

**Associated Billing Center's
Newsletter****Volume 96****Mar 2025****Exclusively Serving Mental Health Practices
Building Our Reputation One Client at a Time****Web: mentalhealthbillers.com****A Message from Mona****Associated Billing Center, LLC-Jamesburg, NJ**

☎ Give us a call—we're here to support you! Several days ago, a provider called me and said they had a question but thought about not calling because they did not want to be perceived as a nuisance. I responded, "No, you're not a nuisance, that's why we're here." Providing readily available support to Mental Health professionals is crucial, especially in the complex world of mental health billing.

Our dedicated team is always just a phone call away. We prioritize accessibility, ensuring our providers receive prompt assistance. We understand the challenges of mental health billing and we're committed to supporting our providers every step of the way. Don't hesitate to call us with any questions or concerns.

On Another Note: March was National Social Work Month, an opportunity to celebrate the profession and highlight the essential work social workers do. At **Associated Billing Center**, we see ourselves as partners to mental health providers. We are invested in your success, because your success means better access to mental health care for those who need it.

*Mona***Education Box-You Need to Know****News & Notes****■ Pear Portal:**

It's an online platform used by certain insurance companies (Amerihealth, Independence, Americhoice) for providers to access patient information.

It likely consolidates information related to benefits, claims, eligibility, and other administrative tasks.

Provider Responsibility:

Mental health providers must personally register for Pear Portal.

They must grant permission within the portal for third-party access (**Associated Billing Center, LLC**). The third party can no longer directly enroll providers in Pear Portal. Insurance companies are directing inquiries (benefits, claims) to the portal, refusing to provide information over the phone without portal access. The shift to provider-managed portal access likely enhances HIPAA compliance and data security.

■ Reminder: If you are licensed in another state other than your home state, please inform us and provide us with a copy of that license.

■ For Credentialing, we work closely with Kellie Goodroe/CEO, Affordable Physician Services. **Kgoodroe@affordablephysicianservices.com**.



Building Blocks to a Successful Website

Building a website for your Mental Health practice is a crucial step in establishing your online presence and reaching potential clients.

Planning & Strategy: What do you want to achieve with your website? (e.g., attract new clients, provide resources, establish credibility).

Plan the pages you'll need (e.g., Home, About Me, Services, Contact, Blog/Resources). Determine the content for each page, focusing on clarity, empathy, and professionalism. Consider incorporating keywords related to your practice and services for SEO (Search Engine Optimization).

Branding: Choose a professional and calming color palette. Select a clean and readable font. Choose a professional and easy-to-remember domain name (e.g., yourname.com). Ensure the website is mobile-responsive (works well on all devices). Highlight your areas of expertise. Share your qualifications, experience and approach to therapy.

Website Development: Website builders (e.g., Squarespace, Wix, Webflow, Go Daddy, Site 123): All user-friendly, require no coding experience & offer templates and hosting.



THE WISDOM OF YOUTH

*Never give up because life gets harder as you get older. After preschool the road of life keeps getting bumpier and bumpier. Angela, age 11.

*Don't think life is easy because when you get older it is hard work. I used to think life was easy, now I have to do the dishes every other day. Nick, age 9.

Source: bouldertherapist.com

*What's a therapist's favorite type of music? Anything with good "emotional range."

*How many therapists does it take to change a lightbulb? One, but the lightbulb has to want to change.

*A Therapist to a Patient: "I'm sensing some resistance." Patient to Therapist: "No, I'm just trying to avoid your co-pay."

Source: anonymous



Crisis Billing Options

For Crisis Billing Options: 90839 First 60 minutes of psychotherapy for a crisis. 90840: Each additional 30 minutes (add-on code used with 90839). Your provider notes must specify that the session is a crisis session. Take Note: There is no longer a prolonged care code for use with psychotherapy services. Prolonged codes 99354 and 99355 were deleted in 2023 and the existing prolonged care CPT code 99417 for office visits may not be billed with Psychotherapy codes.

Aetna Change to Psychiatric Diagnostic Evaluation

This update applies to commercial members only. To align more closely with CMS, Aetna will pay psychiatric evaluation codes 90791 and 90792 only once every six months.

Note to Washington State providers: For commercial plans, your effective date for changes will be communicated to you following regulatory review.

Mental Health Practice News & Notes



Artificial Intelligence & The Mental Health Provider

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) is poised to reshape the landscape of mental health services, possibly influencing mental health professionals in multifaceted ways. Here's a breakdown of key impacts:

>Improved Diagnostic Accuracy and Early Detection:

AI algorithms can analyze vast datasets, including medical records, speech patterns and facial expressions, to identify subtle patterns that may indicate mental health conditions. This can lead to earlier and more accurate diagnoses, enabling timely interventions.

>Personalized Treatment and Monitoring:

AI-powered wearable devices and apps can track symptoms and provide real-time feedback to both patients and clinicians. AI can help to analyze session information and find patterns that the human eye may miss. This will give mental health professionals more data to base treatment plans on. AI-powered assessments can provide preliminary insights before a session, allowing therapists to tailor their approach.

>Mood Tracking & Journaling:

AI-powered apps can analyze mood patterns based on client inputs and provide insights.

>Administrative Efficiency:

Automated Scheduling & Reminders: Reducing no-shows with AI-driven scheduling tools.

>Ethical Considerations & Challenges:

Confidentiality & Data Security: Ensuring AI tools comply with HIPAA and other privacy regulations. **Maintaining Human Connection:** AI should enhance, not replace, the therapist-client relationship. While AI can augment human capabilities, it cannot replace the empathy, compassion and therapeutic alliance that are essential for effective mental health care. Also, AI algorithms can perpetuate existing biases if they are trained on biased data, leading to disparities in care.

It's Personal:

To what extent, if any, do you integrate AI into your mental health practice is an extremely personal decision. In essence, AI has the potential to revolutionize mental health care by enhancing efficiency, improving diagnostic accuracy and increasing access to services. However, it's essential to address the ethical and practical challenges to ensure that AI is used responsibly and effectively to improve patient outcomes.



NASW NJ Reports the Following: Social Work Licensure Compact Bill Passes Senate & Assembly: Governor Signs

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee recently met in Trenton, NJ at the State House Annex to consider the Social Work Licensure Compact Bill. The National Association of Social Workers testified in support of the legislation. The bill passed in both the State Assembly and State Senate with Governor Phil Murphy signing the legislation into law thereby entering NJ into the compact. As of March 31, 2025, the Counseling Compact, a licensure compact for mental health professionals, includes 37 states and the District of Columbia, with the Counseling Compact Commission hoping to start granting privileges to practices in other states by the fall 2025. States enrolled in the Counseling Compact include: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming, and District of Columbia.

*****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”.

STORIES YOU SIMPLY NEED TO KNOW ABOUT



➤ Add another to the list because according to the Loch Ness Centre, the first possible 2025 sighting of the lake beast was reported earlier this month. “A witness observed what appeared to be a large, dark mass beneath the calm, still waters of the loch,” reads a post about the sighting on the center’s website. The center’s General Manager, Nagina Ishaq, said: “We’ve had numerous observations over the years, but this recent sighting has been particularly captivating.” Photos showing a “black mass” slithering underneath the chilly waters of the famous lake were handed over to the Loch Ness Centre in Inverness by a witness who spotted the spooky shape and snapped a picture as evidence. *Spoiler Alert:* Kat Bruce, manager of a research lab near the Scotland lake claimed that the so-called creature was more likely a “very big eel” — at least according to testing done on the infamous body of water.

➤ Man Conceals Live Turtle in Pants at New Jersey Airport:

TSA agents at a New Jersey airport discovered a man attempting to smuggle a live turtle concealed in his pants during a routine pat-down. The animal was wrapped in a blue towel, under the man's clothing. The turtle was estimated to be approximately five inches in length and identified to be a red-ear slider turtle. NO-it was not a snapping turtle.

➤ Rare Whiskey Bottles Wash Up on New Jersey Beach:

Nearly a dozen sealed whiskey bottles from the Prohibition era were found washed up on a New Jersey beach. The discovery has intrigued locals and historians, sparking speculation about their origin and journey.



➤ Scheduling gym time can be a real challenge for many people given time constraints and/or lack of motivation. For Egyptian free diver, Ramy Abdelhamid, routine excuses do not apply. Abdelhamid regularly works out under water. He recently plunged into the Red Sea to break the Guinness World Records for the most pull-ups under open water with one breath. Abdelhamid managed to take the record with 33 pull-ups before he had to surface for air. According to Guinness World Records, the record was achieved as part of a personal goal and to motivate other people to engage in physical activity leading to an active lifestyle. Advice: Change your mindset: View exercise as a form of self-care, not a chore.

*Check with your medical advisor before undertaking a fitness program.



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 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:



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.



More About Associated Billing Center, LLC

Associated **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.

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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.



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

> Hi Mona, you have No Idea how much I have and do appreciate all you and ABC have done for me from the very beginning = and that you continue to do for me. When I read that "you have me covered; don't worry"! I got tears in my eyes! You guys go so far "above and beyond"! I think ABC can also stand for the "Above and Beyond Company"!!!

Thanks! Thanks, and Thanks!

Bethann A. LCSW

>Mona, I received a call from one of your providers telling me how great you guys are and how quickly you work to get any issues resolved. I am thrilled that she provided me with your information. My small group practice is running more smoothly and with less administrative difficulties than we recently experienced. And it's true! Whenever I call your company, I always get a live person answering the phone not a voice message. Mona, a great big thanks to you and your staff for doing such an efficient job. I did not get that with my previous billing service.

Ellen & Jim S. Ph.D. Group

>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

More Actual 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. Ph.D.

>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

>Working with Associated Billing Center has been a game-changer for our practice. Their team is knowledgeable, efficient, and always available to answer any questions. Billing can be overwhelming, but they make the process seamless, allowing us to focus on our clients rather than administrative tasks. I highly recommend their services to any mental health professional looking for reliable and professional billing support. Here's a bonus: Our revenue has been growing since our affiliation with Mona.

Ellen F. Ph.D. Owner of a Group Practice

MENTAL HEALTH PRACTICES CREATE A COMFORTABLE ENVIRONMENT

***Design welcoming and calming waiting areas.**

***Ensure privacy and confidentiality in treatment rooms.**

***Provide amenities that enhance comfort.**

A comfortable and welcoming mental health therapy office is a significant factor in attracting and retaining clients, thus contributing to the growth of your practice.

Former New York City Mayor, Ed Koch, was known for using the phrase "How My Doin" frequently while speaking with reporters and his constituents. Regularly surveying patients to gather feedback on their treatment experience is an invaluable practice for mental health therapists. Surveys can reveal patterns and trends in patient experiences, highlighting areas where the practice can improve its services.

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