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# Associated Billing Center's Newsletter

- Volume 77

- April 2023

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

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

## A Message From Mona



### Meet & Greet

I look forward to meeting many of you at the upcoming **National Association of Social Workers** Spring Conference in Atlantic City, April 30th & May 1st. Please stop by and visit us at **Booth 204**. We have some terrific giveaways. **Associated Billing Center** also affiliates with the American Psychological Association, the American Psychiatric Association and the Professional Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner Organization.

### Communication is the Key

Market research indicates that the number one reason that a client disassociates with a billing service is poor communication. **Associated Billing Center** places a huge emphasis in this area. By maintaining open and transparent communication with our clients, we establish ourselves as a reliable and trustworthy partner who is committed to collaboratively working with your practice to achieve your goals. I am always available for conversation via telephone, zoom or an in-office meeting when possible.

### Making the Investment

**Associated Billing Center** is currently investing in new technology that will help us maintain the level of service you have come to expect from us. This upgrade will not require your practice to make any changes in the way you do business with us and will not require any software investment from your practice.



Mona

## Education Box-You Need to Know



### News & Notes

- To avoid any delays in claims processing, it is important that ANY change to your practice information (NPI, Tax ID, Address) needs to be given to your Account Rep ASAP.
- **Associated Billing Center** has noticed that 1099's coming from insurance companies include the amounts paid by virtual credit card (which makes sense). However, credit card companies also report this income to the IRS. Therefore, you should verify that you are not being double taxed for these payments.
- If your patient transitions to COBRA, ask if they have been given a new ID card or if the information remains the same. We suggest that new benefits be obtained.
- Renegotiate your rate: Providers do have the option to request an allowance increase with insurance. Ask us for advice.
- Reminder: Our Patient Information Profile Page will inform you & your patient if a carve out exists when determining network status.
- For Credentialing we work closely with Kellie Goodroe/CEO, Affordable Physician Services. 765-692-0887.  
[Kgoodroe@affordablephysicianservices.com](mailto:Kgoodroe@affordablephysicianservices.com).  
Inform Kellie that you are a client of ours. Any questions give us a call. We are here to help!

**Associated Billing Center, LLC** utilizes the services of Liles/Parker, an attorney health care regulatory firm representing mental health providers nationwide seeking counsel in practice matters. Web: [lilesparker.com](http://lilesparker.com) speak with Robert Liles.



## Stay In the Know-Your Mental Health Practice



### *Decision Time: Do I Want to Expand into a Group Practice*

Expanding a mental health practice to a group practice can offer several benefits for both the practitioners and the clients. Here are some potential advantages of expanding to a group practice:

- >Collaboration and consultation: Mental health professionals in a group practice can collaborate and consult with each other on difficult cases which can lead to better outcomes for clients.
- >Diverse expertise: By bringing together mental health professionals with different specialties and backgrounds, a group practice can offer a wider range of services to clients.

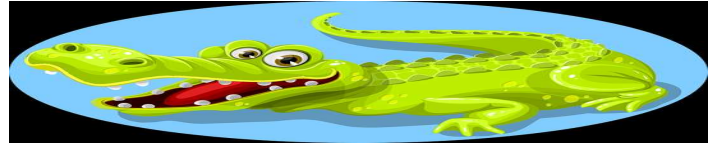
### *Individual Practices Have Their Benefits*

There are also some potential challenges to consider when expanding to a group practice, such as managing group dynamics, ensuring consistent quality of care across practitioners, and addressing potential conflicts of interest. It's important to carefully consider these factors before making the decision to expand to a group practice. **Associated Billing Center** engages in consultation frequently with our clients concerning the above subject matter.

### *Take Note:*

The impact of the pandemic on mental health continues. Revenue in the Mental Health market is projected to reach \$20 billion in 2023. More than 150-million people live in designated mental health professional shortage areas.

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



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

\*Why is crushing pop cans taxing on one's mental health? Because it's soda pressing.

Source: upjoke.com

\*A man walked into a therapist's office looking very depressed. "You've got to help me. I can't go on like this." "What's the problem", the therapist asks. "Well, I'm 35 years old and I still have no luck with the ladies. No matter how hard I try, I just seem to scare them away." The therapist responds, "My friend, that is not a serious problem. You just need to work on your self-esteem. Each morning I want you to wake-up and run to the bathroom mirror. Tell yourself that you are a good person, a fun person and an attractive person. But, say it with real conviction. Within a week you'll have women buzzing all around you." The man seemed content with this advice and walked out of the office a bit excited. Three weeks later he returned with the same downtrodden expression on his face. "Did my advice not work?", asked the therapist. "It worked alright. For the past several weeks I've enjoyed some of the best moments in my life with the most fabulous looking women." "So, what's your problem?" "I don't have a problem," the man replied. "My wife does." Source: feefunnyjokes.com



## *Addressing Mental Health Practice Revenue Leakage*

Revenue Leakage refers to the loss of revenue from your practice which can be corrected by detecting the source of the leak. There are four primary areas that will help you reduce Revenue Leak in your practice. 1. Confirming Patient Benefits-practices run the risk of providing services that are either not covered or failing to realize that there are copays and deductibles involved. Verifying patient benefits is important especially to avoid non-payment given the abundance of carve-outs in mental health. 2. Prior Authorizations-investigating whether certain testing or service codes need an auth on file. 3. Accounts Receivables-Engaging a reputable billing service (**Associated Billing Center**) to balance bill patients in a timely fashion is a prerequisite to a healthy bottom line. Make an earnest attempt to collect copays and deductibles at time of service. Allowing patients to leave with the expectation that they will be billed usually results in a 20-23 percent reduction in collections. 4. Review your credentialing to ensure its accuracy.

# Mental Health Practice News & Notes

## **\*MANAGING A PROFITABLE MENTAL HEALTH PRACTICE**

By implementing these strategies and staying focused on providing high-quality care, you can build a profitable and sustainable mental health practice.

1. Develop a strong business plan: A business plan is essential for any successful practice. It should outline your goals, target market, services offered and financial projections.
2. Set competitive fees: Do some research to determine what other mental health practitioners in your area charge for similar services. Be mindful of your own expenses when setting prices, but don't undervalue your services.
3. Maximize your reimbursement rates: Make sure you're billing for all eligible services. **Associated Billing Center** stays abreast of changes in insurance policies that could affect reimbursement rates.
4. Build a strong referral network: Establish relationships with other healthcare providers in your area, such as primary care physicians, psychiatrists and other mental health practitioners. They can refer patients to you and vice versa.
5. Work with a well-organized, responsive billing service that specializes in mental health. This is important. Mental Health billing is unique in many ways. A well-qualified mental health billing service (Suggestion: **Associated Billing Center**) can realistically increase revenue by 23 to 34 percent and is many times more cost-effective than in-house billing.
6. Market your practice effectively: Develop a strong online presence, participate in community events, and consider offering free workshops or seminars to showcase your expertise and attract new clients.
7. We speak frequently in this Newsletter about your therapy being your commodity. Prioritize client satisfaction: Ultimately, the success of your practice will depend on your ability to provide high-quality care and build strong relationships with your clients. Make sure you prioritize client satisfaction and always look for feedback from your patients. Remember: Your Practice is Your Business.

## **\*Telehealth Update**

The Administration's plan is to end the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE) on May 11, 2023. The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 extended many of the telehealth flexibilities authorized during the COVID-19 public health emergency through December 31, 2024. After the public health emergency ends, mental telehealth is likely to continue to play an important role in mental health care delivery. Many providers have expressed an interest in keeping this venue available as an option for their patients. Cost Sharing: Patients with commercial policies will be subject to each individual insurers stated policy concerning the waving of cost sharing post the PHE. Ending on May 11<sup>th</sup>-Non-HIPAA compliant platforms that were allowed under the PHE will no longer be allowed. Concerning Medicare patients, the in-person visit requirements before a patient may be eligible for tele-behavioral health care services is delayed through December 31, 2024.

## **\*Take Note**

**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



✚ The FBI is issuing a warning to consumers about their use of free public charging stations. The agency maintains that thieves have managed to hijack public chargers that can infect devices with malware, or software that can give access to your phone, computer, or tablet. The FBI's field office in Denver says its message is meant to be an advisory. The Federal Communications Commission has also warned about "juice jacking", as the malware loading scheme is known, since 2021. The agency further warns that consumer devices with compromised USB cables can be hijacked through software that can then siphon off usernames and passwords. Best advice: Use your own charging cable. Unscrupulous individuals may have left corrupted cables plugged in hoping you will use them instead.



✚ Most of us head to a restaurant for an enjoyable relaxing dinner engaging with a "human" server who enhances that experience. In fact, for many people, the ambiance is just as important as the food. Many of us lead somewhat stressful lives and an evening out with friends, family or your significant other is just "What the doctor ordered." Introducing: The Robo Server. A little robot history: Owned by Shayne Hayashi, the Two Panda Deli in Pasadena, California became the first restaurant to "employ" robot waiting staff when it opened in 1983. The fast-food outlet used robots – named Tanbo R-1 and Tanbo R-2 – to bring Chinese food to its customers. Redwood City, California-based Bear Robotics introduced its Servi robot in 2021 and expects to have 10,000 deployed by the end of this year in 44 U.S. states and overseas. Shenzhen, China-based Pudu Robotics, which was founded in 2016, has deployed more than 56,000 robots worldwide. An informal survey of our team at Associated Billing Center finds that it's unanimous -- Everyone here wants to interact with real, live human beings.

✚ Krispy Kreme finds itself in somewhat of a sticky situation. In many U.S. locations the doughnut chain provides free doughnuts to students who receive an A on their report card. In fact, one doughnut for every A in some locations. Several critics are charging that Krispy Kreme is diminishing the self-worth of other students who are earnestly attempting to secure an A grade. Another issue, according to one employee, is that store owners are not allowed to ask you if you are currently in school. "So, if you show us a report card of any kind with an A on it we have to give you a doughnut". (We have not confirmed this with Krispy Kreme). Also, parents with overweight children are attempting to persuade the company to utilize another form of incentive. Again, some consider the idea a sticky situation.



## ***Additional Newsletter Note***

### Update on the telehealth flexibilities during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency

As previously stated, the Administration's plan is to end the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE) on May 11, 2023. The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 extended many of the telehealth flexibilities authorized during the COVID-19 public health emergency through December 31, 2024.

More information about coronavirus waivers and flexibilities is available on the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) website.


### ***Permanent Medicare Changes Post the PHE***


- \* Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) can serve as a distant site provider for behavioral/mental telehealth services.
- \* Medicare patients can receive telehealth services for behavioral/mental health care exit disclaimer icon in their home.
- \* There are no geographic restrictions for originating site (must be in the same state or licensed in the originating state) for behavioral/mental telehealth services.
- \* Behavioral/mental telehealth services can be delivered using audio-only communication platforms.
- \* Rural hospital emergency departments are accepted as an originating site for mental telehealth therapy.


Source: [TELEHEALTH.HHS.GOV](https://www.hhs.gov/telehealth)

**Associated Billing Center, LLC**  
**Exclusively Serving Mental Health Professionals**

**Please check out our website: [mentalhealthbillers.com](https://mentalhealthbillers.com) for our News & Blog updates.**

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***Please Refer us to a Colleague. It is always appreciated. "Word of Mouth" referrals are of paramount importance to the success and growth of a service sector business. Thank You!***





**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.

***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."**

***MORE ABOUT US-Associated Billing Center, LLC***

**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 our 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.**

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

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