



A Publication for Saint Barnabas Health Care System Physicians' Office Administrators and Staff

BEST Practice

Help Patients Quit Smoking

Despite all the warnings, cigarette smoking and the resulting second-hand smoke still threaten the health of thousands of adults and children in New Jersey. Saint Barnabas Health Care System's Institute for Prevention is making it easier for physicians to help their patients quit.

The Institute for Prevention is offering the same Tobacco Dependence Treatment Program available at its state-certified Quit Centers in Essex, Monmouth, Ocean and Union Counties to physician offices across the state. The Tobacco Dependence Treatment Program provides individualized treatment plans, including assessment, behavioral therapy and advanced medical therapies. The comprehensive treatment services utilize the latest research available.

Physicians can now make these highly effective eight-week sessions available to their patients right at their offices. An experienced team from the Saint Barnabas Institute of Prevention coordinates and facilitates the entire program at the physician offices. Spanish language sessions are also available.

To learn more about bringing Tobacco Dependence Treatment Program to your physician's office, call Tracy Gross at the Saint Barnabas Health Care System's Institute for Prevention at 732.236.1866.

CPT Code Update

Coding is one of the most important, yet frustrating, responsibilities undertaken at a physician practice. Frequent changes in code definitions require that office staff stay up-to-date with the most current guidelines for processing claims.

The five CPT Coding Seminars hosted earlier this year by the Saint Barnabas Health Care System Office Managers Association offered more than 300 participants a review of the American Medical Association's 2008 Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) codes that will help them increase the accuracy and quality of coding at the physician's office. In addition to the new, deleted and revised CPT codes, Jean Buble, Director of Compliance for the Saint Barnabas Health Care System, stressed the importance of compliance with this universal system that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, managed care and other insurance companies use to determine reimbursement amounts.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Inspector General developed a voluntary compliance program for individual and small group physician practices that can help to prevent the submission of erroneous claims. The seven elements of an effective compliance program were also stressed during the Coding Seminars.

- ❖ Written Policies and Procedures
- ❖ Compliance Officer and Compliance Committee
- ❖ Training and Education
- ❖ Effective Lines of Communication
- ❖ Enforcing Standards Through Disciplinary Guidelines
- ❖ Monitoring and Auditing
- ❖ Responding to Detected Offences and Developing Corrective Action(s)

The Link 1-888-SBHS-123

The Saint Barnabas Health Care Link puts information about our programs, services, physicians and facilities at your fingertips. Patients can use the Link to find a physician and even make an appointment. Physicians can contact a Director of Physician Services or 1.888.726.2362 to update their professional profiles at any time.

Fall Luncheon at Clara Maass Medical Center



Standing L to R: Fran Monteleone, Director of Physician Services, Clara Maass Medical Center; Flor Pariente and Clara Arias, both staff members at the office of Andrea A. Harper, MD; Alejandra Rivera, Wendy Figueroa and Jennifer Mejia, staff members at the office of Robert S. Spira, MD, and Joseph R. De Pasquale, MD.

Sitting L to R: Polly Spencer, Director of Laboratory Services, Clara Maass Medical Center; Debbie Kowalewski, Manager of Pre-Admission Testing, Clara Maass Medical Center; and Jacklyn Arce, staff member at the office of Robert S. Spira, MD, and Joseph R. De Pasquale, MD.

Nearly 50 people attended Clara Maass Medical Center's Fall Luncheon program titled Navigating Medical Records. This networking opportunity brought together physician office staff members, physicians and hospital managers for an educational presentation that highlighted the most up-to-date processes and procedures for more efficient charting, billing and coding.

All of the Saint Barnabas Health Care System hospitals host similar educational events throughout the year. To learn more, contact the Director of Physician Services at the Saint Barnabas Health Care System hospital nearest your office.

Directors of Physician Services

The Saint Barnabas Health Care System provides physicians and their office staff with a direct link to our Saint Barnabas System hospitals through the Directors of Physician Services. These physician liaisons can help you become familiar with our variety of services and assist you in accessing them. They are committed to ensuring that doctors, as well as their office staff and patients, have a flawless experience at all of the Saint Barnabas Health Care System facilities.

For more information about the Saint Barnabas Health Care System or assistance with any of our services, please contact:

- ❖ **Shari Beirne** 732.914.3805
Saint Barnabas Behavioral Health
- ❖ **Lauren Burke** 973.926.2632
Cardiovascular Services
- ❖ **Carrie Cristello** 973.322.7345
Saint Barnabas Ambulatory Care Center
- ❖ **Jean Flaherty** 732.557.2296
Audrey Petersen 732.557.3940
Community Medical Center
- ❖ **Fran Monteleone** 973.450.2997
Clara Maass Medical Center
- ❖ **K. Crystal Pate** 908.624.2331
Saint Barnabas Nursing and
Rehabilitation Centers
- ❖ **Jessi Rosenbaum** 732.923.7523
Eileen VandeBunte 732.923.7535
Monmouth Medical Center
- ❖ **Alyssa Ruby-Mako** 732.557.7168
Kimball Medical Center
- ❖ **Lydia Spingler** 973.322.2827
Saint Barnabas Medical Center
- ❖ **Currently Recruiting**
Newark Beth Israel Medical Center

At Your Fingertips: News to Know

High Mark Medicare Services administers the Medicare Fee-for-Service Part A business for Pennsylvania, Maryland, and the District of Columbia – as well as administers the Part B business for Pennsylvania. Soon, they will be the Medicare Administrative Contractor (MAC) for New Jersey. Take a look at how they do business and learn more about the history of this 50-year-old company at: <http://www.highmarkmedicare.com>.

To stay informed about Medicare Contracting Reform, be sure to bookmark the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) website. As required by law (section 911 of the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003), CMS is replacing its current claims payment contractors - fiscal intermediaries and carriers - with new contract entities called Medicare Administrative Contractors (MACs). CMS plans to award a total of 19 MAC contracts through three procurement cycles. See more about this at http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MedicareContractingReform/07_PartA_PartBMedicareAdministrativeContractor.asp.



Improving the Health of Your Practice –

There are common challenges to running an efficient, yet pleasant, physician office practice. While many problems cannot be eliminated altogether, these creative solutions can help you clear the biggest hurdles.

Part III Scheduling

In this multitasking, over-scheduled, fast-paced society, more and more people are showing up late for their appointments or, even worse, not showing up at all. There are several strategies for reigning in that lost time that can cost the practice money and make waiting times unpredictable.

- **Same-day appointments:** Leave ample room in the daily schedule for same-day appointments. After all, people call the doctor when they are feeling ill and want an appointment as soon as possible. The no-show rate of same-day appointments is very low.
- **Appointment reminder calls:** In addition to leaving reminder messages on patients' answering machines, consider asking them to call back to confirm their appointment. If they do not confirm, then the appointment is canceled. The office can apply this policy to all appointments or only a subset of visits such as new patients or those scheduled for lengthy procedures. Be sure that if your office requires a confirmation, the office staff can handle the extra calls.
- **Charging patients for missed appointments:** Some physician offices have resorted to collecting a \$15 to \$25 fee from patients who miss scheduled appointments. If your office wants to institute this kind of policy, be sure to notify patients in writing in advance and post signs in waiting and exam rooms. The scheduler should also remind patients about the fee when scheduling all appointments.

For Parts I and II of the series, see Summer 2007, Vol 1, Issue 1 and Fall 2007, Vol 1 Issue 2.

No one Should Face Advanced Illness Alone

For more than 25 years professionals from the nationally-renowned Saint Barnabas Hospice and Palliative Care Center have provided exceptional emotional, physical and spiritual support to patients and their families during life's final stages. Whether at home, in a hospital, or in long-term care or assisted living facility, the dedicated team strives to improve quality of life while providing comfort, preserving dignity, and honoring the unique wishes of each patient and family.

Specialized programs and services include:

- ❖ Advanced dementia and cardiac special care
- ❖ Comprehensive bereavement support
- ❖ Jewish hospice services
- ❖ The Shining Stars Program for children of all ages with a life-limiting illness

The Center serves residents throughout New Jersey with offices in the following locations:

- ❖ Saint Barnabas Hospice and Palliative Care Center, West Orange
- ❖ Saint Barnabas Hospice and Palliative Care Center at Monmouth Medical Center, Long Branch
- ❖ Saint Barnabas Hospice and Palliative Care Center at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center, Newark
- ❖ Van Dyke Hospice and Palliative Care Center at Community Medical Center, Toms River

For more information about the Saint Barnabas Hospice and Palliative Care Center, please call 973.322.4800.

When Difficult Patients Become More Than a Test of Patience

Does your office team know what to do if a difficult patient or family member is encountered? It is not uncommon for people to be anxious about their medical appointments and inevitably some will even be impatient and short-fused.

According to Jim Romer, MA, Director of Psychiatric Emergency Services at Kimball Medical Center, an affiliate of Saint Barnabas Health Care System, every office should have a plan that outlines how to handle difficult situations. "The first rule of thumb to expect the unexpected," says Mr. Romer.

To schedule a team meeting at your physician office to establish a patient safety management plan that includes crisis management call Jim Romer at 732.886.4474.



OFFICE MANAGERS ASSOCIATION



Steve Adubato, PhD, Emmy award-winning anchor and professional communications and leadership coach, pictured with Helen Pollicove, of WeeCare Pediatrics at the offices of Harvey Hirsh and Mosha, engaged the nearly 300 guests at the Saint Barnabas Health Care System's inaugural Office Managers Association held in November 2007.

It's Not Too Late to Join!

The Educational Toolkits will be sent to registered members only, so join today and become a part of this growing association! This group is 400 strong so far and members represent a variety of practice types from across the state. Get timely tips, advice, information and special offers about the issues that affect your unique profession.

Members, let us know what you would like to see in upcoming issues of Best Practice by calling 1.888.724.7123, prompt #1.

There is still time to join the Saint Barnabas Health Care System Office Managers Association. Please complete this card and return it to Saint Barnabas Health Care System, 368 Lakehurst Road, Suite 304A, Toms River, NJ 08755.

Name: _____

Name of Practice: _____

Physician(s): _____

Office Address: _____

Office Phone: _____

Office Fax: _____

Hospital(s) of Affiliation: _____

Home Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Topics of Interest for educational seminars and lectures:

