

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

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

### A Message from Mona



Associated Billing Center, LLC Jamesburg, NJ  
*Merry Christmas*

*Happy Hanukkah*

*Celebrating Kwanzaa*

This past year has been a period of significant growth for our company and we owe much of this success to your support. As we continue to evolve, we remain committed to meeting and exceeding your expectations. 2024 has brought significant changes to mental health coverage from insurance companies. We are staying abreast of these developments to ensure that your claims are processed as efficiently and swiftly as you've come to expect from us.

We're thrilled to welcome Carly to our Associated Billing Center team. With her wealth of experience and dedication, Carly will play a vital role in supporting our efforts to provide exceptional service to our clients.



Mona

### Education Box-You Need to Know



#### News & Notes

- Ask your clients for a copy (both sides) of their 2025 insurance card.
- The Medicare Part B deductible for 2025 is \$257, up from \$240 in 2024.

#### Medicare Rule Change

- In-person visits are mandated for Medicare in 2025. Telehealth Medicare Providers: For new clients after 1/1/25, there must be an in-person visit at least once in the 6 months prior to the first telehealth visit. All clients must have at least one in-person visit every 12 months. The in-person requirement had been delayed since the Covid pandemic.
- Associated Billing Center is moving to a new patient information data base to further improve our efficiency in submitting claims. Please Note: This updated file requires that you include a patient phone number when submitting new patient information. Associated Billing Center protects patient data with firewalls, encryption and access controls.
- For Credentialing, we work closely with Kellie Goodroe/CEO, Affordable Physician Services. [Kgoodroe@affordablephysicianservices.com](mailto:Kgoodroe@affordablephysicianservices.com).

## Unpaid Patient Balances

Collecting unpaid balances from mental health patients can be challenging, but here are some strategies that may help:

- > Establish clear payment policies upfront: Discuss payment expectations, including fees, copays and insurance coverage during the initial intake process.
- > Associated Billing Center can provide detailed invoices to your patients.
- > Follow up promptly: If a payment is missed, reach out to the patient promptly to inquire about the reason for the delay.
- > When necessary, offer flexible payment plans: Consider offering payment plans to help patients manage their financial obligations.

Unpaid patient balances can significantly impact the financial health of a mental health practice. Here's why:

- > Reduced Revenue: Unpaid bills directly translate to lost revenue. This can strain the practice's ability to cover operating costs like rent, salaries and supplies. Even if a practice is profitable overall, outstanding balances can create cash flow issues.
- > Revenue Leakage: When a practice doesn't receive payment for services, it's called revenue leakage. This can happen when bills are sent after the service is provided or when a practice doesn't follow up on outstanding balances. Attempting to collect copays prior to each session is an important tool in maintaining the practice's financial integrity.

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



\* Patient to Therapist: "I want this to be the happiest holiday of my life." Therapist to Patient : "How do you plan on achieving this goal?" Patient to Therapist: "By staying in therapy with you for 24 hours straight."

Source: Anonymous

\* Why is psychoanalysis generally a lot quicker for a man then for a woman? Because when it's time to go back to childhood, a man is already there. (Yes, in most quarters this is still considered PC).

Source: free-funny-jokes.com

\* A husband says to his wife, a mental health therapist, "There is something lacking in our communication with each other." The wife replies, "Make an appointment with me and we will discuss it."

\* Therapist to Patient: "Have a Happy New Year." Patient to Therapist: "If I thought that was possible I wouldn't be here."

Source: Anonymous



## Should I Hire Additional Providers for my Practice

Adding more mental health providers to your practice can be a great step toward growth, but it's essential to consider several factors to ensure it's the right move. Here are some aspects to evaluate: Demand for Services: Are you consistently receiving more client inquiries than your current team can handle? Specialization Needs: Could additional providers help fill gaps in specialties or services you don't currently offer e.g., child therapy, couples counseling, trauma-focused therapy? Would their expertise complement your practice's mission and enhance client outcomes? Cultural Fit: Would adding new team members align with your practice's values and culture? Financial Readiness: Can your practice sustain the costs of hiring, onboarding and retaining new providers? Do you have the infrastructure e.g., office space, scheduling systems, billing support to accommodate growth? Do Your Research.

## Mental Health Practice News & Notes



Recent legislation authorized an extension of many of the Medicare telehealth flexibilities. This includes:

- ✔ Waiving geographic and originating site requirements through March 31, 2025.
- ✔ Expanding practitioners eligible to furnish telehealth services through March 31, 2025.
- ✔ Allowing Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) to serve as distant site providers through March 31, 2025. For 2025 and 2026, FQHCs and RHCs will be paid for telehealth services under the FQHC prospective payment system or the RHC all-inclusive rates, respectively.
- ✔ Delaying the in-person requirements for tele-mental health services through April 1, 2025.
- ✔ Allowing audio-only telehealth through March 31, 2025.

Please call with any Mental Telehealth Questions. *We Are Here to Help.*

### Take Note:

Several lawmakers are encouraging their colleagues for longer, if not permanent, extensions to Mental Telehealth. If you support this concept, we encourage you to contact your Congressional delegation to stimulate further thought on the issue.

### \* Associated Billing Center/Keeping Your Practice HIPAA Compliant \*

To maintain HIPAA compliancy, Associated Billing Center, LLC performs an Exclusion Screening Report each month. Please inform us of any new hires or dismissals so our records are accurate. If you have any questions, please give us a call.

### \* Obtaining Pre-Authorization for Psych Testing \*

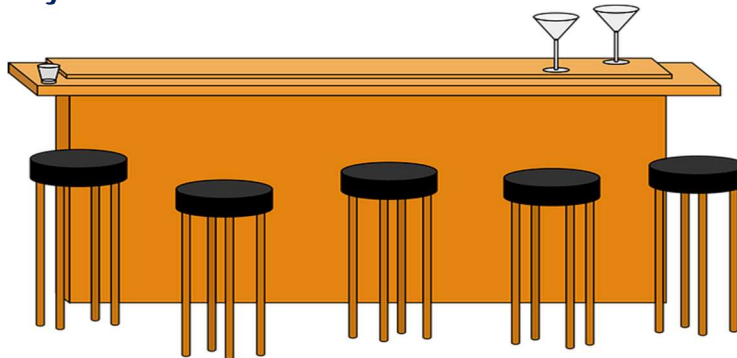
Psych testing often requires pre-authorization. Some insurers will only cover testing for specific diagnoses or special circumstances. The provider must submit a request detailing the need for the testing to ensure coverage and avoid potential claim denials. The pre-authorization request usually involves detailed information about the patient's symptoms, clinical presentation, why other assessments aren't sufficient and the specific tests intended to be administered.



# STORIES YOU SIMPLY NEED TO KNOW ABOUT



- What is the most overdue library book ever? The Guinness world record for the most overdue library book is held by one taken back to Sidney Sussex College in Cambridge, England, a whopping 288 years later. A Chicago resident, Chuck Hildebrandt, is not close to shattering that record. He “borrowed” the book *Baseball’s Zaniest Stars* in 1974 from a Detroit library while visiting the city. “When you’re moving with a bunch of books, you’re not examining every book. You throw them in a box and go,” said Hildebrandt, who has lived in many cities. “But five or six years ago, I was going through the bookshelf and there was a Dewey decimal library number on the book.” He decided to keep the book until 2024, figuring on the 50th anniversary the library might forgive his fine. His “figuring” was correct. Hildebrandt is now trying to raise \$4,564 for Reading is Fundamental. The amount roughly represents a 50-year overdue library fine.



- “Ladies Night” sounds like fun. Discounted drinks and meals at the local bar which tends to attract increasing numbers of men and women. Fun that is until someone filed a discrimination lawsuit against a local California tavern. The Unruh Civil Rights Action, a law that dates back to 1959, stipulates that businesses can’t discriminate against religion, race or *gender*. “A lot of these small mom-and-pop type bars honestly might not know about this law,” said Rebecca Nieman, professor of business law and ethics at the University of San Diego. “Which is why you see these lawsuits still happening with these extremely small proprietors.” The owner of the Lima Restaurant in Concord says he was forced to shutdown over expenses related to the discrimination lawsuit. Earlier this year in California, the minor-league baseball team, Fresno Grizzlies, was sued over a promotional event for women.



Biden Administration Finalizes Stronger Rules on Mental Health Coverage Parity: Health plans cannot use more restrictive prior authorization, other medical management techniques, or narrower networks to make it harder for people to access mental health and substance use disorder benefits than their medical benefits. Health plans also must use similar factors in setting out-of-network payment rates for mental health and substance use disorder providers as they do for medical providers.

### 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 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 two decades, will never be labeled as one of these impersonal “behemoths”.



Exclusively Serving Mental Health Professionals Since 2001

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](http://mentalhealthbillers.com) for our News & Blog updates.



*Several members of the **Associated Billing Center** team during a recent technology update meeting.*

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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.**

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**Associated  
Billing  
Center, LLC**

***More About Associated Billing Center, LLC***

**A**ssociated **B**illing **C**enter, 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.

## **ASSOCIATED BILLING CENTER, LLC CLIENT TESTIMONIALS**

**A personal testimonial is invaluable when evaluating a billing service's credentials and its promise to clients.**

>What I discovered at Associated Billing Center was so much more than “assistance”. I discovered a mental health billing service that was ready, willing and able to support me in my endeavors to establish a private practice after leaving a group setting. To say I could not have done it without them is an understatement! Thanks to Mona and her competent staff.

Bethann A. LCSW

>Finally. Finally. Finally. After searching the web for a dependable reputable mental health billing service, I actually discovered one that delivered on all of its promises during an introductory meeting. What I especially like is that when I call ABC, someone actually answers the phone. Mona and her staff are extremely accessible, knowledgeable and always helpful. Managing our group practice is now streamlined and much more efficient. It is a pleasure working with you.

Ellen W. Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner

## Actual Associated Billing Center Client Testimonials

>You guys are great. I really mean it. I believe I am like most other groups and individual practices in that dealing with insurance companies is the least favorite part of our job. Your company takes the burden off me and does it so well, invariably coming back with the problem resolved. In addition to this invaluable work that you do, every one of you is also pleasant to deal with and efficient with my billing. Finally, I appreciate how flexible you are. You were open to working with me to develop forms and procedures that suited my practice.

Andy R. PhD

>Mona, what can I say. I am breathing a lot easier these days. I truly think Associated Billing Center is reviving the definition of what true client service means. It is amazing that, whenever I call your company, a live person answers the phone, not a virtual assistant. You promised during our first meeting that my practice would experience increased revenues and that your staff would be there to support my group practice. You were right. I am no longer burdened with many of the administrative tasks I previously encountered. Thanks. I can, without reservation, recommend Associated Billing Center to individual and group practices.

They're great!

Mark S. LCSW