

Associated Billing Center's  
**Newsletter**

- Volume 62

- December, 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



#### **A Time for Reflection**

No, I do not keep a personal diary. What I do have in my possession 24/7 is our company pocket calendar. I keep detailed notes on appointments and other life events. Yes, this could be considered my version of a diary. In reviewing 2021 my immediate response was WOW!

Fortunately, everyone in my family is doing well after some minor medical challenges. The pandemic brought about a plethora of changes in our personal and professional lives. In addition to being thankful for my family, I am fortunate to be surrounded by the most competent and caring team members in our company's history.

I want to take this opportunity to sincerely thank you for being a part of the **Associated Billing Center, LLC** family. I am so grateful for the trust you've placed in us. We have experienced considerable growth in 2021 thanks to your referrals and kind words circulated in the marketplace. I appreciate our relationship and you can feel confident that we will do our best to continue to give you the kind of service you deserve.

**A Note on Telehealth:** The Center for Connected Health Policy estimates that telehealth visits increased by as much as 40% during Spring & Summer 2020 and remains 30% higher than it was before the pandemic. This Newsletter reports extensively on how trends in telehealth could affect your practice operation.

*Enjoy Good Health and Peace in 2022.*

**STAY SAFE. STAY HEALTHY.**



Mona

### Education Box-You Need to Know



#### **News & Notes**

- Medicare Providers: Please make sure you are sending your Account Manager the EOB's you receive from your patients Supplemental Insurance. We do not always receive these electronically. This will help to ensure that our database reflects current activity and will assist in any follow ups.
- Optum/United Behavioral Health is beginning to require medical notes for code 90837 to support services rendered.
- 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.
- Reminder: Ask your patients if their insurance has changed with the New Year. Also, if they receive new ID cards, please forward a copy to us so there will be no delay in claims processing.

#### **Therapy Notes:**

- If the insurance company requests medical notes in order to process claims, each DOS (Date of Service) must have a separate page with the requested information. Notes for multiple DOS cannot be on the same page when we submit them for processing.

#### **Credentialing Assistance**

- Looking for a great credentialing person? We can recommend Kellie Goodroe/CEO, Affordable Physician Services, LLC 765-692-0887 [Kgoodroe@affordablephysicianservices.com](mailto:Kgoodroe@affordablephysicianservices.com)  
Advise Kellie that you are a client of **Associated Billing Center, LLC**  
**Associated Billing Center, LLC** utilizes the services of Liles/Parker, an attorney health care regulatory firm representing providers around the country seeking counsel in practice matters. Web: [lilesparker.com](http://lilesparker.com)

## Mental Health Telehealth Trends



### Public Health Emergency Telehealth Update

Currently, the COVID federal public health emergency (PHE) is still in place and, therefore, all the COVID policies still apply. The PHE is currently expected to be extended well into 2022.

Once the PHE expires, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is going to require an in-person visit within 6 months of an initial telehealth visit and every 12 months of subsequent visits. Although, there are narrow exceptions to the 'subsequent visit requirement' when the patient and provider agree risks and burdens of an in-person visit are outweighed by continuing via telehealth, such as possible disruptions.

Keep in mind that the visits must be paid by Medicare in order to count. The rule does allow use of audio-only for mental health, but you do need the capability of providing care via audio-video according to the rule. Additionally, if the client has a substance use disorder or co-occurring mental health disorder or lives in a rural area (as defined by Medicare) AND goes to a certain type of medical facility to connect to you via telehealth, the in-person requirement doesn't apply.

### Tips to Increase Mental Health Practice Revenue

The utilization of telehealth technology in mental health practices has, in many instances, enhanced Revenue Cycle Management (RCM) and improved practice profitability.

Other suggestions for growing your revenue:

>Build an on-line presence and attract new patients.

>Renegotiate missed appointments. Attempt to reschedule a missed appointment as expeditiously as possible reducing lost billable time.

>Contract with a reputable billing service that specializes in mental health (Suggestion: **Associated Billing Center, LLC**).

>Pre qualify patients to ensure efficient, profitable appointments. By utilizing our *Benefit Information Profile Page*, the patient maintains a clear understanding of his or her fiduciary responsibility while seeking therapy.

**Reminder: Your Practice is Your Business**

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



- \* A donut walked into a therapy session and said, "No matter what I can't seem to feel hole."
- \* What does a sad tortilla say? Nothing, he doesn't want to taco 'bout it.
- \* What does the psychologist say when a patient who believes he is invisible calls for an appointment? "I'm sorry I can't see you."
- \* One day a man went to a therapist for the first time. After telling him his troubles, the man says, "So, what's wrong with me?" The therapist replies, "Well, you're crazy." Indignant, the man replies, "I am not, I want another opinion." To which the doctor replies, "OK... You're also short."
- \* Does the name Pavlov ring a bell?
- \* A Freudian slip is when you say one thing and mean your mother.
- \* My therapist told me that a great way to let go of your anger is to write letters to people you hate and then burn them...I did that and I feel much better but I'm wondering...do I keep the letters?
- \* What do you call a show where people laugh at you while you get your therapy? Dr. Phil
- \* At first I thought my therapy for Stockholm syndrome was useless. But now I kind of like it.



## Mental Health Practice Notables/ Patient Benefits

Whether you confirm your patient's mental health benefits on your own or utilize our **Associated Billing Center Patient Information Profile Page**, it is important that the data you obtain is accurate.

Establishing your client's fiduciary responsibility to your practice as early as possible will improve the chances that those requirements will be satisfied. We never obtain patient benefits on line. They're simply are too many variables in the mental health area. Also, we document each call notating the person to whom we spoke and the date and reference number for the call. Seeing patients without first obtaining accurate benefits can cause unnecessary financial stress on your practice.

## Mental Health Practice News & Notes



### HIPAA & the Mental Health Provider

Under HIPAA, therapists may share pertinent information with people involved in a person's care if the person in treatment: has agreed, has been given the opportunity to object and has not done so, has agreed that they would agree to bring a partner to treatment or have a parent help in the scheduling of sessions, as well as agreeing to allow that parent to pick up any medications prescribed by a psychiatrist. The therapist can also share information if the patient is delirious, intoxicated, experiencing psychosis, unconscious or otherwise incapable of making decisions. In addition, therapists are allowed to share patient information with other members of their health care team. **IMPORTANT:** In the case of a minor or client who can't make their own health care decisions, a therapist can share information directly related to care with the caregiver or representative, unless there is a reasonable concern that they are causing harm or acting against that person's best interests.

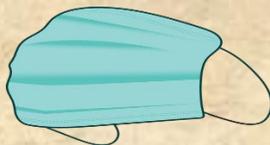
### A Proven Methodology to Minimize Missed Appointments

It is a frequent occurrence. You have a medical doctor appointment and 24 hours prior to the visit you get a call to confirm. Therapists can replicate this action by simply emailing or calling a patient to remind them of an upcoming session. Statistics have shown repeatedly this is an effective way to avoid missed sessions. Insurance will not cover missed/late cancelled sessions and shouldn't be billed for them. If you are in-network with the client's insurance, you can charge them for a missed or late cancelled session. You may only charge your contracted insurance rate. Out of network providers can charge their full fee. You should have the patient sign off on your cancellation policy. Missed sessions can add up to thousands of dollars of lost income. Charging for missed appointments is a very personal choice to make.

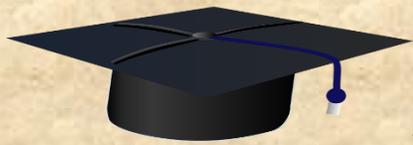
## Stories You Simply Need to Know About



✓ **Beauty Pageants are considered in many circles to be a relic. With each passing year those pageants that are still in existence come under intense criticism as being "sexist in nature". Now there is a new version of the "Beauty Pageant". This one may attract the attention of PETA. The 40-day King Abdulaziz Camel Beauty Pageant has taken root in Saudi Arabia and could soon be broadcast worldwide. Breeders compete for more than \$66 million in prize money. The owners of winning camels receive cash prizes and the recognition means they can sell the animals for higher prices. Contest officials have disqualified 43 "contestants" after cracking down on Botox injections and other forms of tampering by breeders.**



✓ **Have you been in a store or restaurant wearing your Covid mask when someone near you is not donning theirs and then they sneer at you? Those sneers are usually politically motivated. You may be wearing a mask to protect someone in your home who is immunocompromised or feel you are partaking in the exercise to afford yourself added protection. Psychologist Dawn Potter says "Think about it like wearing a brightly colored outfit or having a zit on your chin: While it may feel like everyone is staring at you, the reality is that most people will simply make a mental note and move on."**



✓ The cost of a college education continues to outpace inflation exponentially. Average tuition, fees, and room and board this year is \$22,180 for in-state students at four-year public institutions. In the past decade, the cost of college has risen 26% on average at both public and private universities. Some potential students are deciding that the goal of donning a cap and gown and facing years of debt is less appealing than alternative routes to achieving an education. Niche curriculums in technical or specialty schools offer less cumulative debt and, at times, a faster employment track. A recent survey of high school students found that the likelihood of attending a four-year school sank nearly 20% in less than a year — down to 53% from 71%, according to ECMC Group, a nonprofit aimed at helping student borrowers.



✓ With advances in surveillance technology, several divorce lawyers are reporting that their clients are more inclined to use technology to “spy” on their spouses. One law firm reported that 20% of exes engaged in potentially illegal spy activity against their partners. The New York Post reports that surveillance expert Roger Bescoby, Director of Conflict International, warned that the tools are easy to find. He cited examples of spyware including dash cams, installing software on mobile phones and tracking devices.

“In terms of where we’ve found devices, the list is endless,” he said, telling the Independent that cars in particular, are “increasingly prime targets.” More “unusual” hiding spots have included plush toys, a box of cereal and a model boat, he claimed.

## **Associated Billing Center, LLC**

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

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## **Newsletter Addendum: Building Back Better**

The Building Back Better legislation proposed by the Biden administration passed in the House and now stalled in the Senate, itemizes many provisions directly related to mental health services in America. Among the facets of health care set for expansion in the bill are greater mental health parity, increases in the number of those working in behavioral health, permanently increased funds available for crisis services and extended access to Medicaid coverage. The act allowed for further strengthening of the 2008 federal parity law which requires that insurance coverage for mental health and substance use disorder services face no restrictions compared with care for other medical issues.

It is our hope that lawmakers can come together in bipartisan negotiations and find a pathway forward that will help to benefit those in need of mental health services and the profession itself.

### **Associated Billing Center, LLC**

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

#### **About Us:**

**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\***

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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  
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Exclusively Serving Mental Health Practices