grown so rampant that more than 70 percent of new referees in all sports quit the job within three years according to the National Association of Sports Officials. It's commendable to show your child support on the playing field but counter productive to challenge every call that "might hurt your child's chance to win a sports scholarship".**

## **Associated Billing Center, LLC**

**Refer us to a colleague. We appreciate it!**

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

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## ***Newsletter Addendum: NJ Gov Opines on Mental Telehealth***

New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy thinks that Mental Telehealth has benefitted countless state residents. Nonetheless, the Governor has conditionally vetoed a bill that would extend many of the provisions applicable to telehealth services during the Covid-19 pandemic. The bill would have permanently extended the rates paid for Telehealth visits to parity with in-person visits. These rates have been in place since the start of the pandemic in March, 2020. Murphy is instead calling for parity to remain in place through the end of 2023, while the state Department of Health studies the issue. Murphy states "I am concerned that in the long term, pay parity could over-incentivize telehealth, further limiting in-person options. This could be especially detrimental for those in underserved communities." A survey by the Mental Health Association of New Jersey found eight out of ten people who received virtual mental health services during the pandemic considered them a "great alternative" when in-person options are unavailable. A super-majority of mental health advocacy groups support permanency for telehealth and in-person parity. **Associated Billing Center, LLC** will closely monitor the NJ Legislature for developments.

## **Associated Billing Center, LLC**

**Associated Billing Center, LLC** was established in 2001 to exclusively provide Mental Health Billing Services to individual and group practices. We are certified as a third-party biller by the NJ State Department of Banking & Insurance. We work as your dedicated back office with the focus on improving your Revenue Cycle Management while allowing you to do what you do best – take care of your patients.

We have recently moved to our newly expanded mental health billing office suite in Jamesburg, NJ. Our team is fully trained in the nuances of mental health billing and changes in rules as they occur. We are extremely proud of our team members who are truly dedicated to maintaining the integrity of our reputation in the marketplace.

We take tremendous pride in the fact that our client retention rate is among the highest in the industry. Our success is built upon the foundation of a genuine commitment to client service, an identifiable, tangible commitment that is more than just a promise – it's an action.

**\*Tell a colleague about our Associated Billing Center, LLC Newsletter\***

**Thanks for being a part of our family. We never take your business for granted.**

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“Effective communication is the key to positive personal and business relationships. Possessing the ability to communicate effectively could possibly be one of life’s most important skills.”

Mona Ruback/CSS  
**Associated Billing Center, LLC**  
Exclusively Serving Mental Health Practices