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Upcoming Practice Meetings:

Southern Nevada:
Tuesday, June 23rd at
Summerlin Hospital

Northern Nevada:
Wednesday June 24th at
SureStay Plus Hotel by Best
Western 1981 Terminal Way,
Reno NV 89502

Visit our Website
www.silverstateaco.com

Contact Us:
(702) 800-7084
(775) 391-6484
Compliance Line:
(702) 751-0834

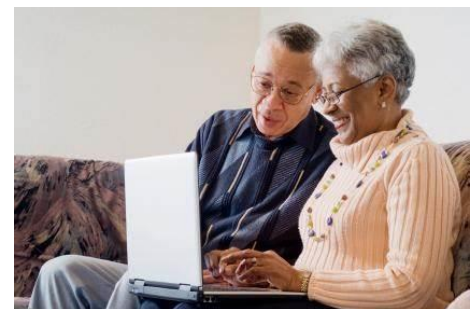
[SilverStateACO@
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TeleHealth Services – Here to Stay?

In 2010, when the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (“ACA”) was passed, it included directives for medical practices to utilize more digital and technology based systems to deliver medical care. The hope and belief was that it would improve care while reducing costs. Since then, CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services) has published additional guidelines, responsive to the ever-changing technology available.

The availability and ease of use of telehealth has been improved. Although CMS allows providers to bill for telehealth services, there have been many specific rules for doing so, and a limited number of medical conditions and services for which it was approved. In fact, in 2016, CMS reported to Congress that only about one quarter of 1% of all Medicare Fee-for-Service beneficiaries had utilized a telehealth service. And, most of those services were for psychological or psychiatric services.

Effective January 1, 2020, CMS streamlined rules and added certain services (and their billing codes) to the list of allowable telehealth services. In reaction to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (“PHE”), CMS further expanded the list. CMS realized that in a world where it can be dangerous for a patient to venture out – even if to go see a doctor – it’s preferable for the patient to have a doctor visit remotely. This helps protect the patient as well as the clinic staff and patients who need to be *seen* and are, therefore, in the clinic.



The following is a link to the list of allowed services and billing codes for telehealth, updated April 30, 2020. Before providing services on the presumption that CMS will allow – and pay for them – we urge you to confer with your billing company. Also, check the website often to be sure that CMS has not changed it or

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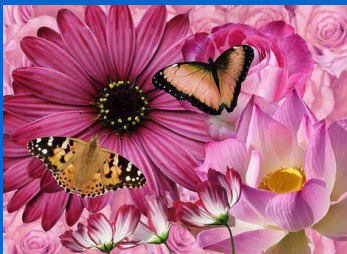
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Happy Mother's Day

allowed it to expire. In addition, some of the services require a modifier, which should be also be confirmed.

<https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-General-Information/Telehealth/Telehealth-codes>

That being said, we urge you to take this opportunity to continue caring for your patients during this Public Health Emergency and simultaneously acclimating them, as well as your providers and staff, to remote visits. CMS has fast-tracked adding the availability of many services to this list. We recommend you fast track your clinic's implementation of telehealth. It has the potential to add additional resources to your 'basket' when the world returns to "normal". As nobody



has a clear sense of exactly when that will be, take advantage of all options available to you *now*.

Fraud, Waste and Abuse

CMS reminds us that, although they have eased some restrictions on delivery of services, they will *not* tolerate fraud, waste or abuse of CMS services, billing or payments. All practice staff should have been educated as to the definition - and prevention - of fraud, waste or abuse. Most importantly, all should understand that mishandling or manipulation of Medicare services is not only detrimental to the entire system, costing taxpayers dearly, but could also harm patients if medical records are incorrect as a result.

The first – and perhaps most important – thing we should remind everyone is, “If you see something, say something”. Sometimes, misuse can be accidental. Sometimes, a staff member may not be aware that he/she is doing something

wrong. Sometimes it's purposeful. You need not be sure *why* something happened in order to report it as a possible violation or incidence of noncompliance. Each practice should have a means for reporting an incident without fear of punishment. In addition, you may always call Silver State ACO's dedicated compliance line, 702-751-0834.

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SOMETHING,
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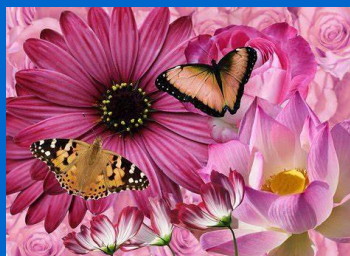
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There are other, often simple and straightforward ways to prevent fraud, waste or abuse. Here are some:

- Always check new applicants against the List of Excluded Individuals and Entities (LEIE), published by the OIG (Office of Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services). Anyone included on the list has been strictly forbidden from working in federally funded healthcare. Medicare will not pay for any services rendered by anyone on the list.
- Report any suspicious activity relating to Medicare services or billing.
- Be sure your practice has a Code of Conduct and that it clearly states that the standards are for everyone at all levels of responsibility in the organization. Confirm that every staff member has read it, agreed to it, and signed a document confirming that they have.
- Ensure accuracy of billing. Just as you check carefully that everything has been billed for, be sure to check that there is no duplicate billing to Medicare or for any services already paid for by another payer.

Keep in mind that fraud, waste or abuse of CMS services may not only endanger your patients and your ability to continue servicing them (if CMS discontinues your contract), but you could also be liable for substantial fees and penalties and (for purposeful fraud) prison.

SECURITY. SECURITY. SECURITY
... for all Technology Based Systems

We can't say it enough. Now is the time. Update your security programs; ask your IT company to review any weaknesses they detect in your system; and educate, educate, educate! Your staff is your first, last and best defense. Be sure they know what's expected of them and of the vulnerability they present for the whole practice if they are not careful about securing PHI (Protected Health Information) and PII (Personable Identifiable Information). Be sure to consider vulnerabilities that might exist at the home if you have staff that are working remotely.



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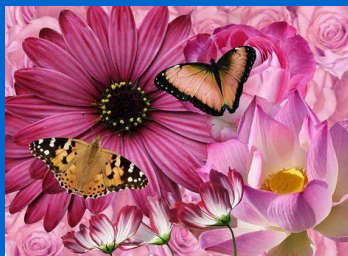
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Silver State ACO COMPLIANCE LINE

SSACO maintains a dedicated phone line for reporting compliance issues. As people acclimate to this new COVID-19 world, there are many changes which can make detecting possible mistakes or lapses more difficult. Do not let your guard down. CMS may be changing some protocols to assist in letting you continue to care for your patients but they will *not* ignore mishandling of Protected Health Information (PHI) or forgive Medicare fraud, waste or abuse. If you have a compliance issue with a Medicare patient which you'd like to report, please reach out to us.

**SILVER STATE ACO COMPLIANCE LINE:
702-751-0834**

You may remain anonymous.

Prevent the Spread, Avoid Getting Sick

As various states begin to "open up", we in Nevada are watching closely. Amid the debate as to the best time and way to do so, nobody suggests that we just forego all precautions completely. Quite the contrary, as people return to stores, parks and other places where groups can congregate, the need to maintain our distance and be vigilant about not spreading the virus becomes all the more important.



SPOTLIGHT



And, remember, each time you avoid spreading the virus, everyone benefits.

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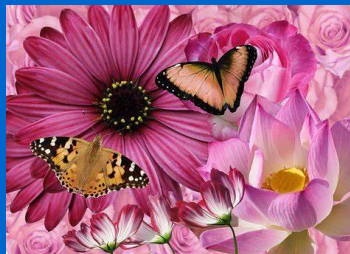
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REMINDERS:

UHS (the Valley Health System in Las Vegas), Silver State ACO partner and preferred hospital network, has graciously offered to help practices implement Telehealth services quickly, efficiently and economically. Please contact Sharon@silverstateaco.com for additional information.



USHS (US Health Systems) – not to be confused with UHS - is Silver State ACO's care coordination team. Please call them for help with patients for whom you'd appreciate an extra set of eyes or hands. [833-208-0588](tel:833-208-0588)

Mother's Day

Setting aside a day to celebrate mothers can be traced to ancient Greeks and Romans who held festivals in honor of their mother goddesses. The second Sunday in May became an official U.S. holiday in 1914, by decree of President Woodrow Wilson.

Though we can't confirm the statistics now, a number of years ago it was reported that there were more calls made on Mother's Day than on any other day of the year.

Send a card. Call your mother. DON'T go see her if you've not been in self isolation with her, if you are out and about because of your job, or if she is elderly or has underlying conditions. Keep her safe by staying away.

Final Word:

Please mark your calendars. We have rescheduled our practice meetings for June 23rd at 7:30 and 11:30 a.m. at Summerlin Hospital (Southern Nevada) and June 24th at 5 p.m. (Northern Nevada). Please note the new location for the Northern Nevada meeting: Surestay Plus Hotel by Best Western, 1981 Terminal Way in Reno.

We will continue to monitor the current Public Health Emergency situation, laws and guidelines set forth by federal, state and local governments and will keep you updated. We look forward to seeing you all at the meetings. For now, if you'd like to be entered into a raffle at the meeting, reply to the email to which this newsletter was attached with the words "Healing and Happy".



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