



A Publication for **Barnabas Health** Physicians' Office Administrators and Staff

GO GREEN

Developing and Implementing a Green Cleaning Policy

Editor's Note: The below article was prepared for the website PracticeGreenHealth.org.

When developing and implementing policies that will limit exposure of staff, patients and visitors to toxic ingredients in cleaning products, it's important to also ensure effective infection prevention and control processes. A thorough environmentally preferable cleaning policy should address a number of specific elements, including the following:

- ❖ Standard operating procedures (SOPs) for an effective cleaning program
- ❖ Guidelines for safe handling and storage of cleaning chemicals
- ❖ Plan for managing chemical spills or mishandling incidents
- ❖ Site-specific training for environmental services personnel
- ❖ Commitment to phase in environmentally preferable cleaning products, materials, and equipment
- ❖ Annual re-evaluation of new technologies, procedures and processes to ensure continuous improvement in addition to routine evaluation of thoroughness of current cleaning processes

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Appeal, Appeal, Appeal

Workshops Discuss Strategies to Ensure Appropriate Physician Payment

During her recent Appeal the Claim Workshops, Jean Buble, R.N., C.P.C., Vice President of Case Management, Health Information Management and Coding for Barnabas Health, discussed key strategies in implementing effective claims appeals processes to help physician practices receive reimbursements for procedures and services that are provided to patients.

Buble identified the following tips when reviewing appeals:

- ❖ Read the denial letter and note reason for denial of service
- ❖ Note when response is due
- ❖ Review medical record and determine whether appeal is warranted
- ❖ Assemble an appeal packet
 - ◆ Redetermination form
 - ◆ Appeal letter
 - ◆ Copy of denial letter
 - ◆ Provider signature log and/or attestation statement if necessary
 - ◆ Typed transcript of provider documentation if necessary
 - ◆ Applicable references
- ❖ Mail prior to due date

"First and foremost, make every attempt to put the claim in correctly from the beginning," stressed Buble. "When denial letters are received, look at it as an education process – the payor is educating you. Take any egos out of the situation and look if you could have made a mistake, see if there is anything you can learn. Next, it's most important to thoroughly review the letter."

Once it's been determined that the claim was submitted correctly, Buble urged physicians' offices to take the time to now educate the payor.

"When submitting an appeal, you need to explain and justify to the payor why you believe their reasoning is incorrect," said Buble. "This is more than simply resubmitting the claim and the medical records."

Buble suggested calling attention to specific areas in the medical records by highlighting or providing additional background information on the coding. She also stressed the importance of good writing skills.

"You have to be concise and really good with your written communication to be successful. In some offices, this may mean identifying one particular person who is a better writer and have them write the appeal letters or review each one," said Buble.



Jean Buble, R.N., C.P.C.,

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Compliance Corner:

New Malpractice Insurance Policy Achieves Average Premium Reduction of 25 Percent

Barnabas Insurance Services is proud to report great success in the roll-out of its new Medical Malpractice Insurance policy, available only to physicians and practices affiliated with Barnabas Health. This is an outstanding new program which has been successful in many other states but has now finally been approved in New Jersey.

More than 85 percent of physicians who have received quotes have signed on, achieving an average premium reduction of 25 percent.

The program brings significant advantages as follows:

- Most importantly, Barnabas Insurance Services is a strong, financially secure, national carrier with an A+ rating with more than \$148 billion in assets.
- There are no capital contributions required and no large deductibles. The physician's entire risk has been transferred to the insurance carrier.
- The program's rates are very competitive when compared to other carriers in New Jersey, for both large and small practices.
- State-of-the-art risk management and experienced claims handling capability, which is important to help prevent losses and keep them to a minimum.
- Both claims-made and occurrence-equivalent forms are available to meet individual needs. High limits are available.

For more information, contact Kristin Woehl at (973) 884-4400 extension 231 or e-mail kristinw@barnabasinsurance.com. For an overall view of this and other coverages available from Barnabas Insurance Services, visit our website at www.barnabasinsurance.com

Save the Dates: Ready. Set. Code! ICD-10 Specialty Coding Workshop Series

The compliance date for implementation of the International Classification of Diseases, 10th edition, Clinical Modification/Procedure Coding Systems (ICD-10-CM/PCS) is October 1, 2014. To ensure that all physician offices are prepared for the implementation date, the New Jersey Hospital Association and Barnabas Health will host the Ready. Set. Code! ICD-10 Specialty Coding Workshop Series on Tuesday, October 1 and Thursday, October 3 at Jack Baker's Lobster Shanty in Point Pleasant and Tuesday, October 15 and Thursday, October 17 at Cedar Hill Golf & Country Club in Livingston.

The hands-on coding workshops, designed by specialty, will help practice managers understand ICD-10-CM, as well as the documentation requirements associated with coding for specialty-specific practices. Participants will gain an understanding of the code structure and the ability to assign diagnosis codes using ICD-10.

The Ready. Set. Code! ICD-10 Specialty Coding Workshop Series will consist of six, two-hour workshops during a two-day period. Choose the below workshop session and location most appropriate and convenient for you.

Day 1: Tuesday, October 1 at Jack Baker's Lobster Shanty in Point Pleasant / Tuesday, October 15 at Cedar Hill Golf & Country Club in Livingston

- ❖ **Workshop 1** – 8:30 – 10:30 a.m. – Cardiology / Vascular / Pulmonary
- ❖ **Workshop 2** – 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. – Ortho / Podiatry / Spine
- ❖ **Workshop 3** – 2:30 – 4:30 p.m. – OB-Gyn / Pediatrics / Urology

Day 2: Thursday, October 3 at Jack Baker's Lobster Shanty in Point Pleasant / Thursday, October 17 at Cedar Hill Golf & Country Club in Livingston

- ❖ **Workshop 4** – 8:30 – 10:30 a.m. – Internal Medicine / Family Practice
- ❖ **Workshop 5** – 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. – General Surgery / Gastro / ENT / Plastic Reconstructive / Colon-Rectal
- ❖ **Workshop 6** – 2:30 – 4:30 p.m. – Psychiatry / Neurology / Neuro Surgery

The workshops in the Ready. Set. Code! ICD-10 Specialty Coding Workshop Series are eligible for two AHIMA CEUs and approved for two AAPC CEUs. Attendees are encouraged to bring the most current ICD-10-CM (Draft) Manual to the Workshop, if possible. However, please note, there will be limited ICD-10 Manuals available as a reference during each Workshop.

Jack Baker's Lobster Shanty is located on Channel Drive, Point Pleasant. Cedar Hill Golf & Country Club is located at 100 Walnut Street, Livingston. Register today Ready. Set. Code! ICD-10 Specialty Coding Workshop Series as seating is limited. To register, visit the Barnabas Health Office Managers Association website at www.barnabashealthofficemanagers.org or call the LINK at 1.888.724.7123.

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The appeal process does not end once the letter has been submitted. Buble strongly emphasized tracking and follow up.

“The onus is on you, the physician's office, to get paid. Just because you've submitted the first level of appeal doesn't mean it's a guarantee,” said Buble. “It's important to track each and every appeal – you've done all the work, follow up and make sure it has been received and that you know the status of it.”

To view Buble's Appeal the Claim presentation, visit barnabashealthofficemanagers.org and click on the section titled Appeal the Claim Workshop Materials.

Ask the Practice Management Experts

"Ask the Experts" is a question-and-answer forum featuring leading practice management experts.

Q: What are your current responsibilities as practice manager?

A: I manage the daily activities of a busy orthopedic practice, which includes overseeing a small staff of employees, managing all facets of the medical billing process and scheduling surgical procedures.

Q: What are some of the biggest hurdles you've encountered during your time as a practice manager?

A: There are many challenges in running a practice. One of the biggest ones, in my experience, has been integrating the practice into an electronic medical record (EMR) system. It has been two years since we first went "live" and it has been a challenge to get things to run smoothly. There are still some kinks. We found that putting information into a patient's chart was a long and tedious task. To improve this, we implemented a dictation system that helps tremendously and makes the process more efficient. We also stay in close touch with our support system to resolve any problems.

Q: What advice would you give to another practice manager?

A: I'd tell other practice managers to always be aware of changes to procedures that affect the practice. Become knowledgeable in applying new procedures and protocol, like the upcoming transition to ICD-10. Also, hiring the right staff is very important. You need people who work well together to have an office that runs efficiently. For example, we have a front desk staff that knew each other and worked together prior to working here.

Q: In your opinion what are some of the most important things to remember as a practice manager?

A: It's important to become familiar with others in your field and share information. One of the best ways is through the OMA. Running a practice is also a learning experience. Working for an exceptional physician, like Dr. Anthony Parks, makes our office environment a great place for our employees and patients.

Our Expert

Janet Maier, Practice Manager, A. Parks Orthopedics, LLC

Janet Maier has served as practice manager for A. Parks Orthopedics, LLC for six years. She has extensive experience in billing and coding, having worked in the field for 33 years. Janet began her career working for a group of orthopedic surgeons as a medical biller. During the course of 20 years, she worked her way up to office manager, where she stayed until the office closed and the last doctor retired. She managed offices and medical billing for an orthopedic spinal surgeon and pediatric neurologist before returning to orthopedics.



Janet Maier

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❖ **Mechanism for collecting occupant feedback (both patients and staff) on odors or concerns about cleaning products or practices**

Clearly written policies and protocols for the various levels of cleaning are vitally important. For more specific elements to integrate, see GGHC Environmental Services Credits 1.1 and 1.2. Policies and protocols also need to incorporate both the CDC's Guidelines for Environmental Infection Control in Healthcare Facilities, and the Federal Insect, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) which determines the list of EPA's Registered Sterilizers, Tuberculocides, and Antimicrobial Products Against Certain Human Public Health Bacteria and Viruses.

FIFRA applies to a wide variety of antimicrobials, including sterilants, disinfectants, and sanitizers used in healthcare facilities. Antiseptics and germicides, because they are used on humans and animals, are approved and regulated by the US Food and Drug Administration. The 2008 CDC Guidelines for Disinfection and Sterilization in Healthcare Facilities also contains useful information for formulating a policy.

Have a practice management question? Ask an expert! Call us at 1.888.724.7123.

Office Managers Association

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Save the Date for Barnabas Health Office Managers Association Annual Celebration

Thursday, November 7 • 4 – 7 p.m.

Woodbridge Hilton, 120 Wood Ave. S, Iselin, NJ 08830

On Thursday, November 7 from 4 to 7 p.m., the Barnabas Health Office Managers Association will host its Seventh Annual Celebration at the Woodbridge Hilton.

The event will feature a cocktail reception, dinner, networking with Barnabas Health exhibitors and keynote speaker Stephanie Decker, a heroic tornado survivor. The 37-year-old mother of three saved the lives of her two young children by shielding them with her body when a tornado ripped through their Henryville, Indiana home. Miraculously, the children survived unscathed but Stephanie required extensive surgeries and amputations on both of her legs to address her injuries.

Since the accident, Stephanie has inspired a nation. She has appeared on the Today Show, The Ellen Degeneres Show, ABC World News Tonight and has been featured in publications such as USA Today and People Magazine.

Stephanie and her family also made a personal visit to the White House to meet President Barack Obama, during which Stephanie walked into the Oval Office.

To register, visit the Barnabas Health Office Managers Association website at www.barnabashealthofficemanagers.org or call the LINK at 1.888.724.7123.



BEST Practice

Randy Glasbergen
lasbergen.com



"We're implementing new security standards in the office, so don't forget to use the ecret-say ode-cay!"