

# DR. KNOW

We won't change the way you do billing...we'll change the way you do business!

An e-newsletter created by **PLEXUS HEALTH SOLUTIONS, INC.**

## WELCOME ABOARD

### *New Staff*

Plexus has hired Thelma Trevino who has an Associates Degree in accounting and will complete her B.S. in Management in December. She is anxious to learn medical billing and apply her skills on your behalf. As soon as she is fully trained you may be having contact via the phone with her.

## HITECH

### *Update*

In an article in the HBMA *Billing* magazine May-June 2010, there is a stress on the updates to the HIPAA HITECH breach rules that became effective 9/23/09.

They primarily want to emphasize, "If all of your information is encrypted to government standards when in motion, at rest, or in storage, you have earned a free pass on reporting breaches." Plexus encrypts both our off-site and on-site backups. We highly recommend that when you back up your local software systems and

there is any patient information in it, you need to encrypt. You can obtain some of encryption software for free. The free ones work just fine, just may take a little longer to perform the task.

Keep in mind that if you encrypt you will not have to notify your patients or the government of any breaches. The needed software is a small price to pay for this peace of mind. Call Diane if you would like information on our software.

Keep in mind that the fines and penalties are PER INCIDENT (each name that is on your lost media), this could really add up.

## SINCE THE LAST NEWSLETTER...

### *Physician Fees Update*

In the last 30 days we have seen quite a bit of angst over the Medicare reimbursement issue.

First the President had averted the lowered payments for 30 days, and then another 30 days and now we will have to deal with it again in November.

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**You can view past issues of this newsletter on our website.**

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## Since Last Newsletter... Con't

Then there was the holding of Medicare payments until Congress voted on the reductions. Now that money is finally being released and finding it's way into your accounts.

Then Congress voted to go ahead with the 2.2% raise in fees AFTER the hold was released. So you should be getting a lot of little payments in the near future.

Keep in mind that with each aversion of the percentage reduction in payment, the reduction is not eliminated it is just postponed. When we get around to 2011, the reduction will be over 27%. It just keeps adding up.

The only way to stop this is to change the law and eliminate the SGR formula for physician reimbursements.

Consider contacting your Congressman and telling them how you feel about this yo-yo payment method, otherwise, eventually, we will have to absorb a huge reduction.

## IDENTITY THEFT

*Insurance Available*

I am sure you've seen the commercial where the guy has his SS# plastered on the semi driving around New York City. He has an anti-identity theft company. Well you don't see it on TV anymore because his own company failed to protect him against ID theft.

With that in mind we have found out that the Wisconsin Medical Society Insurance & Financial Services is offering ID theft coverage. Usually this coverage is less than \$100 per year.

If you are interested give them a call. 866-442-3810.

Check out the section in orange:

[http://www.wired.com/magazine/2010/06/found\\_medical\\_bills/](http://www.wired.com/magazine/2010/06/found_medical_bills/)

## PECOS

*Peer Pressure*

Did you know that if you are a referral based physician, like many specialists are, that the referring provider must be registered with PECOS in order for you to get paid? This applies even if the referring provider is not a Medicare physician.

Encourage your colleagues to fill out the PECOS forms and get them in.

## MEDICARE GLITCH

*MAC Kept Silent*

In one state (Not Wisconsin) the Medicare intermediary encountered a glitch in their software system that resulted in a reduction in benefits to the tune of \$300 per patient.

The state decided not to notify the thousands of recipients that there was a problem in their system unless they called to complain about the reduced payments.

These notifications are to be announced on the MAC's website. They will not send individual letters or notify practices of these issues. But this state did not even post a notice on their site.

There was no indication that this MAC was sanctioned or had any other action taken against them by the feds.

## HOSPITALISTS

*Fastest Growing Medical Specialty*

Avoidable readmissions are the costliest mistakes for the government and taxpayer and now they occur for 1 in 5 patients. This uses up \$17.4 billion of Medicare's current \$102.6 billion budget.

The answer? A new specialty – hospitalists. This area of care has grown from just 800 physicians in the 1990's to over 30,000 today. Because they are involved in everything that happens to a patient from entry to treatment and discharge they are credited with the reduction of the length of stay in the hospital by 17%-30% and reducing costs by 13%-20% according to studies in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.