

Associated Billing Center's  
**Newsletter**

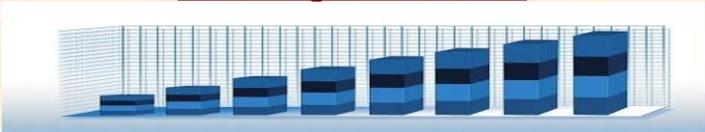
- Volume 63

- January, 2022

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

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

### A Message From Mona



#### Holding the Line on Inflation

Inflation is up nearly 7 percent over the past year, the largest increase since 1982. The measure of so-called core inflation, which excludes food and energy costs that can be more volatile, rose by 4.9 percent over the past year. No, I am not going to assign blame for the increase (that is for a political pundit). What I can say is that I am extremely proud that **Associated Billing Center, LLC** has not increased our percentage fees to our clients in more than five years.

We were able to achieve, what for many companies would be considered an anomaly, by continually investing in technology and methodology in order to remain extremely competitive in the marketplace. I want to personally thank our company consultant and our excellent staff for helping us to "hold the line". **Associated Billing Center, LLC** continuously works toward providing you, our client, a cost-efficient service that will enhance your practice's profitability and allow you to continue to serve your local community.

#### I Have a Quick Favor to Ask.

Would you be so kind as to write a brief testimonial that I can add to my list of satisfied clients? Just a few sentences describing your experience with us would be terrific. We are expanding our social media presence on Google. Prospective clients don't care so much about what I say about **Associated Billing Center**, but they do care what my clients have to say. We never use full names of providers, only first name and last initial. Directions to post a review on Google: Google-Associated Billing Center. Scroll down and click on the box to write a review. Thanks to all.

STAY SAFE. STAY HEALTHY.



Mona

### Education Box-You Need to Know



#### News & Notes

- Horizon BCBS of New Jersey: Effective February 3, 2022, the cost share waiver for telemedicine and telehealth visits not related to COVID-19 testing will end for all plans
- Some patients find themselves with high deductibles/max out of pockets and you may be considering waiving co-pays. Providers must keep a Hardship Waiver on file. Contact us with any questions.
- Reminder: Aetna Medicare Advantage ID's have changed. To avoid delays in processing please remind patients to provide you with their updated ID.

#### Negotiating Fee Increases

- Mental health professionals can attempt to renegotiate reimbursement rates with some insurance providers. Consider contacting your provider relations rep or group for guidance. Be prepared to present specialty skills which may not be in abundant supply in your marketplace. If your request is denied, you can make a counter offer. Also, the portfolio you have assembled can be utilized when requesting a rate increase with other companies in the future.
- Please remind patients to respond in a timely fashion if insurance asks for a Coordination of Benefits (COB) response. This will avoid delays in claims 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



Covid-19 is now affecting one in five Americans according to Johns Hopkins University. We have been closely monitoring changes in telehealth regulations and are providing updates to our clients as we receive them. Please call with any questions or concerns. The Public Health Emergency is expected to be extended well into 2022.

In 2022, most insurance companies are no longer waving cost share. This is plan specific. This information will be included as it pertains to each insurance company on our *Patient Information Profile Page*. Reminder: We always call to confirm patient benefits and document the information, including reference numbers.

Telehealth is expected to grow exponentially this year given the documented evidence of the efficacy and convenience experienced by patients. A recent poll by the American Psychiatric Association shows that more than one-quarter of Americans made a New Year's resolution to improve their mental health in 2022. Studies show that nearly 60 percent of mental health practitioners have full caseloads utilizing telehealth.

If you use Zoom and you are using the free version for telehealth, it is not considered HIPAA compliant. You need to be utilizing a paid version such as Zoom Business or Zoom Pro. Reminder: In order for your office to be considered HIPAA compliant, a telehealth platform needs to provide you with a Business Associate Agreement.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is expanding the definition of telehealth services under the Medicare program to include audio—only for patients with mental illness and substance abuse disorders who are unwilling or unable to access video technology. Clinicians need to document the reason for audio-only telehealth under CMS rules.

Remember that your telehealth workspace should have an appropriate background with no apparent distractions. This is key to retaining patients using this modality and a direct reflection on your practice.

**Remember: Your Practice is Your Business**

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



### **SEX THERAPY**

\*A couple, both age 78, went to a sex therapist's office. She asked, "What can I do for you?" The man said, "Will you watch us have sex?" The therapist looked puzzled but agreed.

When the couple finished, the therapist said "There's nothing wrong with the way you have sex" and charged them \$125.

This happened several weeks in a row. The couple would make an appointment, have sex with no problems, pay the therapist, then leave.

Finally, the therapist said "Just exactly what are you trying to find out?"

"We're not trying to find out anything" the man replied.

"She's married and we can't go to her house. I'm married and we can't go to my house. The Holiday Inn charges \$150. The Hilton charges \$185. We do it here for \$125...and I get \$43 dollars back from Medicare."

Source:reddit.com

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

\*We all have to be careful because people are facing mental health issues from being isolated for so long. "In fact, I have been talking with my microwave and toaster and we all agreed that things are getting hot."

\*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.

\*Research shows that horses tend to have much better mental health than other farm animals due to their stable environment.

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

\*I have a weird mental health issue where I have to get out and pull my car every time I go through a tunnel. It's car-pull tunnel syndrome. Source:upjoke.com



## Mental Health Practice Notables/ Missed Sessions Can be Costly

One of the most challenging aspects in managing your practice is formulating a policy for missed sessions. Therapists, by nature, are compassionate individuals who struggle at times with charging a patient for a missed session. Let's do the math: If you collect on two missed sessions per week at \$80 per session, that adds up to \$640 per month or \$7,680 per year. Yes, your relationship with your patient will help determine your cancellation policy given a specific event. Reminder: Have a clearly stated cancellation policy, establish exceptions, charge the full insurance contracted rate, and clearly explain to your patient (if the cancellation in your opinion is not warranted) that you lost income because you will not have ample time to reschedule the hour. You may be surprised. The patient keeps the appointment!

## Mental Health Practice News & Notes



### Managing Your Online Reputation

Most of your prospective patients will immediately go online to read "all about it". In this instance, the all about it refers to all about you. Checking your average star rating on Google and your Google reviews is of paramount importance. Whether your feedback is positive or negative, it is a good idea to respond and engage. You can always ask satisfied clients to write a review. (Check out the *A Message from Mona Box*). A good question to ask yourself is "If you googled your name right now-what would you see?" Focus on maintaining a good reputation. A super majority of prospective patients will trust online reviews as much as they do personal recommendations. Remember: Some patients will write a negative review unfairly or unsubstantiated. Don't take it personally. Just respond. Good reviews can also help your practice rank higher on search engines.

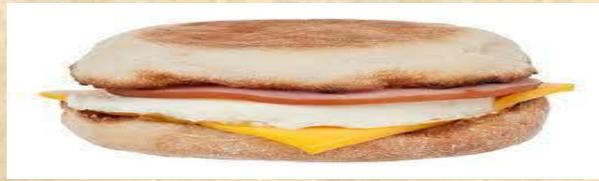
### Mental Health Practice Profitability

No, the word Entrepreneur should not be excluded from your lexicon when asked what you do for a living. Yes, first and foremost you are in the "business" of helping people improve the quality of their lives. The word *entrepreneur* is not referred to as profanity. In fact, if you did not earn a "profit" from your practice at the end of the year you could not continue the commendable work you do. So, with that in mind, here are a couple of ideas to consider to improve that "bottom line". Make sure when filing your taxes this year to take advantage of every legal business expense and deduction available to you. Selecting the proper business formation: Ex. S-Corp and LLC can preserve and enhance your income. If your thinking of expanding from a solo practice to a group, it is imperative to consult with a tax advisor. It could save you lots of dollars. Making purchases for a tax write-off? Businesses justify unnecessary purchases thinking the write-off will be worth it. Contract with a billing service (Suggestion: [Associated Billing Center](#)) that will keep an accurate account of balances owed. Balance bill patients unless you have on file a Hardship Waiver. Yes, we say it often: *Your Practice is Your Business*.

## Stories You Simply Need to Know About



√ According to a new Gallup poll, Americans have deemed nurses to be the most honest and ethical professionals in the country for the 20<sup>th</sup> straight year (Understood: You were recently hospitalized, rang the bell and waited 20 minutes for a nurse to respond). The Gallup Honesty and Ethics poll originated back in 1976 and has been conducted every year since 1990. Nurses have ranked near the top for almost the entire time. The top 5 professions ranked by trustworthiness: Nursing: 81%-Medical doctors 67%-Grade school teachers: 63%-Pharmacists: 63% and Military Officers: 61%. Police officers and daycare providers are now considered exemplary in both honesty and ethics by at least half of the American people.



✓ If you love the Egg McMuffin as much as we do and you are older than 50, then it is possible that you have enjoyed this McDonald's iconic sandwich since 1972. Yes, the Egg McMuffin is actually 50 years old. It was developed by McDonald's operator Herb Peterson, originally Vice-President for In-House Advertising. He developed the McMuffin following an idea for an eggs-benedict inspired item. He decided to scrap the Hollandaise sauce for cheese because "packaged Hollandaise sauce doesn't do the trick" according to McDonalds. At one time, the sandwich was served open-face, with a side of honey or jam. We're surprised that "Ronald" did not frown upon that idea.



✓ A brawl broke out at the Golden Corral restaurant in Bensalem, Pennsylvania with authorities indicating that it may have been caused by a shortage of steak. There is speculation that one patron simply cut in the steak waiting line and this infuriated several others. One has to ponder whether or not this would have taken place if we were not in the midst of a multi-year pandemic. Clara Peller's, "Where's the Beef?" might have been applicable here.

## **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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Connect with us on 

Follow us on 

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**Associated Billing Center, LLC is a proud member of:**



***Thanks for being part of our family. We never take your business for granted. Your support team at Associated Billing Center, LLC.***

## **Newsletter Addendum: No Surprises Act—A Reminder**

The current, *No Surprises Act*, is designed to protect patients from receiving unexpected bills. The Good Faith Estimate provision of the No Surprises Act is designed to give patients predictability in how much they will be charged for services they will be receiving prior to their appointment. The act applies to all providers and facilities operating under the scope of a state-issued license or certification. Providers need to give a Good Faith Estimate of charges, in writing, to every new and continuing client who is either *uninsured* or is *not* planning to submit a claim to their insurance for services they seek. You also need to inform every *uninsured* or *those not submitting to their insurance* of their right to receive a Good Faith Estimate. The Good Faith Estimate provisions do not apply if the client is a participant in Medicare, Medicaid or other federal healthcare programs.

To access an example of a Good Faith Estimate copy and paste the following on to your browser bar:

<https://www.apaservices.org/practice/legal/managed/good-faith-estimate-template.pdf>

### **About Us:**

**A**ssociated **B**illing **C**enter, 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.

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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  
**A**ssociated **B**illing **C**enter, LLC  
Exclusively Serving Mental Health Practices

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