



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

BEST Practice

GO GREEN

Four Useful Things to do With the Back of a Printed Sheet of the Paper

A lot of the sheets of paper in your recycling bin have only been printed on one side. That means there's a whole big blank expanse of totally usable paper, and all you have to do to get at it is flip the sheet. It's so easy that it almost hurts not to do it. Sure, you might not want to use an already-printed sheet to, say, print a legal contract on, but there are plenty of ways to put that half-used paper to full use.

1. Make A Recycled Scratch Pad

You can collect printed sheets with one blank side into an eco-chic, and highly utilitarian, scratch pad. An easy-to-make recycled paper notepad not only looks cool, it saves the planet twice: it saves the water and energy that it would take to recycle that half-used paper into brand new stock, and it saves the ecological cost of making brand new paper just for you to scribble little notes on. Keep a stack of "re-claimed" pads in your desk drawer for notes and brainstorming, keep one by your phone for doodles while you're chatting, and pass some around the office to get your co-workers on the bandwagon.

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Spotlight on CPT Coding Changes at Office Managers Programs

Changes made each year to CPT codes affect reporting and reimbursement for physicians and other health care providers.

Jean Buble, R.N., C.P.C., a compliance expert with the Saint Barnabas Health Care System, discussed a host of new CPT codes and the rationales for the changes during two recent Saint Barnabas Health Care System Office Managers' Association programs.

Through a CPT Coding Update held in January at Jumping Brook Country Club in Neptune and repeated in February at Forest Hill Field Club in Bloomfield, Buble addressed 132 new codes, 70 deleted codes and 123 revisions to Category II and III codes as well as revisions made in several subsection instructional notes and CPT code grammar that took effect on January 1.

CPT changes for medicine, orthopaedics, surgery, pediatrics, radiology, pathology and laboratory, as well as emerging technology, including microsurgical procedures and remote real-time interactive video-conference critical care, have an impact on coding practices, according to Buble. It can be a daunting challenge to keep up with all of the coding changes, but it is necessary for office managers and their staff to be aware of new and revised CPT codes and guideline instructional changes, and be able to assign the appropriate codes for services provided.

"For example, under Evaluation and Management, there are 17 new codes, 15 deleted codes, 18 revised codes and six cross references added," she said. "Many changes within the area of noninvasive physiologic studies and procedures have been moved to the CPT codes related to cardiovascular device monitoring, implantable and wearable devices. And minimally invasive surgery got a major addition to the CPT coding program, adding six new descriptive surgical charges as well as a whole new range of charges and description for stereotactic radiosurgery."

She notes that there also were 79 radiology charges that underwent grammatical changes, and that most of the critical care inpatient pediatric codes were given their own category areas of inpatient neonatal and pediatric critical care and initial and



Jean Buble, assistant vice president, compliance, for the Saint Barnabas Health Care System, presents a CPT Coding Update for the Saint Barnabas Office Managers Association.

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2. Keep Your Place With A Recycled Bookmark

Cut some half-printed sheets into strips for handy, at-your-fingertips bookmarks. Use them to keep track of how far you've read into that book and you'll get an added bonus: you can easily make notes about what you're reading while you're reading it, so not a single one of your genius thoughts is lost in the shuffle.

3. Print On The Back Of Every Sheet

Sure, it sounds kind of obvious, but a lot of people just don't think of printing something else on the blank side of a half-used sheet. If you're printing something to post on a bulletin board, or need to print out a draft of something you're working on editing, nobody but you will even know what's on the back.

4. Share Some Eco-Smart Hints

Reclaimed printed paper is a great choice for making little green reminder signs to put in appropriate places around your office, to help everyone remember some green habits. For example, you could tape up a little note by the light switch in your conference room to encourage your colleagues to switch off the lights when they leave. You'll get an eco-double whammy if you're making your mark with paper that might otherwise get wasted.

Source: Plantgreen.discovery.com

HIPPA/ Compliance Corner

Understanding Patient Safety Confidentiality:

A Compliance Message from the United States Health and Human Services Department

The regulation implementing the Patient Safety and Quality Improvement Act of 2005 (PSQIA) was published on November 21, 2008, and became effective on January 19.

PSQIA establishes a voluntary reporting system to enhance the data available to assess and resolve patient safety and health care quality issues. To encourage the reporting and analysis of medical errors, PSQIA provides federal privilege and confidentiality protections for patient safety information called patient safety work product. Patient safety work product includes information collected and created during the reporting and analysis of patient safety events.

The confidentiality provisions will improve patient safety outcomes by creating an environment where providers

may report and examine patient safety events without fear of increased liability risk. Greater reporting and analysis of patient safety events will yield increased data and better understanding of patient safety events.

OCR works in close collaboration with the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), which has responsibility for listing patient safety organizations (PSOs), the external experts established by the Patient Safety Act to collect and analyze patient safety information.

To learn more, visit the federal government's Health and Human Services Web site at <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/psa/understanding/index.html>.

Spotlight on CPT Coding

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continuing intensive care services. Additionally, the entire range of hydration and therapeutic, prophylactic and diagnostic injections and infusion charges were moved in an effort to better explain how to report them.

"Some of these changes are just cosmetic, but others are drastic, and it's important to make sure that we are getting this new information to the right people," Buble said. "Making sure that you and your staff have all of your codes up to date will hopefully prevent early denials and help maintain the office cash flow."

To view the complete CPT Coding Update presentation on line, visit www.sbofficemanagers.com.

Where can I get answers to my CPT coding questions?

You can submit your CPT coding questions to AMA's new on-line CPT Network Service at www.cptnetwork.com. This new on-line service features an option to search a database of frequently asked questions about CPT coding and clinical vignettes of procedures. It also includes a standardized form for submitting on-line inquiries on issues not contained in the Knowledge Base. The new on-line service is offered as a benefit to AMA members and subscribers.

Medicare Launches On-line Enrollment

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services has launched an on-line Medicare enrollment system which it says can process applications and update information in up to half the time. The Provider Enrollment, Chain and Ownership System lets users submit, view and change their enrollment information and check the status of an



Rev Up Your Revenue in 2009

There is no time like the present to polish up on enhancing your practice's revenue. Let's explore a plan to optimize revenue in your practice.

Fee Schedule Review: An annual review of your fee schedule should be a top priority each year. If you haven't already, review the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) 2009 Fee Schedule at www.CMS.hhs.gov/PhysicianFeeSched/PFSRVF, focusing on relative value units (RVU's) for your most-used codes. Open the Microsoft Office Excel spreadsheet titled "RV009.xls." This file will allow you to review the RVU values for all Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) codes and will provide you with the RVU values pertaining to the specific codes utilized by your providers. This resource can provide you with a guide for reviewing your current fee schedule and, more importantly, evaluating payer reimbursements for 2009 revenue.

Article prepared by PAHCOM, the newsletter of the Professional Association of Health Care Office Management.

ment for Physicians

enrollment application. It is currently available to practitioners in a host of states, including New Jersey. CMS expects to expand the system later this year to all states and next year to all health care providers. For details on submitting a Medicare enrollment application via the system, visit the CMS Web site. at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov>.

Ask the Practice Management Experts

"Ask the Experts" is a question-and-answer forum featuring leading practice management experts. In this issue of Best Practice, we ask Diana Rosso, office manager for Cardiology Associates, Brick, to share coding tips to maximize office revenue.

What is the most common coding question you hear?

Diana: There are so many changes in the area of coding, and it's very difficult to stay on top of it. Proper coding is so important as it affects the ability of the practice to be fully reimbursed for care. The advice I give to other office managers is to make sure that they sign up for daily Medicare e-mail updates. All insurance companies follow Medicare's lead, so if you are on top of the changes in Medicare coding, you are really on top of the latest news in coding. Office managers with Internet access can sign up for these alerts through Highmark Medicare Services.

What is one of the biggest coding challenges you face in your practice?

Diana: Billing for consults performed by our doctors for patients who are hospitalized is a major challenge. The reality of day-to-day operations in the office often means that numerous charges can be lost somewhere between the hospital and the office, and this equals lost revenue. One way to counter this is to establish some form of "rounding list" for inpatient charges, and then encourage your physicians to utilize this important revenue-capturing tool. Office managers should consider reviewing physician progress notes for tests and procedures that may be missing from charge capture reports.

If you had one wish to improve the professional office practice, what would it be?

Diana: I wish we could meet, as office managers, according to our specialties four times a year to share concerns and suggestions. There are a lot of billing issues specific to certain specialties, and I think if we were able to spend more time networking, the office managers, and ultimately the physicians, would benefit. We are all so busy, and we want to do all we can to make sure that things don't slip through the cracks. I think many of us don't realize we have many of the same issues, if we could spend more time helping each other, I think we could all become more efficient.

Have a practice management question? Ask an expert! Call us at 1.888.724.7123, and press 1.

Our Expert:



Diana Rosso has been office manager for Cardiology Associates, a practice comprising Kimball Medical Center-affiliated cardiologists V. Paul Kate, M.D., Tanveer Ahmad, M.D., Thomas Komorowski, M.D., Samir Jain, M.D., and Pragnesh Patel, M.D., for 12 years. She oversees an office staff of 12, and also serves as the billing manager. A coding expert, she has taught CPT Coding I and II at Ocean County Community College for five years, and also has experience teaching ICD9 diagnosis coding and medical billing.

Did You Know?

Of the 6,000 unique visits to The Link's Physician Referral Web site each month, approximately 330 of the services' requests for appointments are made on line. You can learn more about this convenient feature — which allows patients and prospective patients to schedule appointments with participating physician offices 24 hours a day — by visiting www.sbhcs.com, and clicking on Request an Appointment at the top navigation bar.

Refer a Colleague Today!

Do you know colleagues in Saint Barnabas Health Care System-affiliated practices who have not yet joined the Saint Barnabas Health Care System Office Managers Association? It's not too late for them to reap the benefits of membership. They can call 1.888.724.7123, and press 1 to join or visit the website at: www.sbofficermanagers.com and click "How to Join."

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

Save the Dates:

Medicare Physician Quality Reporting Initiative (PQRI) Program

Don't miss this important Office Managers Association Education Program that will help you to learn more about how your practice can become eligible for additional Medicare reimbursements. Information on e-prescribing will also be featured.

Wednesday, June 3: 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.
Jumping Brook Country Club

Thursday, June 4: 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Forest Hill Field Club

Please save the date for the program most convenient for you. Details and registration information will be sent soon.

Call 888.724.7123, and press #1, to register or learn more about these programs.

- Directors of Physician Services
The Saint Barnabas Health Care System provides physicians and their office staff with a direct link to our hospitals through the directors of Physician Services.
- ❖ **Audrey Petersen** 732.557.3940
Community Medical Center
 - ❖ **Fran Monteleone** 973.450.2997
Clara Maass Medical Center
 - ❖ **Josephine Englehart** 973.902.5402
Diagnostic Imaging Physician Liaison
 - ❖ **Alyssa Ruby-Mako** 732.557.7168
Kimball Medical Center
 - ❖ **Cheryl Wittek** 732.923.7523
Monmouth Medical Center
 - ❖ **Patricia Gillen** 973.926.5534
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