

Associated Billing Center's
Newsletter

- Volume 70

- July/August 2022

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

Web: mentalhealthbillers.com

A Message From Mona



I hope that this summer has been an enjoyable one for you and your family. Yes, it has been challenging given Covid and the unsettling political landscape. Shortly we will be repeating the phrase, "Wow, that summer flew by".

This **Associated Billing Center** Newsletter represents our 70th edition. I hope you find the publication to be educational and entertaining. Recently, I have been receiving story suggestions on issues that affect your practice that you would like to see covered in our Newsletter. I am grateful for these ideas and appreciate the feedback. Our July & August Newsletter will now be presented as a combined edition. We will resume publishing monthly Newsletters in September.

I frequently discuss the importance of effective communication between you, our client, and **Associated Billing Center, LLC**. Whenever you have a concern or question, please give your Account Rep or me a call. We are both here for you! Also, we can schedule a Zoom meeting at your convenience. In addition, for those of you nearby, visit us in our Jamesburg, NJ office suite.

Again, enjoy the rest of this summer. Remember, the ice melting salt bags are not far behind.

Best regards,



Mona

Education Box-You Need to Know



News & Notes

- Please notate any monies collected from patients (copays, coinsurance, deductibles, etc.) on your day sheets.
- If you apply to become a Medicare provider and are accepted, please forward us a copy of your Medicare Acceptance Letter. This will enable us to verify benefits, submit and follow-up on claims.
- Psychological testing and neuropsychological testing usually require prior authorization. If you are planning on testing for a patient, please let us know when we verify benefits. Provide us the codes you will be utilizing and we will verify coverage and if prior authorization is necessary.
- Effective 7-1-22 the Medicare sequestration fee increased from 1% to 2%.
- **Associated Billing Center, LLC** is an extension of your staff – a part of your team. Please refer patients to us who have a billing question. That is what we're here for.
- **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.
- **Service References:**
 - 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: liles Parker.com

Stay In The Know-Your Mental Health Practice



>Many commercial insurance companies outsource their mental health coverage to third party insurers. That is why it is imperative that a benefit check is completed to ensure that there is no delay in claims processing and payment. Our **Benefit Information Profile Page** provides all the essentials to ensure a seamless billing process.

>Asking patients occasionally if they are aware of any pending changes to their insurance coverage is a sound business practice. The ultimate goal is to maintain the integrity of your revenue cycle.

>If your Account Manager advises that your patient needs to contact their insurance to complete a Coordination of Benefits (COB), the patient should be encouraged to expedite this process. This will facilitate the processing of any unpaid claims and prevent any delays in future payment.

>Collecting patient cost-share (co-pays, co-insurance, deductibles) is important to your bottom line. In fact, collecting the fees can account for 20 to 40% of your practice income. In-network providers often are contractually obligated to demonstrate an attempt to collect these fees (unless a hardship waiver is granted). It is important to establish a protocol advising patients that these fees are due at the time of service. **Associated Billing Center** will, upon request, balance bill patients to collect these fees.

>HIPAA Reminders

Conduct Telehealth using HIPAA Compliant Software. Maintain a Business Associates Agreement (BAA) with third parties you engage with. Always utilize encrypted email. Maintain a written plan describing how patient information will be stored and protected.

Remember, Your Practice is Your Business.

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



*Therapist to her receptionist: "Just say we're very busy. Don't keep saying it's a madhouse."

*A therapist returns from a conference at an Aspen lodge where all the mental health professionals were permitted to ski for free. Her husband asked her, how it went. She replied, "Fine, but I've never seen so many Freudian slips." (We know-that was weak!)

*Two therapists meet at their twentieth college reunion. One of them looks like he just graduated, while the other looks old, worried and withered. The older one asks the other, "What's your secret? Listening to other people's problems everyday, all day long, for years on end, has made an old man of me." The younger looking one replies, "Who listens?"

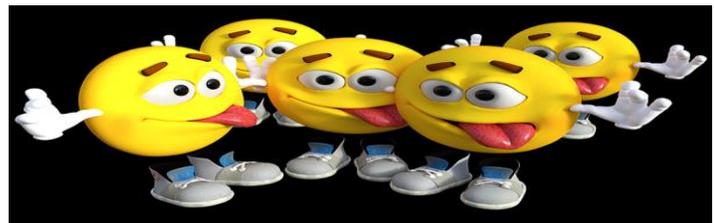
*One therapist to another after love making: "Darling, that was wonderful for you. How was it for me?"

Source: free-funnyjokes.com

*A few warning signs of good health:

Regular flare-ups of a supportive network of friends and family. Chronic positive expectations. Compulsion to contribute to society and a tendency to adapt to changing conditions. Repeated episodes of gratitude and generosity. Craving for peak experiences and a persistent sense of humor.

Source: bouldertherapist.com



Telehealth-Image is Reality

In last month's Newsletter, we wrote about the importance of furnishing your office to accommodate your patient's comfort both psychologically and physically. With mental telehealth gaining in popularity, it is also important to consider your environment when conducting a telehealth session. Noise levels should be kept to a minimum. Lighting should be comfortable but not overpowering. It should be sufficient to allow for eye contact with your patient. Surveys indicate that many patients who were skeptical about the level of intimacy they could achieve with their provider on a computer screen have been pleasantly surprised. Keep your background simple and uncluttered. Using plants and artwork will allow your patients to focus their attention elsewhere when necessary. Reminder: Your office is an extension of your personality. Your telehealth "office" should reinforce that image.

Mental Health Practice News & Notes

Meeting a Deductible-Clearing up the Confusion

When a family deductible is satisfied, it is not necessary for your patient to have met their individual deductible. This only applies when the family deductible has not been met. When obtaining benefits for our **Patient Information Profile Page**, we confirm deductible requirements for both the individual and the family.

How Long will CMS allow Telehealth?

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) proposed in the 2022 Physician Fee Schedule to extend telehealth flexibilities through 2023 instead of through the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency which is expected to run through this year. Once the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency occurs, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2022, ensures a 151-day extension period before many of the policies outlined in the COVID-19 public health emergency are set to expire, to allow for a transition period. Reminder: Medicare reimbursement for mental health telehealth services requires an in-person visit within 6 months of initial assessment and once every 12 months following. FYI, the PHE has been in place since January 27, 2020, and renewed throughout the pandemic. The latest HHS extension for the PHE is effective through October 13, 2022.

Maintaining a Profitable Practice

Providers often ask **Associated Billing Center** how they can improve their revenue cycle and grow their practice. The following suggestions are based on your personal preferences: Expand your telehealth volume. Advertise and market your practice using social media and print where appropriate, even a small box ad in a weekly newspaper can be a call to action. Build an online presence. Seventy-two percent of patients consult the internet when seeking a provider and sixty-two percent read reviews. Submit your practice and your specialties to online directories. Also, when visiting a doctor's office, resort to the old-fashioned activity of dropping a bunch of cards. We spoke with a therapist recently who educated her physician about her practice and now is consistently getting patient referrals. Renegotiate your payer contracts. Add a cancellation policy with a fee. Consider providing group wellness sessions. If you manage a group practice, diversify the skill sets of your providers. Think like an entrepreneur. Your financial success allows you to perform the work that you love. Helping Others.

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



>A recently released study at the 2022 Alzheimer's Association Conference, following ten-thousand people for up to ten years, concluded that eating ultra-processed foods for more than 20% of your caloric intake could lead to cognitive decline. People who ate the most ultra-processed foods had a 28% faster rate of global cognitive decline and a 25% faster rate of executive function decline compared with people who consumed the least amount of overly processed food. Research indicates the key problem with ultra-processed foods is that they are usually very high in sugar, salt and fat, all of which promote systemic inflammation, perhaps the most major threat to healthy aging in the body and brain. Research indicates that eating healthy can improve concentration and attention span. Heading for a BBQ, have a veggie dog. Maybe!



dreamstime.com

> Thousands of people in the United Kingdom recently tested a four-day work schedule with no cut to their pay to test worker productivity and the affect on their personal lives. With the advent of Covid-19, many workplaces converted to an hybrid work schedule. Throw into the mix low unemployment and increased worker leverage and the concept of a four-day work schedule is taking on more prominence. Many workers said they felt happier, healthier and increasingly more productive. The six-month pilot committed 3,300 workers across 70 companies to work 80% of their usual week in exchange for promising to maintain 100% of their productivity. Ok,now to the flip side. Nearly 50% of companies surveyed by Microsoft say they plan on asking their employees to return to the office full-time next year. They maintain that workplace culture, productivity and collaboration suffer when employees work remotely. The jury is still out on what the future holds.



>NPR reports that a man disguised as an old woman in a wheelchair threw a piece of cake at the Mona Lisa in Paris. Security guards at the Louvre Museum escorted the man away as he spoke in French about the planet. "Think of the Earth! There are people who are destroying the Earth! Think about it. Artists tell you: think of the Earth. That's why I did this." he is quoted as saying. A video shows someone cleaning off the cake from the glass protecting the artwork. The 36 year old was detained and sent to a psychiatric unit. The oil painting hangs in the Louvre's largest room. The glass was put up after the painting was damaged in an acid attack during the 1950's. The Mona Lisa was stolen in 1911 and recovered after an individual tried to sell the painting to an Italain art dealer.

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 & Vitally 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."

On Another Note:

"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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