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FREE WEBINAR: State Medicaid Update, Where are we now and where are we heading?

When: Friday, May 20, 2016, 10:00am  Earn CEU credits!
Speakers: John Berta and Michelle Apodaca
Hello and Happy Springtime ~

So here in Texas we’ve had our share (and more) of springtime rains along with some substantial flooding/hail/wind and other associated weather-related issues. Here in the San Antonio area we’ve experienced two hail storms within two weeks of each other which contained 4-5 inch hail causing a great amount of damage in a short amount of time to auto’s, people, houses and other buildings. I’ve seen estimates of nearly 20,000 claims for damage just from the first storm. In our business – 20,000 claims is just a day or two of business which we send out or manage; and we continue to do this week after week. The volume of our work seems to continually increase – both in volume and in complexity.

Just since last we talked; CMS has issued several substantial changes to how hospitals are paid (most will think Two Midnight Rule here) and how we must process our claims in order to actually be paid for our services. They extended participation in the Bundled Payments for Care Improvement initiative; they proposed changes to payment rates under IPPS; issued IPPS and Long Term Acute Care Hospital (LTCH) proposed rule issues for FY 2017; IPPS Rate Adjustments for Documentation and Coding and Two Midnight Policy; Medicare Uncompensated Care Payments, along with the Hospital Readmissions Reduction Program and the Hospital Value-Based Purchasing Program. And this is just some of the CMS changes – not to mention other payer and contract variations.

So though the storms which we encounter in our work don’t usually produce hail or thunder (thankfully !!) – and won’t be a harbinger of May flowers, how we respond to those storms will put us in the proper position to continue to thrive and be successful. One of many benefits of AAHAM is access to both education and others in our industry to help you weather the storms which will come.

I can also report that AAHAM Legislative Day was attended by 83 participants from 31 states who took the HIP Act along with the Medicare Audit Improvement Act to Congressional members looking for their support. While attendance was lower than last year’s record number of attendees – our sponsorship set an all-time record. Texas was represented by myself, Shelly Kellogg from BaylorScott&White and Robert Walker from our Platinum Sponsor PFS; and our scheduled visits allowed all three of us to attend all but one of the assigned congressional offices. Shelly will report on her first Leg Day in the next issue – and as a representative on the National Government Relations committee we’re planning on additional activities at the state level – so stay tuned for those updated.

The Board has begun plans for our ASI this August, tentatively planned for August 4 & 5 or possibly August 9 & 10. We welcome your participation if any of you are interested in assisting your chapter in the future.

For now – stay dry and let’s enjoy the springtime.
Switching to the Healthcare EFT Standard:
4 Ways to Ease the Transition

By Priscilla Holland, Senior Director of Healthcare Payments, NACHA

Healthcare electronic funds transfers (EFTs) via ACH – the Healthcare EFT Standard - can make practice management easier and more affordable—and switching doesn’t have to be difficult.

Compared with other payment methods, providers can save up to $7.21 per payment using EFTs via ACH in combination with electronic remittance advice (ERA), according to the 2014 CAQH Index. EFT via ACH payments, which transfer funds electronically from the insurer’s account to the provider’s account, are also faster than other methods, with funds available the same day they’re received.

Additionally, going electronic also has security and efficiency benefits. Because they’re transferred digitally, EFTs via ACH come with lower fraud risk than, for example, paper checks, which often change hands multiple times. And, with most practice management systems, reconciliation between EFT and ERA can be fully automated.

Best of all? It’s not difficult to switch. Thanks to the implementation of the Healthcare EFT Standard effective Jan. 1, 2014, which requires insurers to deliver EFT payments via ACH upon request, it’s easier to transition than ever, especially if you use the following tips.

Enroll the easy way. CAQH offers an enrollment hub that’s free to all providers. Entering your information into the secure database just once allows you to enroll with multiple participating health plans, simultaneously. For plans that aren’t participating in the enrollment hub, providers should rank them according to payments volume. In most practices, roughly 80 percent of payments come from 20 percent of insurance providers. It makes sense, then, to enroll with the largest payments providers first to reap maximum benefit right away. Then, gradually work your way down the list until you’ve enrolled with all insurers.

Don’t forget ERAs. EFTs via ACH produce more savings for practices when they’re used in conjunction with ERAs. ERAs allow for the automatic reconciliation and posting of payments to patient accounts, saving your staff time as well as eliminating manual posting errors. It’s easy to set up ERAs: in most cases, they can be requested at the same time as EFTs via ACH. If your practice uses a clearinghouse, contact them for additional assistance.

Talk to your vendors. Communication and cooperation between all parties involved in the EFT process—practices, banks, clearinghouses, practice management systems—is essential to a smooth transition. Your bank is required by NACHA Operating Rules, which govern the ACH Network through which healthcare EFT standard transactions are processed, to deliver ACH remittance data to your practice. If you’ve requested ACH data and your bank won’t provide it, contact NACHA immediately. Additionally, while most clearinghouses and practice management systems can support EFT/ERA reconciliation and auto posting, make sure yours can and, while you’re at it, ask about any set-up help or services they might provide.

Address staff concerns. Change can be uncomfortable for staffers who are used to tried-and-true processes or who might be concerned about being replaced by technology. In truth, transitioning to EFT/ERA simply reduces staffers’ time spent on reconciliation and posting. This allows them to handle a larger volume of claim payments or frees them up to focus on other important tasks and patients. Prior to transitioning, get ahead of staff concerns and make sure everyone understands the EFT/ERA process and its benefits.

Switching to EFTs via ACH is one of the easiest ways to dramatically simplify your practice management and reduce costs. For more resources and tips on how to make the transition a smooth one, visit https://healthcare.nacha.org/ProviderResources.
2016
Annual National Institute

October 5-7, 2016

2016 ANI
Annual National Institute

Caesar’s Palace
Las Vegas, Nevada

MAKE PLANS
TO JOIN US
AT 2016 ANI

The ANI is attended by nearly 500 National members and over 75 exhibitors. Each year, the members of AAHAM come together to exchange ideas, renew old friends, make new ones, and further their knowledge and education in the field of Patient Account Management.

Get Exposure! Exhibit booths are available for unopposed time in the exhibit hall. Sponsorships are another way to show your support and enhance your sales, and double your company’s visibility. Advertising space is available in the ANI Insider, the official conference program.

AAHAM’s ANI always attracts a large number of qualified speakers, who present on a variety of topics. Be sure to check out the Agenda and Exhibitor Prospectus (available in 2016) for the ANI. Get a sneak preview of what sessions and educational opportunities will be taking place at this year national meeting.

If you would like to be considered as a speaker for AAHAM’s ANI, please visit the Be a Speaker section for an application. Speaking positions, both paid and unpaid are usually filled by the end of April, but we do take information year round and will be sure to mail out Speaker RFPs to all interested parties.

If you have any additional questions about the ANI, please feel free to contact the National Office at 703-281-4043 ext 209 or by email at danielle@aaham.org

Exhibitor and Sponsorships available! Click here for more info.
What Does it Mean to be a Member of AAHAM?

The American Association of Healthcare Administrative Management (AAHAM) was founded in 1968 as the American Guild of Patient Account Management. Initially formed to serve the interests of hospital patient account managers, AAHAM has evolved into a national membership association that represents a broad-based constituency of healthcare professionals.

AAHAM is the only national organization dedicated to the revenue cycle of both management and the front line staff.

Membership in AAHAM helps you work smarter, advance your career, and offers you access to a wealth of revenue cycle information. The association recognizes that professional development is one of the key reasons that many individuals become members. To this end, one of AAHAM’s primary focuses is the professional development of its members.

We provide education and training for staff and managers, as well as offer a nationally recognized certification program in the form of publications, conferences and seminars, benchmarking, professional certification and numerous networking opportunities for increasing the skills and knowledge that are necessary to function effectively in today’s health care environment. AAHAM has 32 active chapters across the US and abroad, all offering superior education and networking on a local level.

Each year, AAHAM asks you to verify your membership information, so that you do not miss out on any updates or announcements. It only takes a few minutes to update your information, by logging onto the website, www.txaaham.org. Your username is your email address and if you’ve forgotten your password, please contact us by email, info@txaaham.org, and we will be happy to assist you.

We hope you’ll take a few minutes and verify your information is correct and also to renew your membership if you have not already done so. The new membership year started on January 1st, but it is not too late to renew!

You can join or renew online!
https://www.logiforms.com/formdata/user_forms/16822_2754748/77363/.

Please note this is for Local membership ONLY. For AAHAM Dual membership please visit the AAHAM National website at www.aaham.org.

Thank you for your interest and support in AAHAM. We look forward to hearing from you and seeing you in the elite ranks of Patient Account Managers.

**NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP** - $190. If you join anytime between July 1st and August 31st, the dues are $150 for the rest of the current year. If you join between September 1st and December 31st, the fee is $230 for the rest of the current year and all of the following year.

**STUDENT MEMBERSHIP** - $50. If you join anytime between July 1st and August 31st, the pro-rated dues are $35.00, and if you join between September 1st and December 31st, dues are $65 (for 15 months of membership). To qualify for student membership you must currently be taking 6 credit hours per semester. Student members receive all the benefits of membership with the exception of voting, eligibility for professional certification, and cannot be a proxy for a chapter president at any national board meetings.

**RETIRED** - A significantly discounted membership fee is offered to retired members. To qualify for retired membership an individual must be a national member who has retired from healthcare. To see if you qualify as a retired member, please contact that National Office at 703-281-4043 ext 202 or e-mail them at moayad@aaham.org.

*Please note, membership is on an individual, not institutional basis, and is non-transferable.
News & Updates

Upcoming Webinars

The Hidden Dangers of Liability

When: WEDNESDAY, May 18, 2016, 1:30pm - 3:00PM EDT
Speakers: Michael Ford, J.D., Co-Founder and Executive Vice President of Medical Reimbursements of America, Inc. (MRA)

This important, intermediate level webinar provides an overview of the complexity of managing accident claims including best practices in billing, patient advocacy, and compliance for every patient and every payment source across the US. Gain insights to avoid legal issues while optimizing the reimbursements available to hospitals for accident claims. Much detail is provided regarding the challenges hospitals face in managing this unique financial class along with real life examples of legal violations and damages incurred in recent years.

Payment must be received on or before May 11, 2016. You will receive your confirmation and handouts via email by May 15, 2016. Everyone earns 3 CEU’s for attending

Click here to download the full description and registration form.
Click here for Online Member Registration
Click here for Online NON-Member Registration

FREE WEBINAR: State Medicaid Update, Where are we now and where are we heading?

When: Friday, May 20, 2016, 10:00am
Speakers: John Berta and Michelle Apodaca

Earn CEU credits!

Patient Access Section of the CRCP Webinar Series

When: WEDNESDAY, June 8 & 22, July 6 & 20, 2016 1:00pm - 2:30PM EDT

Join AAHAM and top CRCP coaches as we present A Four Part Webinar Study program for the AAHAM Certified Revenue Cycle Professional Exams.

PREPARE FOR YOUR CRCP OR STAY CURRENT IN YOUR SKILLS & EARN AAHAM CEUs AT THE SAME TIME!

Earn 3 AAHAM CEUs for each study session attended

If you can’t attend the webinars, you can purchase downloadable mp4’s of the webinars.

The webinar dates are:
June 8, 2016 – 1:00 - 2:30 EDT Patient Access
June 22, 2016 - 1:00 - 2:30 EDT Billing
July 6, 2016 - 1:00 - 2:30 EDT Credit & Collections
July 20, 2016 - 1:00 - 2:30 EDT Management

Click here to download the full description and registration form.
Click here for Online Member Registration
Click here for Online NON-Member Registration

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Are your interests changing on our healthcare freeways and intersections?

Education Committee
Develops educational programs for members of the Chapter. Plans, schedules, and organizes a minimum of two multi-day programs each calendar year for the purpose of providing the membership with information on topics pertinent to the patient accounting field. Solicits input from members for content of future educational programs.

Membership Committee
Responsible for maintaining and recruiting. Maintains up-to-date membership list. Distributes quarterly list to chapter members. Develops membership recruitment plan and implements plan for purpose of increasing National AAHAM membership. Maintain database of Chapter members. Distribute updated membership lists to members on a quarterly basis. Provide membership list to other committees as requested.

Publications Committee
Chairman functions as the editor of Chapter publications and oversees the publication committee. Assures all Chapter publications follow the outlined publishing guidelines. Submits any Chapter publications to the National Office to participate in the National Journal Award.

When it comes to the ever-changing healthcare industry, you don't want to be in the dark. Let PFS Group be your guide to cost-effective A/R management, so you can switch your focus back to providing excellent patient care. Through state-of-the-art technology, trust and compassionate communication, we are committed to helping patients resolve their outstanding balances quickly and easily. To maximize customer satisfaction while improving your bottom line, partner with PFS Group — where experience counts.

Our Services
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See patient care in a new light.
Call us at 713.784.4410 to learn how we can help resolve outstanding balances.
ClaimTECH Solutions Company allows auto insurance carriers and medical providers of care the opportunity to resolve third party medical claims quickly and fairly. Auto Carriers that use ClaimTECH Solutions experience substantial savings by paying claims quickly, at a much reduced dollar amount of the original claim, directly to the medical providers of services. In addition, medical providers enjoy timelier payments and better reimbursements.
**Publication Information**

The Texas Tumbleweed is published quarterly by the Texas Bluebonnet Chapter of American Association of Healthcare Administrative Management as a communication medium to Chapter members. Opinions expressed in articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Texas Bluebonnet Chapter or its members.

Members are encouraged to submit articles and report news of interest to the membership. Contact the chapter editor to obtain deadlines for submitting articles. The editor reserves the right to edit any submission for clarity and length, and to accept or reject any submission. Please send all submissions (articles in MS Word, advertising in .jpg, .pdf, or .tif files) to:

Jocelyn Cox, Publications Chair - jocelyn.cox@christushealth.org

**Submission Deadlines:**

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- Advertising with sponsorship only.
- All ads and logos should be in .eps, .tif, .jpg, or .pdf format at a minimum of 300 dpi.
- Ads cannot be “re-sized”.
- Please do not send any graphics or logos embedded in MS Word or Acrobat text files.

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Please submit ads to: info@txaaham.org

**AAHAM now offers certification exams three times a year, in March, July and November.**
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Thank you to our Chapter Leadership!

For information on open positions, please contact: scott.a.noel@gmail.com