

Associated Billing Center's
Newsletter

- Volume 68

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

Web: mentalhealthbillers.com

A Message From Mona



I sincerely appreciate the abundance of well wishes I received after recently contracting Covid. I am happy to report that I am completely recovered. In addition, thanks to our **Associated Billing Center** team for extending an extra effort during this time.

On another note: It is rare that I opine on political activity. But, here goes. The Supreme Court's decision to reverse Roe v. Wade was jarring, invalidating 50 years of precedent. A friend recently asked me, "Has the Supreme Court ever issued a ruling concerning a man's body?" In addition, Justice Clarence Thomas' messaging about a possible review of gay marriage and contraception settled law is quite simply "unsettling".

I realize that engaging in a debate of pro life vs. pro choice is truly an exercise in futility. Americans are firmly entrenched in their beliefs. Whether you are content with the cultural status quo or seek change, you do have enormous power in America to exercise your opinion. It's called **voting**. And, it happens every November.

OK, back to the "Business of your Business", your mental health practice. Unless you have completed a hardship waiver for an insurance patient on outstanding balances, it is strongly suggested you attempt to stay current. This will greatly affect your Revenue Cycle Management (RCM) and year-end balance sheet. **Associated Billing Center** balance bills patients upon request.



Mona

Education Box-You Need to Know



News & Notes

- When submitting day sheets please notate if the patient has an outstanding credit.
- Please notate any monies collected from patients (copays, coinsurance, deductibles, etc.) on your day sheets.
- When securing authorization for a patient, please forward to us so that we can document in the patient's file and avoid claims processing delays.
- When submitting new patient information, please remember to include a copy (both sides) of the patient's insurance card.
- It is unusual to have both a copay and coinsurance but it does occur. Secondary insurances may absorb these costs. It is imperative to check benefits on primary and any secondary insurances.

▪ *Provider Reminder:*

Medicare Supplemental Providers

Upon receipt of an EOP/EOB with a paper check for a Medicare Supplemental plan, please forward to us so that we can apply payment to the correct date of service.

- If your patient has a question concerning their billing, please have them contact us. 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

Let her know 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

NEWS

Marketing your Solo or Group Practice-The Essentials

Mental health professionals spend a majority of time in their formal training focusing on counseling and how to assist patients in finding hope and recovery. Ask many professionals if they received any or minimal training in the marketing of their practice-and more often than not the answer is a resounding, "NO".

Consider this the Reader's Digest presentation on the topic. Some areas to focus on when marketing your practice include:

Knowing your target audience. Is there a specialty area that you would consider your brand or do you want to have more mass appeal?

Website Development: If you choose a specialty area, make this a focus of your online messaging. Yes, you can invest in a web designer but there is a plethora of web hosting services that provide templates for creating your own site. Make sure the site is simple and client-focused and contains a call to action (motivation for the patient to make that first appointment). Create rich and interesting content. Encourage satisfied patients to leave a positive review on sites like Yelp, Google and others. Find network opportunities on LinkedIn and create a Facebook business page.

Gain visibility by submitting your practice information to professional websites (ex. Psychology Today). Many patients search these sites when seeking therapy. In addition, network with local clergy, medical professionals and other therapists in your area. Referrals can lead to an expanded patient roster.

Providers need to think of themselves as a brand/product. You are marketing you.

Remember, Your Practice is Your Business.



*Two therapists are thinking of forming a partnership. Partner A says, "I deserve a 60 percent share of the revenue because my patients need more therapy and counseling." Partner B responds, "That's nonsense. How did you reach such a conclusion?" Partner A responds, "My patients include my mother, father, son, daughter and my wife." Partner B says, "You may be entitled to more than 60 percent."

*A patient complains to his therapist that his "fast food" restaurant never serves his food quickly. The therapist asks, "What do you mean?" The patient replies, "I thought fast food meant the server would run to the counter when giving me my order." (Ok, OK, we know it's weak).

*Request for Treatment:

A patient told her therapist you must help me. "It's gotten so that every time I date a nice guy, I end up in bed with him. And then afterward, I feel guilty and depressed for a week."

"I see," nodded the therapist. "And, you no doubt, want me to strengthen your will power and resolve this matter." "For God's sake, NO!" exclaimed the woman, "I want you to fix it so I won't feel guilty and depressed afterward."

Source: bouldertherapist.com

Patient to Therapist: "Thank goodness for telehealth. With the price of gasoline, I would not be able to afford to reduce my anxiety level concerning gas prices."

Source: Gary R'nel



Furnishing Your Practice Office

While telehealth has grown exponentially, some patients are returning to in-office visits. In fact, some prefer them. If you are a new practice or refurbishing, a couple of things to keep in mind. First impressions are everything and the manner in which you furnish your office is no exception to this rule. Therapists are now thinking about creating spaces that convey the feeling of openness and healing. Others want to convey structure and security. One recent study found that a blue-teal combination was most comforting while dark colors can evoke feelings of claustrophobia. Chair selection can also be crucial and could affect a patient's feeling of vulnerability. Surprisingly, some patients felt more comfortable with no couch in the room, feeling increasingly empowered when sitting in a chair. Yes, the proper furnishings do contribute to your patient's satisfaction level.

Mental Health Practice News & Notes

Practice Cancellation Policy

Mental health practices should have a cancellation policy that is part of your office's intake packet and discussed at the first appointment. Studies have shown that practices without a clear policy suffer from increased cancellations and an adverse effect on Revenue Cycle Management (RCM). Yes, there are circumstances that should be taken into consideration with every request. A sound cancellation policy should include an allowable time frame for the cancellation to take place without any fees being charged. Also, you need to establish a policy on how the patient will communicate with your office if they need to cancel. What are the acceptable options-phone, text, email, etc. Your cancellation policy is a direct reflection on your practice and, if exercised properly with exceptions where necessary, can lead to solidifying client retention. Several of my clients send reminders to their patients via email or text to confirm an upcoming appointment.

Podcasting as a Marketing Tool

No, hosting a Podcast is not for everyone. It requires a comfort zone that some individuals may or may not possess. Podcasting can be a fantastic marketing tool. Your patients can feel connected to you more often and prospective clients can be convinced that you might be a "great match". You need a microphone and a simple recording device (already on most laptops). You will need a host site which is relatively inexpensive and can be found by searching google. The technically challenged will find simple directions on uploading their podcast to a host site and tips on editing. The length of your podcast and topic selection are extremely important. Ideally, you do not want to exceed 25 minutes. Also, while covering a range of topics is a terrific idea, it is extremely important to feature niche areas of your practice. Reminder: In addition to providing invaluable information, your Podcast is, in essence, a Call to Action. Frequently mention your practice contact information. Be consistent on posting days. Inform your patients that you host a podcast and ask them to tell others. You will find suggestions on marketing a Podcast on host sites. Remember: Hosting a Podcast is not for everyone and there is no immediate ROI (return on investment). But, Podcasting can be an invaluable asset as an image enhancer in the marketplace.

Note to Providers: Patient information should never be sent via text message. We will only respond via encrypted email. We will not respond utilizing text messaging. This is a HIPAA violation.

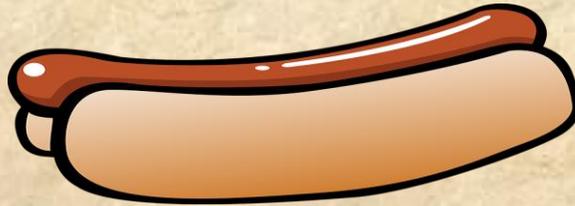
Stories You Simply Need to Know About



>Cracker Jack now has company. Cracker Jill. PepsiCo unveiled Jill in order to promote the accomplishments of women in sports. PepsiCo stated: "Tapping into the brand's rich history with America's favorite pastime, Cracker Jill™ comes to life through five different representations on a series of special-edition bags available at the start of this year's baseball season in professional ballparks across the country and through a donation of \$5 or more to the Women's Sports Foundation." The company says it will be donating \$200,000 to the nonprofit Women's Sports Foundation to "help girls and women across the country reach their potential in sport and life."



> A new study by Gallup reveals some disturbing news. According to the U.S. Department of Education, 54% of American adults 16-74 years old (about 130 million people) lack proficiency in literacy, reading below the equivalent of a sixth-grade level. The study also found that income is strongly related to literacy and that reducing illiteracy would yield economic benefits. On an individual level, illiteracy can impact a person's lifetime earning potential by 30-42 percent. And, while you might think that the United States is at the forefront of literacy and education, it ranks 125th for literacy rates among all countries. That's not surprising, according to the most recent "Nation's Report Card" by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The NAEP reports that roughly just one-third of students in fourth, eighth and 12th grades are proficient in reading and have "solid academic performance and demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter."



>He has done it again. Joey Chesnut won his record extending 15th Nathan's Famous International Hot Dog Eating Contest at Coney Island. Chesnut devoured 63 hot dogs and buns in ten minutes. Chesnut has now won the contest seven consecutive times. In the women's contest, Miki Sudo, won her eighth championship, slamming 40 hot dogs and buns in 10 minutes. No mustard, ketchup, or any condiments. You may be a hot dog lover, but unless you are over the age of 18 and are invited to participate, you can enjoy your dog as a spectator. If there is a tie in any situation, five hot dogs are given as an eat-off to see who can eat them in the shortest amount of time. The first contest was held on the Fourth of July in 1916.

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:



Newsletter Addendum



Associated Billing Center, LLC values client feedback. In fact, encouraging client feedback is one of the most important areas of our operation. We take pride in the fact that our client retention rate is in the top percentile for our business category. Please call us immediately if you have a question concerning your account. Your feedback helps to ensure that we are offering optimum service to our clients.

A Quick & Vitaly Important Thought from Mona

“Effective communication is the key to enhanced personal and professional relationships. Maintaining the ability to communicate effectively is one of life’s most important skills. Communicating effectively with family, friends and business associates leads to an increasingly rewarding life.”

“No, they are not mutually exclusive. You can manage a profitable mental health practice while being an empathetic clinician. In fact, quite literally, one cannot exist without the other.”

Thanks for being part of our Associated Billing Center, LLC 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 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.

Mona Ruback/CSS

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