1st Quarter 2007

NCDS update

A Quarterly Newsletter for Clients

Keeping your office up-to-date on industry and insurance changes, late-breaking billing & reimbursement news, and general inter-office communication…

EMR Systems

Taking the plunge into electronic medical records?

Many of you may be considering the purchase of an electronic medical records (EMR) system for your office. NCDS recently attended a seminar discussing the implementation and use of EMR systems. Here are some points we hope will be helpful in your research and decision-making.

- *Currently, there are over 300 different EMR systems on the market. Keep in mind, since this is a relatively new type of software and line of business, there's always the chance that some of the current EMR vendors will go under. Look into each company's corporate stability before buying, as your practice will likely require their continued technical support.*
- *Be aware of the potential obsolescence of any EMR system that you may purchase this year. Constant upgrades and modifications are being made as more and more physician offices and hospitals are utilizing EMR systems and reporting feedback to their EMR vendors.*
- *Pricing of EMR systems may not be that straightforward. EMR vendors don't adhere to a uniform price structure, making it difficult to compare one vendor's proposal with another. Some charge a low purchase price, but make up for it with higher support costs.*
- *It takes 6-10 months for the average primary care practice to load its existing paper charts into their new EMR system.*
- *Implementation of an EMR system will drastically change how your practice operates on a day-to-day basis. During the first 2 months of use of the EMR system a practice's productivity could be cut in half.*
- *Your liability insurance could be raised due to the increased risk factor of an unavailable medical record if your EMR system should happen to be "down" for any reason.*
- *Specialty-specific EMR systems are available for most specialties. Make sure the software being sold has templates pertaining to your specialty.*

EMR continued…

Implementing an EMR system in a clinical practice can be a daunting task. It requires good planning, strong physician leadership and supportive office staff. But there are benefits to using an EMR system, such as legible notes and prescriptions, fewer medical record errors, immediately available charts, and lower transcription costs. All EMR systems are different, so be sure to do a careful assessment of each vendor's product.

NCDS is capable of interfacing with any EMR system that has import/export capability of an HL7 or an ANSI-410A record. If you are seriously considering the purchase of an EMR system, please contact NCDS for further information on what standards the EMR system will need to meet for compatibility with your NCDS billing software.

NEW YEAR … New Insurance?

It's that time of year again! Now that January is here many of your patients will have NEW INSURANCE PLANS and/or UPDATED BENEFITS.

Remember to ask all patients if they have new insurance or if there are any changes to existing policies, and copy their new cards so that NCDS may promptly and accurately bill their claims for you. **Claims billed with invalid insurance information can cause major delays in reimbursement.**

Also, keep an eye out for any increase in your patients' CO-PAY amounts.

Quick Note: **CREDIT CARD TRANSACTIONS**

Be careful when swiping credit cards through the swiper at your terminal. It may take a moment for the action to register on your screen if your internet connection is slow, and you want to make sure you do not swipe the card twice as this will result in transaction errors.

Insurance EOBs Returned to Providers

Time to make a little space! During the month of January, NCDS will be boxing up and returning to each provider their original insurance EOBs from the years 2004 & 2005. Providers can anticipate arrival of their box(es) of EOBs via UPS before the end of the month.

Fax Your Work to NCDS!

Stop messing with envelopes and labels, waiting around for new supplies to be sent to you, and dealing with delays regular mail can cause. Begin faxing (or scanning) your work to NCDS today!

Faxing your patient registrations and billing forms to NCDS saves time and money. Your work will be entered into our system quicker, and since faxing is so easy you can send us work *every day* if you'd like, rather than once or twice a week.

All of which translates to **quicker and more consistent reimbursement** for your claims.

Contact Michael Polo at (888) 876-8833 to find out how.

Have you heard about...

The NCDS Referral Incentive Program?

Ask David or Mick to learn about how you can earn discounts on your monthly billing invoice...

- Receive a $50.00 discount for any prospective client you refer to NCDS that arranges a sales-presentation meeting.
- Receive a $500.00 discount for any referral that results in a contract-signing with NCDS.

In lieu of a discount, comparable amounts may be donated in your name to the American Cancer Society.

MEDICARE NEWS

✓ **Medicare Fees for 2007**

Congress has passed the necessary legislation to prevent the 5.1% physician fee schedule cut from going into effect… *Ask NCDS what this may mean for your practice.*

✓ **Colorectal Cancer Screening**

To eliminate a potential financial barrier to its beneficiaries, Medicare will exempt the colorectal cancer screening benefit from the Part B deductible.

✓ **Part B Deductible**

Speaking of deductibles, Medicare is raising theirs to **$131** per year for all beneficiaries.

Employee Corner

NCDS would like to recognize the following dedicated employees celebrating an anniversary with us this quarter!

February 1st
Susan Mobley
8 years of service

February 10th
Betsy Novak
9 years of service

February 18th
Tina Sexton
4 years of service

March 8th
Susan Hunt
8 years of service

March 20th
Nicole Dumond
7 years of service

March 28th
Jessica Braddock
2 years of service

Congratulations to Susan M., Betsy, Tina, Susan H., Nicole and Jessica, and thanks for your continued hard work! We look forward to many more years with you!