

Associated Billing Center's
Newsletter

- Volume 64

- February, 2022

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

Web: mentalhealthbillers.com

A Message From Mona



Much appreciation is extended to our providers who posted positive reviews for **Associated Billing Center** on Google as we continue to expand our social media presence. Directions to post a review on Google: Google Associated Billing Center. Scroll down and click on the box to write a review. THANKS!

The third Friday in February was National Caregivers Day. The day honors individuals who selflessly provide personal care, physical and emotional support to those who need it most. As a caregiver myself, I realize the invaluable services we provide to loving members of our family and to others in need. Mental Health Professionals absolutely fall into the category of caregiver. Yes, while it is true that this can be described as a "different kind of caregiving", the common denominator is a concern for the well-being of others.

Safeguarding Patient Privacy

Associated Billing Center continues to make ongoing investments in technology in order to protect patient privacy and information. We take pride in adhering to strict HIPAA guidelines. If you have any questions regarding HIPAA and your practice, give us a call.

Final Thoughts:

Our heartfelt prayers for peace are with the people of Ukraine, those affected abroad and in the United States. Next month is Social Workers Month. We will be writing about a broad range of topics on the "business" of the profession.

STAY SAFE. STAY HEALTHY.



Mona

Education Box-You Need to Know



News & Notes

- Horizon BCBS NJ has stopped cost share effective 2-3-22. The problem is that their system has not caught up to this end date. They are incorrectly waiving cost share on many patients' accounts. Please continue to collect copays/coinsurances/deductibles from your patients. Horizon will, at some point, adjust these claims and recoup this money from you. The patient will owe it which will create a large balance from them if you have not been collecting at each session. As of this time, we have only come across this issue with Horizon BCBSNJ.

- Reminder: When sending new patient information please include a copy of both sides of their insurance cards.

- In-network providers should ALWAYS charge insurance their full fee, not the contracted rate.



We encourage you to tell your patients to contact us with any questions concerning billing. We are here to remove this time consuming task from your daily activity. Patients are treated with the utmost respect. After all, we are a direct reflection of your practice.

- Credentialing: We can recommend Kellie Goodroe/CEO, Affordable Physician Services, LLC 765-692-0887

Kgoodroe@affordablephysicianservices.com

Tell her you are a client of ours. **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

Mental Health Telehealth Trends



Jeffrey Cohen, an Assistant Professor of Psychology at Columbia University, recently told the Philadelphia Inquirer, "We're going to see the impact of the pandemic on the human psyche for years." As for the future use of telehealth technology, it is not a question of will patients want to continue to utilize the technology but rather, how will insurance companies and lawmakers respond to the demand. In other words, reimbursement levels and legislation.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) 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. Advocacy groups and professional organizations across the country continue to lobby lawmakers for the expanded use of the technology.

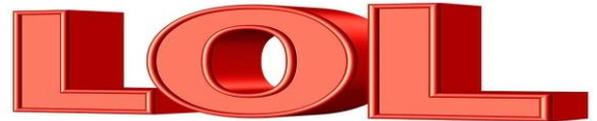
The Kaiser Family Foundation reports that many states plan to continue mental telehealth coverage post-pandemic. **Associated Billing Center**, LLC urges mental health professionals who support the continuation of telehealth services to contact their lawmakers and state professional organizations to advocate for continuation of parity reimbursement and for continuation of these services.

Telehealth Patient Feedback

We need your help! If you are getting feedback from patients concerning the efficacy of telehealth, we want to hear about it. In a future edition of the Newsletter, we will publish "informal" survey results on patient satisfaction with the utilization of this technology.

J.D. Power reports that half of all patients using telehealth did so because of convenience, nearly half because of swift access to care and more than a third because of safety. The highest usage in the past year was among Generation Y (born 1977 to 1995) and Pre-Boomers.

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



- * Patient to Therapist: "I used to be indecisive. Now, I'm not sure". Source: workjoke.com
- * Therapist to Patient: "If you don't cut the cake in pieces and just eat the whole cake, then you only had one piece." Source: jokes4all.net

BUMPER STICKERS

- * Athesim is a non-prophet organization.
- * A patient complains to his therapist: "She's always late. Her ancestors arrived on the June Flower".
- * Change is inevitable. Except from a vending machine.
- * Honk of you love peace and quiet. Source: bouldertherapist.com
- * Patient to Therapist: "I want this Christmas Day to be the happiest day ever." Therapist to Patient: "How do you plan on accomplishing that?" Patient to Therapist: "By staying in session with you the entire 24 hours." Source: R'nel
- * What is the right age to get married? Camille, age 10, tells her therapist "Twenty-three is the best age because you know this person FOREVER by then."
- * No person really decides before they grow up who they're going to marry. Kirsten, age 10, tells her therapist, "God decides it all way before and you get to find out later who you're stuck with." Source: bouldertherapist.com
- * Two therapists are speaking: "You are so difficult to get along with. The other responds, "Why don't you set up an appointment with me so we can discuss this?" to which the first replies, "Why, so you can collect the session fee?" Source: R'nel



Telehealth-No, It's Not a New Concept

The concept of telehealth actually dates back more than 100 years. William Eithoven, the inventor of the EKG, discovered a way to transmit medical data over a telephone wire. In 1940s Pennsylvania, radiology images were sent 24 miles between two townships via telephone line in the world's first example of an electronic medical record transfer. 1955 was a watershed year for the development of telehealth. A doctor constructed a closed-circuit TV connection with another facility over 100 miles away. Next up: Smartphones, the internet, and high-speed networks. The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated the use of the technology. State lawmakers and mental health advocates were next to fall in line.

Mental Health Practice News & Notes



Suggested Strategies for Practices Wishing to Grow

Assess your marketing needs. Yes, risking redundancy we will state it again: *Your Practice is Your Business*. Advertising your services is not immoral or unethical. Case in point. The Psychology Today therapist listing service. Yes, this, in essence, is a form of advertising. You can creatively write a short description of your counseling philosophy and list your specialties. Elsewhere, while most print community newspapers have been permanently relegated to the trash heap, many are still publishing online editions with loyal readership. Research indicates that these publications are an extremely cost-efficient venue to introduce prospective patients to your practice. In addition, you might consider maintaining a website. It does not have to be complex nor expensive but professional in appearance and presenting your identity, philosophy and niche specialties. Use keywords effectively, encourage people to leave reviews and consider adding a blog page. Encourage a consultation call. Your site should also be optimized for mobile. Personalize, Personalize, Personalize your marketing to reflect the advantages of utilizing your practice for therapy. Remember that people looking for mental health counseling will start in the same place most of us do: the internet. Also, creating a network of referral sources (PCP's, etc.) could assist in growth.

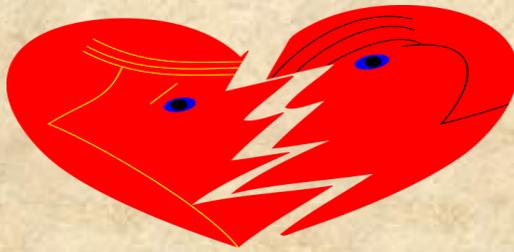
Your Mental Health Practice Image

Perception is reality. Within the first seven seconds of an encounter (telehealth or in-person) patients will form a solid impression of who you are. Research has shown that within those initial 7 seconds, people will form 11 impressions of you. This is known as the 7/11 rule. Smiling: It could enhance the patient's trust of you while making you seem more approachable. Posture: Makes you seem more confident. Note taking: Allowing the prospective patient to witness you taking notes even during a complimentary consultation can express an enthusiasm on your part to embrace their mental health challenges. ONE SIZE does not fit all. Adapt these suggestions as they are applicable to your personal level of comfort.

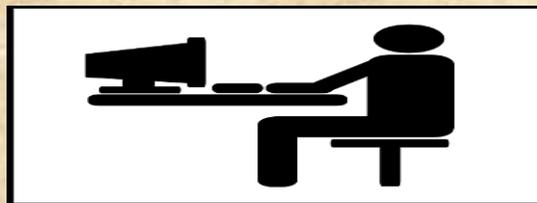
Stories You Simply Need to Know About



√ Souvenirs relating to Vincent Van Gogh on display at a London art gallery were removed after being branded "insensitive" by some of the museum's visitors. Many said that an eraser in the shape of an ear is considered to be making light of the topic of mental health. The Dutch painter cut his left ear off. He later spent a year at a psychiatric hospital in France. The painter suffered from mental illness throughout his life which ended at the age of 37 when he shot himself. "The Courtauld takes mental health extremely seriously. It was never The Courtauld's intention to present an insensitive or dismissive attitude to this important subject by stocking these items," a statement read. Another gift also removed was a \$7 bar of soap touted as ideal for "the tortured artist who enjoys fully bubbles." The ear removal was considered a mysterious act of self-mutilation.



✓ Not everyone received a gift of flowers this past Valentine’s Day. Romance in the United States is facing some serious challenges these days. According to a 2021 General Social Survey, twenty-six percent of Americans ages 18 and up didn’t have sex once in the last twelve months. Survey results also reported that the percentage of Americans who had sex once a month or less topped 50 percent. Divorce in America has been falling in recent years due to the fact that less people have decided that the institution of marriage is a good fit for them. On top of the already record high share of never-married adults, some Americans postponed their marriage plans because of the pandemic. Cohabitation rates have increased across all age groups since 1995, though this growth has slowed in the past decade.



✓ Excessive sitting may be bad for your mental health. A recent study at Iowa State University concludes that those who moved less since the inception of the pandemic felt more depressed, anxious and lonely. The report was published in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. Study co-author, Jacob Meyer, says, “For people whose sitting times stayed high, their depressive symptoms, on average, didn’t recover in the same way as everyone else’s. If you’re no longer walking down the hall for in-person meetings, you can still incorporate that break from sitting by taking a short walk before and after your Zoom call.”

Associated Billing Center, LLC

Refer us to a colleague. We appreciate it!

Please check out our website: mentalhealthbillers.com for our News & Blog updates.

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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: The Surprise Billing Law is Not One Size Fits All

Several mental health advocacy groups say that, while they agree in principle with the No Surprises Act, the legislation could put some providers in an “ethical bind” and could discourage some patients from seeking care. Therapists are very supportive of the main aim of the legislation which prevents patients from being blindsided by bills usually from out-of-network providers who work at in-network facilities. It is the price transparency provision that has some mental health professionals uncomfortable. The provision requires most licensed medical practitioners to give patients detailed upfront cost estimates, including a diagnosis and information about the length and costs involved in a typical course of treatment. That’s unfitting for mental health care, they say, because diagnoses can take time and sometimes change over the course of treatment. Mental health providers recently wrote a letter to the Department of Health and Human Services seeking an exemption from the “good faith” estimates for routine mental and behavioral health services. Jared Skillings, Chief of Professional Practice with the American Psychological Association, stated, “We got thrown into this bill, but the intention was not mental health but high-cost medical care.” We will update subscribers to this Newsletter if there are any addendums made concerning mental health and the applicability of The Surprise Billing Law.

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.

“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
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