



Associated Billing Center's

Newsletter

Volume 81

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

Web: mentalhealthbillers.com

A Message From Mona



I sincerely hope that your summer was enjoyable and that you found the time to enjoy your family, friends and nature.

This summer we completed our technology update which translates to improved efficiency and an enhanced client experience. **Associated Billing Center** technology investments strengthens data security and ensures that your sensitive patient information is protected. This update also ensures that we are in compliance with Mental Health billing regulations and HIPAA requirements. These upgrades will further streamline the billing process from receipt of patient data to the submission of claims. Our technology update does not require you to invest in any software update.

On Another Note:

Associated Billing Center, LLC encourages and actively seeks client feedback. This helps us to evaluate our job performance and helps to ensure that we are providing you with the service you have come to expect from us. Also, we strongly encourage your topic suggestions for future editions of this Newsletter.



Mona

Education Box-You Need To Know



News & Notes

▪**Take Note:**

If you are an opt out Medicare provider, you cannot see patients in managed care plans. Check your contracts for each insurance carefully. Call us with any questions.

▪Timely filing for out of network Aetna providers has changed from 27 months to 12 months.

▪If you're contemplating an office move, it is necessary to update the insurance companies, CAQH and the NPI Registry. If you are moving out of state, you need to be licensed in the state where you will be located. In addition, you also need to be credentialed with insurance companies in that state. Any questions please give us a call. That is why we are here!

▪**Reminder:**

▪CPT Code 90785 is utilized to describe interactive complexity during therapy sessions with patients. This code is used to indicate that a patient's condition requires additional time and expertise from the mental health professional providing treatment. This additional time might be needed to address communication difficulties, complex behavioral or emotional issues, or other challenges that make treatment more complicated.

▪For Credentialing, we work closely with Kellie Goodroe/CEO, Affordable Physician Services. Kgoodroe@affordablephysicianservices.com. Inform Kellie that you are a client of ours.

Interstate Counseling Compact

The American Counseling Association reports that, for the past four years, ACA has been working with the National Center for Interstate Compacts to create and operationalize a compact for counselors—and now the Counseling Compact is moving toward becoming operational. Twenty-Eight states have now passed the Compact legislation and have joined the Commission, which will likely start granting privileges to practices in other Compact states by the end of 2023. The Compact will significantly change the way counselors can practice and provide continuity of care and the ability to reach underserved populations.

How Did You Find Me?

If you are not asking new patients how they found you, you're missing a great opportunity to grow your practice. Focus your marketing dollars in areas that will give you the greatest ROI (Return on Investment).

Reminder:

Florida Bans Offshore Health Record Storage

Mental Health Providers may no longer store electronic health records offshore or rely on third party vendors who operate offshore and have access to patient data maintained in the United States. Also, several lawmakers are reviewing and advocating for legislation that would prevent billing companies from exporting patient data offshore for billing purposes without expressly disclosing the activity to their clients. It is being reported that other states are now moving toward replicating the Florida ban. **Associated Billing Center, LLC** never utilizes offshore services in any service capacity. All work is completed in our office in compliance with all HIPAA mandates.



***Warning:** This one is not that great.

A therapist returns from a ski conference in Aspen where all were permitted to ski for free. Her husband asked her how it went? She replied: "Fine, but I've never seen so many Freduian slips."

Source: workjoke.com

***Ever notice how many women's problems can be traced to the male gender? MENstruation, MENopause, MENTAL breakdown, HIMorrhoids.**

Source: jokes4all.net

***One therapist to another therapist: Who do you talk to when you're in need of therapy? The other responds: "Myself, I am well trained in offering advice."**

***There is a new Barbie doll on the market-Chain Smoker Barbie-with the Surgeon General's warning on the box.**

***Why did the therapist bring a ladder to the therapy session? Because they wanted to help their patient reach "new heights".**

Source: Anonymous



Effective Marketing: Expanding Your Practice

Looking for inexpensive ideas on how to expand your practice? Look no further than your surrounding neighborhoods: **Community Health Fairs:** Participate in local health fairs or community events where you can set up a booth, distribute information about your practice and offer brief presentations or screenings related to mental health. **Nonprofit Organizations:** Collaborate with nonprofit organizations focused on mental health, addiction recovery or related issues. Offer to volunteer, provide training or speak at their events to raise awareness and build connections. **Reach Out and Express Interest:** Contact the organizations you've identified and express your interest in speaking at one of their events or meetings. Approach local community centers, schools, businesses or religious organizations and offer to conduct seminars on mental health topics that are relevant to their audience. This can be an excellent way to educate the community while promoting your practice. **Social Media and Online Presence:** Maintain an active online presence, including a website and social media profiles, where you share educational content, articles and resources related to mental health

Mental Health Practice News & Notes

A Look Ahead: Mental Telehealth

Congress extended many telehealth flexibilities under the Medicare program that people relied on during the COVID-19 PHE through the end of 2024 via the Consolidated Appropriations Act. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, extended many Medicare telehealth flexibilities for people with Medicare through December 31, 2024, such as:

Access to telehealth services in any geographic area in the United States, rather than only in rural areas, allowing patients to stay in their homes for telehealth visits that Medicare pays for rather than requiring travel to a health care facility.

Coverage for mental telehealth will vary by private insurance plan after the end of the COVID-19 PHE. When it covers telehealth, private insurers may impose cost-sharing, prior authorization or other changes to the benefit structure. **Associated Billing Center's *Benefit Profile Page*** will provide you with the latest information concerning each patient's mental telehealth benefit and any changes applicable to those benefits post PHE. Any questions, give us a call. That's why we are here!

Interesting Stat:

According to the Business Group on Health, 77 percent of major employers say they are focused on improving access to mental health therapy through insurance contracts offered in the workplace.

No-show and Late Cancel Fees-Reminders

In most states, Medicaid prohibits therapists from billing for no-shows. What about Medicare you ask? Medicare does allow you to bill members for no-shows and late cancellations. Take Note: The amount the provider charges Medicare beneficiaries for missed appointments must be equivalent to the amount that they charge non-Medicare patients. Let's turn our attention to private insurance. Billing a commercial insurer for a missed appointment is considered fraudulent.

When accepting a new patient to your practice, you should clearly state in your welcome packet your office policy concerning no-shows and late cancellations. Clearly stated policies facilitate the reduction in missed appointments.

The Economics

Here is a sobering statistic: A mental health practice can face an annual revenue loss of \$30,000 or more with just four missed weekly appointments. True, different practices have different no-show rates. It can go as low as 10% for a dental practice and as high as 20% or more for mental health. Appointment reminders, on average, result in a ten percent reduction in missed sessions.

REMEMBER - YOUR PRACTICE IS YOUR BRAND. YOUR OFFICE IS YOUR BRAND. Building a strong brand in the mental health field is important as it helps therapists differentiate themselves and establish credibility. It allows potential clients to understand what they can expect from the therapist's services and whether they align with their specific needs and preferences.

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. We want to protect your practice from a code violation.

Stories You Simply Need to Know About



***Gender parity goes amok. Accounting firm Deloitte recently conveyed this message: Employed women pay \$15.4 billion more out of pocket for medical expenses despite purchasing identical health insurance plans in the workplace. The report, "Hiding in Plain Sight – The Health Care Gender Toll," revealed that, based on current benefit coverage, women's out-of-pocket costs are disproportionately higher than men's for every age from 19 to 64, even when excluding pregnancy-related services. Deloitte found that, while women experience 10% more in total healthcare expenses, their out-of-pocket expenditures were 18% higher. Some of this disparity can be contributed to the types of services women utilized. Deloitte maintains that the expenditure gap can be closed. The firm maintains that financial equity could be achieved if the employer contributes approximately \$133 per enrolled employee annually.**



***Electric vehicles that steer themselves. Ok, no breaking news on this. But what about an actual flying car? A California startup has received a special airworthiness certificate from the FAA. Alef is not the first aircraft of its kind to be granted an airworthiness certificate. Alef Automotive says that its vehicle/aircraft is unique. It is dubbed the "Model A" and is the first flying vehicle that is drivable on public roads and able to park like a normal car. The company expects to sell the vehicle for \$300,000 each with the first delivery projected for the end of 2025. It can carry one or two occupants with a road-range of about 200 miles and a flying-range of 110 miles.**

***A study conducted by researchers at the University of Queensland and Harvard Medical School finds that half the world's population will experience mental illness by the age of 75. Most common were mood disorders like depression and anxiety. Among women, depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder were the three most common mental health disorders reported. Men most commonly struggled with substance abuse, depression and anxiety. This Newsletter reports frequently on an impending shortage of mental health professionals. An estimated 122 million Americans, or about 37% of the U.S. population, live in areas with a mental health professional shortage. Three years after the pandemic began, 90% of U.S. adults said they thought the country was facing a mental health crisis, according to data from the Kaiser Family Foundation.**

Additional Newsletter Note:

Artificial Intelligence/Mental Health Care

Artificial intelligence (AI) has the potential to make significant contributions to mental health care in various ways while it's essential to recognize that AI should complement, not replace, human clinicians and therapists. **Early Detection and Diagnosis:** AI algorithms can analyze vast amounts of data, including text, audio and sensor data, to identify early signs of mental health issues. **Data-driven Insights:** AI can help mental health professionals gain insights from large datasets, leading to a better understanding of the prevalence of mental health conditions, effective treatment methods and population-level trends. **Reducing Stigma:** AI-driven mental health tools can offer a degree of anonymity, which may encourage individuals who might otherwise hesitate to seek help due to social stigma.


However, it's important to consider the ethical implications of AI in mental health care, including issues related to privacy, bias in algorithms and the need for human oversight. Additionally, AI tools should always be used in conjunction with human clinicians who can provide personalized care and make important decisions.

As the field of AI in mental health care continues to evolve, it is crucial to maintain a balance between harnessing the technology's capabilities and ensuring the well-being and autonomy of individuals seeking mental health support. When it comes to mental health therapy, the human element is of paramount importance.


Associated Billing Center, LLC

Exclusively Serving Mental Health Professionals

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:



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!

Take Note:

Associated Billing Center, LLC utilizes the services of Liles/Parker, an attorney healthcare regulatory firm representing mental health providers nationwide seeking counsel in practice matters. Web: lilesparker.com
Robert Liles is your contact.



Associated Billing Center, LLC values client feedback. In fact, encouraging client feedback is one of the most critical areas of our operation. We take pride in the fact that our client retention rate is in the top percentile for our market sector. 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:

The mental health billing sector has become extremely competitive and saturated since the onset of the pandemic. Most of these entities are impersonal corporate type organizations interested in volume. Many of these behemoths strip away your ability to manage your own practice (solo or group) in what you perceive to be in your best interest. We are proud that **Associated Billing Center**-serving Mental Health Practices nationwide for more than a decade, will never be labeled as one of these impersonal "**behemoths**".

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 RCM (Revenue Cycle Management) while allowing you to do what you do best – take care of your patients.

**Thanks for being part of our Associated Billing Center, LLC family.
We Never Take Your Business for Granted. Never.**

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