

Associated Billing Center's
Newsletter

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

Web: mentalhealthbillers.com

A Message From Mona



Here is an incredible fact. In about eight weeks, we will be welcoming in the New Year. Yes, eight weeks. Yes, your Associated Billing Center family is preparing with due diligence. Some of us are looking forward to snow and skiing while others are hoping for ZERO precipitation this winter. Any guess as to my comfort zone here?

As we approach the New Year, we are working diligently to report on updates in the areas of Mental Telehealth, CPT and DX codes. In addition, we are closely following information regarding any changes in claims submissions requirements. It is **Associated Billing Center's** intention to stay ahead of the "curve" in these areas so claims processing will not be disrupted.

Associated Billing Center is always concerned about your practice and our office staying in compliance with HIPAA. Reminder: Patient information should never be sent via text message. We will only respond via encrypted email. We want to protect your practice from a code violation.

If you require an expedited **Associated Billing Center** benefit check, please advise your account manager of the need. We call for benefits to ensure that they are correct rather than copy and pasting off a website.



Mona

Education Box-You Need To Know



News & Notes

- Take Note: The Medicare Deductible for 2024 will be \$240. This represents a \$14 increase for your patients from 2023.
- If your tax ID, NPI or location changes please keep us informed so we can avoid delays in claims processing.
- Please ask your patients if they have been notified of any impending insurance changes for the upcoming New Year.
- If you are supervising a clinician for clinical hours, the clinician must be under the same credentials as you. Also, some insurances require a specific modifier. We need to know if you are supervising in order to submit claims correctly. The dates of service need to be on a sheet with the clinician's name and your name as supervisor. We also need the clinician's information for our records. If you have questions or concerns, we're always here for you.
- Beginning in 2024, LPC (Licensed Professional Counselors) and LMFT (Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists) will be able to bill for Medicare clients. If this is something you want to do, we suggest starting the credentialing process now so you'll be good to go in the New Year.
- For Credentialing, we work closely with Kellie Goodroe/CEO, Affordable Physician Services. Kgoodroe@affordablephysicianservices.com. Inform Kellie that you are a client of ours.

Stay In the Know-Your Mental Health Practice

J.D. Power and Your Mental Health Practice

You're a Mental Health professional. No, you are not selling a car or a durable product. You're offering a service that profoundly affects someone's quality of life and is of the utmost importance. Equally important is your reputation in the marketplace. Yes, even Mental Health Professionals participate in a marketplace. Ensuring patient satisfaction in your Mental Health practice is crucial for maintaining a positive reputation and client retention.

Suggested Strategies:

>Manage Wait Times:

Minimize wait times for appointments. Communicate delays and reschedule promptly if necessary.

>Feedback and Evaluation:

Regularly collect feedback from patients through surveys or interviews. Use feedback to improve services and address concerns. Several therapists have told us they mail "Therapy Evaluation Forms" to their patients without patient identifiers attached. Patients are encouraged to return these without concern that their identity will be revealed.

>Billing Transparency:

Be transparent about billing and financial matters. Provide clear explanations of costs, payment options and missed appointment fees. Engage with a mental health billing service (**A**ssociated **B**illing **C**enter, LLC) that encourages your patients to call and speak with them about billing issues. We take enormous pride in the diplomacy we exercise when speaking to your patients. We understand that an effective Mental Health billing service is an extension of your practice and your personality.

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



*Apparently people who exercise have been shown to recover better and be less at risk from mental health issues. So who said you can't run away from your problems?

*You are forewarned-this one is weak: Recent research shows that horses tend to have much better mental health than other farm animals due to their *stable* environment

* Divorce is a psychological process. One is psycho, the other is logical.

* I have a weird mental health issue where I have to get out and pull my car every time I go through a tunnel. It's car-pull tunnel syndrome.

*Another semi weak one: My friend is a farmer with a huge ego problem. All I did was ask where he was and he brags that he's out standing in his field.

Source: upjoke.com

* Every time you talk to your spouse, you should remember that, "This conversation will be recorded for training and quality purposes."

Source: Anonymous



Optimizing Revenue in a Mental Health Practice

Optimizing profits in a mental health practice requires a delicate balance between providing quality patient care and running a financially sustainable business. Here are some strategies to help you achieve this balance: Consider offering a range of services, such as individual therapy, group therapy, workshops or online counseling. Diversifying your services can increase your revenue.

Implement a no-show policy and consider using appointment reminders via text, email or phone calls to reduce missed appointments. Ensure that your practice complies with all relevant laws and ethical guidelines. Legal issues can be costly and damaging to your reputation. Build relationships with other healthcare professionals who can refer patients to your practice. This can help maintain a steady flow of clients.

Mental Health Practice News & Notes

PSYPACT-You Have Questions-We Have Answers

PSYPACT is an interstate compact designed to allow licensed psychologists to practice telepsychology across state boundaries legally and ethically without necessitating that an individual become licensed in every state to practice.

To practice temporarily under the authority of PSYPACT, you will need to apply for and obtain an Interjurisdictional Practice Certificate (IPC) from the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards (ASPPB) and apply for and obtain a Temporary Authorization to Practice (TAP) from the PSYPACT Commission.

Does my physical location matter while I am providing telepsychology services under the authority of PSYPACT? At this time, PSYPACT requires that a psychologist be physically located in their declared Home State of licensure while providing telepsychology services. For the practice of telepsychology under PSYPACT, Home State is the PSYPACT state where you are licensed to practice and physically located when telepsychology services are delivered. Does PSYPACT apply to other mental health professions (i.e. counseling, marriage and family therapy, etc.) PSYPACT only applies to licensed psychologists. For additional information on whether your state is a PSYPACT participant, go to their website: psypact.org.

Important Reminder-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. 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.

HIPAA Notes for Your Mental Health Practice

A Mental Health professional must protect the information of the person they're working with, but it's always permitted for family members and loved ones to share information about a person's mental health with the provider. Also, HIPAA allows therapists to decide when sharing information about the patient is in that person's best interest. In addition, your personal reflections and psychotherapy notes, when kept separately from the patient's record, can for the most part remain private. HIPAA permits providers to:

- Consider the patient's capacity to agree or object to the sharing of their information.
- Involve a patient's family members, friends or others in dealing with patient failures to adhere to medication or other therapy.
- Listen to family members about their loved ones receiving mental health treatment.
- Communicate with family members, law enforcement or others when the patient presents a serious and imminent threat of harm to self or others.
- The provider may ask the patient's permission to share relevant information with family members or others, may tell the patient he or she plans to discuss the information and give them an opportunity to agree or object
- Where a patient is not present or is incapacitated, a health care provider may share the patient's information with family, friends or others involved in the patient's care or payment for care, as long as the health care provider determines, based on professional judgment, that doing so is in the best interests of the patient.

Stories You Simply Need to Know About



***What-are you kidding me? You're charging me for this service in a diner? A Pennsylvania couple was in a diner recently when they both ordered sandwiches that were delivered to the table uncut. That's right, not cut in half. When they requested the sandwich to be taken back and cut in half, they were informed there was (stabilize yourself) an upcharge for this. Once upon a time an upcharge applied to "French Onion Soup" with your meal. The owner apologized profusely to the couple stating that he needed to make up increased costs somewhere.**



***We are all aware of the dangers associated with cigarette smoking. An estimated 28.3 million adults in the United States currently smoke cigarettes. That calculates to nearly 11.5 percent. What you might not be aware of is that most smokers in this country reside in 12 states in the South and Midwest. Truth Initiative, a nonprofit focused on ending tobacco use, has dubbed that group of states "Tobacco Nation," a region that spans Alabama, Arkansas, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee and West Virginia. These states comprise about 21 percent of the U.S. population but 28% of smokers in the country. An average smoker in "Tobacco Nation" goes through about 53 packs in one year, compared with an average of 29 packs in the rest of the U.S.**

***F---You. Wait just a moment! That is inappropriate language for this Newsletter. Not according to Timothy Jay, professor emeritus of Psychology at Massachusetts College. Jay has studied swearing for 40 years. He says swearing may be a sign of verbal superiority. He says well-educated people with plenty of words at their disposal were better at coming up with curse words than those who were less verbally fluent. "Having the strategies to know where and when it's appropriate to swear and when it's not," Jay said, "is a social cognitive skill that exemplifies a higher level of intuitive behavior."**


Additional Newsletter Notes-The Future of the Profession


- >As of October 2023, more than 160 million Americans live in areas with mental health professional shortages, with over 8,000 more professionals needed to ensure an adequate supply.
- >Substance abuse, behavioral disorder and mental health counselor jobs are expected to grow 23% from 2020 to 2030, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- >There is an expanding need for counseling professionals who can provide mental health and substance abuse services to veterans.
- >More employers are acknowledging the need to recognize mental health issues and provide resources to address them.
- >According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 1 in 4 people worldwide will experience some form of mental illness at some point in their lives. Among the leading contributing factors: Personal & Family issues, the post pandemic scenario and political chaos.
- >The mental health market is highly fragmented and varies significantly from region to region. North America is currently the largest market for mental health services, with an estimated value of over US\$ 154.8 billion in 2022. Europe is the second-largest market, followed by the Asia-Pacific region.
- >According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), approximately 91% of adults in the United States mental health market have health insurance which gives them access to mental health services.
- >A study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association found that the number of adults seeking treatment for mental health issues increased by 21% between 2015 and 2022 in the United States.


Associated Billing Center is here to support your practice to ensure that it partakes in the expected existential growth in the profession. We are always available for practice consultation in video or audio meetings on platforms like Zoom or Microsoft Teams. And, of course, in office meetings are always available.

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

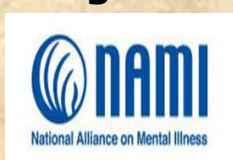
Please check out our website: mentalhealthbillers.com for our News & Blog updates.

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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!



Associated Billing Center, LLC values client feedback. 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.

An Important 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 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.

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