

Newsletter Update: Thank you to all who have made positive comments about our attempt at putting out a semi-regular Newsletter. About the only complaint we have had so far is that you want more copies to spread around your office. So, in an attempt to make the newsletter more available, we have decided to post it on our web page. What? We have a web page? Of course we do, although I have to admit it hasn't had the attention and maintenance it should be receiving. This will change. The address is:

www.SystemsDesignNW.com.

Click on 'Ambulance Billing Services' in the left side column, then 'Newsletters' to get to the most current newsletter, as well as all back issues. If you would like to be notified when a new newsletter has been posted, send us your e-mail address and we will add you to the list. Feel free to add multiple members of your staff so everyone can receive their own notification. Send an e-mail with 'Newsletter' in the subject line to:

rogerz@SystemsDesignNW.com



Signatures: As most of you know by now (because we tend to bug you about this!) you are required to get a patient signature for every transport you bill for unless they have previously signed a long term authorization (LTA). Ultimately, you are asking for the patient to sign several documents, but these can be blended into one all encompassing form.

The things you need patient signatures for are:

- **Billing Authorization:** This document allows you to bill on behalf of the patient and to receive the payment directly.
- **Payment Responsibility:** This document is a commitment from the patient that states they are responsible for payment of their bill, regardless of what insurance they may have. It also requires them to turn over to you any payments made directly to them.
- **Receipt of Privacy Practices:** This is a HIPAA requirement. You are required to have a copy of

your Privacy Policy available for the patient at the time of service.

What happens if you are unable to get a patient's signature? Another responsible party may sign on their behalf. This would include a spouse, representative or friend. Just be sure to include the relationship of the person to the patient. If the patient is unable to sign and there is no one else available, you may still bill, but the trip report must support the determination that the patient cannot sign. You should also attempt to get their signature after the fact by mail.

If the patient REFUSES to sign, then we are not allowed to bill Medicare. Instead, we would bill the patient directly. Remember, Medicare has the right to request copies of the patient signatures for any transports billed to them. If you are unable to provide the requested signatures, they may reprocess the claims and take back their payments. If you would like a sample Patient Signature form, give us a call.



Good News: The payments from Medicare for dates of service July 1 and later are starting to come in. The reimbursement rate for these transports reflects the new Regional Fee Schedule we have been talking about in the last two newsletters. Overall, the payments are quite a bit higher for those of you who are billing above the Medicare Allowance. If you are billing below the Medicare Allowance, the Regional Fee Schedule will have no effect as they pay the Allowance or billed amount, whichever is lower. Also, remember that this is a temporary increase and will be phased out between now and 2010.



Upcoming topics:

- Mileage documentation
- Condition codes
- Transports if not medically necessary
- Rural Mileage reimbursement
- Medicare Advanced Beneficiary Notice

Suggestions?