



Rehab Net News Update

R E H A B I L I T A T I O N N E T W O R K O F A R K A N S A S

BECKY'S SCHEDULE

- Nov. 5 Office Manager's Mtg
Nov. 12 Rehab Net Board Mtg.
Nov. 12 ASBPT Mtg
Nov. 17 CMSA Mtg
Nov. 23-27 Vacation/Holiday

Important Numbers

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Web site <http://www.arptb.org>

ArPTA Web site <http://www.arpta.org>

APTA Web site <http://www.apta.org>

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For member only section

TAKING THE FEAR OUT OF AUDITS

Many therapists and clinic administrators view audits as threats or punitive evaluations. The very thought of an audit can cause fear and anxiety. Being prepared for an audit can alleviate these fears. The key to surviving an audit is self evaluation of your documentation well before the medical records are requested. Moving into an electronic world in your practice does not necessarily improve your documentation, but it can certainly make your life easier when used properly.

Recently, AMS hosted an outreach program by CMS to discuss the inception of the Recovery Audit Contractors (RAC) program in Arkansas. One way to be ready for these audits is by conducting self-audits of your medical records and billing practices. This type of internal review will point out billing and coding patterns that may represent a concern. Make sure your office team understands the effect proper coding can have on an audit. Under coding is not a remedy to ensure you are not audited. Good documentation, either by establishing excellent templates in your electronic record or standardized methods of telling the story of a patient's visit, will greatly increase your chances of being paid promptly or winning an appeal.

If you think of your office visit with a patient as a story of the encounter, that might help you get the right information. There is an introduction which should tell why the patient is there (objective findings). The plot should outline what is taking place with the patient (subjective findings); include all complaints and improvements voiced by the patient. It does not have to be a long narrative but if you list the complaints you need to list a recommendation or treatment offered to address it. The end of the story should be the treatment given. Be sure to document your treatment times too. CMS prefers you show the treatment time for each intervention given as well as the total treatment time.

Poor documentation is the number one reason claims are denied and lost at appeal. You know what you did for the patient, you know the time spent with the patient and you know how to continue the treatment, but failing to document these things will result in recoupment if not reported in your findings. Self audit can pinpoint deficiencies in your records. Watch for repeated services being denied or down coded by payers and know the appeal process. Trends in your billing practices will show a clear path to claims denial. Also, make sure staff is not just writing off denials without doing research into why the service was denied. Don't always take "no" for an answer.

Consider appointing an audit team that will have the responsibility of developing standardized forms or forms for appeals and creating policies and procedures to effectively communicate with payers. I would recommend that you appoint a staff member to audit five charts per week or even once a month. Start with documentation and follow a claim until it is paid. If there are bumps along the way, note these and correct. Develop a checklist of target areas such as plan of cares signed by physicians, documented attempts to obtain signed plan of cares, procedures coded properly, treatment given follows treatment plan on evaluation, etc.

If you are faced with an audit, make sure your staff understands the who, what and why. Introduce the auditors to your staff and advise them to cooperate but not to discuss your office procedures unless the information is requested.



CLINICS IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Mountaincrest Rehab of
Bella Vista
1801 Forest Hills Blvd.,
Suite 205
Bella Vista, AR 72714
(479) 855-9348

Rehab Net's newest member isn't really a new face. Mountaincrest Rehab of Bella Vista is owned by Joel Sebag, PT, and Stewart Ong, PT. Joel also owns Mountaincrest Rehabilitation, Inc. located in Harrison and Stewart came to work with Joel. They opened Mountaincrest Rehab of Bella Vista in 2004. Their clinic is located in the Highlands Cross Community Building in Bella Vista, AR where they treat neurological, orthopedic and pediatric patients.

Stewart Ong (pictured above) is the full time physical therapist at the clinic and he is assisted by John Bania, PTA. Contract therapists assist as needed.

Stewart states his philosophy as a therapist is to approach pain with respect, use a gentle light touch and to treat an illness of a person as the whole person rather than as a part of that person.

Stewart was trained in the Phillipines but relocated to the United States in 1994 after completing that training. He has worked in both Oklahoma and Arkansas in various settings. He continues to do some home health on the side but his main focus is his private practice clinic.

John Bania, PTA, says he has a dynamic communication style and is adept at building relationships of trust with his patients. His Navy background has provided him an arsenal of exercises to aide his patients to their fullest recovery. He began work with Stewart in 2005 as a rehab tech and obtained his PTA license in 2008. He is Stewart's right hand man.



AthletePlus PT & Sports
Performance
1906 Cambridge Road
Springdale, AR 72762
(479) 751-8437

AthletePlus Physical Therapy & Sports Performance is owned by Chris Cothorn, PT, DPT, CSCS. AthletePlus specializes in lumbar stabilization, orthopedic injuries, athletic injuries, injury prevention, and participates in the Silver Sneakers Senior Fitness Program. Other services offered at the clinic include functional capacities evaluations, work hardening, manual therapy, kinesio taping, and fitness.

Amanda Bohannon is the office manager that handles scheduling for speed training and therapy. She also assists the therapist when needed and has extensive experience in medical offices. Amanda recently added a baby girl to her family that includes two boys.

Chris just received his Doctorate degree in physical therapy. He is the chairman of the Great Arkansas Workout of the Governor's Council on Fitness and is also the Arkansas state director for the National Strength and Conditioning Association. Chris has extensive experience treating patients of all ages, but also has years of training in the treatment of back and neck pain.

Adam Taylor has taken over as Sports Performance Director. Adam is a Certified College Strength and Conditioning Coach who was a University of AR strength coach from 2002 to 2008. Taylor has trained over 50 professional athletes and 1000 collegiate athletes in 6 different sports, including football, basketball, baseball and track. He has trained over 40 All-Americans, indicating his passion for training athletes to become Playmakers at AthletePlus.

Casey Dick has joined AthletePlus as a speed trainer and Quarterback University Director (QB U) for skills training for quarterbacks ages 6 and up. Dick, a native of Allen, TX, first came to AthletePlus to train with Taylor, who also worked out current Carolina Panthers rookie Andrew Davie over the summer to help them prepare for the NFL.

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Letter From the Editor

Rehab Net made our first appearance at the UCA Health Professions Career Fair and had a great time visiting with students. I hope everyone found the student address list of benefit. We are going to continue to participate in the Career Fairs. We will possibly attend the one at ASU in 2010.

Rehab Net is also coordinate luncheon meeting with the PT students at UCA and ASU to talk about private practice in December.

Through these contacts with the students, we hope to encourage them to look to Rehab Net for assistance in job hunting as well as membership if at some point they opt to go into private practice for themselves.

One more thing, Rehab Net is asking Terry Malone, PT, PhD, to come back in the Spring to do his knee course for us.
-Becky

ArPTA Regional Course Offerings

Advanced Lumbo-Pelvic Manual Therapy Interventions

Presented by Steven Forbush, PT, PhD
Dec. 5, 2009
UCA Physical Therapy Department

Musculoskeletal Assessment of Soft Tissue & Soft Tissue

Release Techniques

Presented by Steve Joseph, PT
Nov. 14, 2009
Donald W. Reynolds Center for Health Sciences at ASU

Cost Per Course

ArPTA PT Member	\$85
ArPTA PTA Member	\$60
PT Nonmember	\$125
PTA Nonmember	\$100
Student	\$40

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To register or to learn more call Becky at 866-548-6003

16 Tips to Help Your Business Grow

By Sarah Walmsley

(reprinted from the PT in Motion October 2009)

The secret: Turn patients and physicians into fans

Yesterday as I was going through my mail I was intrigued by an envelope with a hand written address, a welcomed sight among bills and catalogs. I opened it. Inside was a short note from a local running store thanking me for my past patronage...and a \$25 gift card. It just so happens that the day before, during a long run, I decided it was time to purchase a new pair of running shoes. Today at lunch I will be heading to that very running store to put my gift card to go use.

I tell you this story not because I want you to know that I'm a sucker for saving money, but because this is an excellent example of a company that has put thought and effort into customer retention. There probably are 4 retail stores between my office and this particular store where I could buy a new pair of shoes. Several of those stores sell the shoes for less. However, I will make the effort to get to this store because it made an effort to reach out to me. And more important for them, I'll regularly recommend the store to my friends.

Customer retention and marketing programs always have been the lifeblood of any business. But in these challenging economic times, good customer services can provide the boost that your physical therapy clinic may need to survive and even thrive. In the current climate, every business needs a differentiating factor. An effective marketing and customer service program makes an excellent distinction.

As you probably know, the cost to acquire a new patient in an average private, outpatient physical therapy clinic is about 50% more than the cost to obtain a new

patient via referral. It's pretty clear that turning current and past patients and referring physicians into referral courses is much more cost effective than acquiring new patients by other means. Remember that, even in direct access environments, patients often first go to their primary care physicians, who then refer the patients to PTs.

Marketing and customer retention programs don't have to be expensive. Further, the effort often produces big returns. The key, however, is to know your audiences and what makes them happy.

Outpatient physical therapy clinics often have two main referral target audiences: local physicians and patients both past and present. Consider each separately when developing an outreach program.

The secret to using these audiences to gain business is to turn them into fans. Good customer service is all about bringing your customers back and sending them away happy so that they will pass on positive feedback about your business. The essence of good customer retention and marketing programs is forming a meaningful relationship between your business and the customer.

Here are 16 things that you can do right now to turn your referring audiences—physicians and patients—into fans who will help your business grow.

Increase Physician Referrals

1. During your personal visits with referring physicians, give them useful promotional items that they are likely to use on a daily basis. We have created notepads with treatment options pre-printed on them so the physician need only to check off

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their orders instead of writing each one out every time. The simple step may give an extra 30 seconds in his or her day. That may not sound like much, but it's always appreciated. The branded pads also keep our company and it's contact information readily available to the potential new patients.

2. Whenever you receive a patient from a physician who has never before referred to your clinic, take a few moments to write a personal thank you letter and send it with a packet of information about your services.
3. Collaborate with your top referring physicians when a media opportunity presents itself. If you're holding a grand opening event, invite them to attend and to offer their expertise to reporters for interviews. Even if they don't mention your clinic or physical therapy, keep in mind that when their business grows so does yours.
4. Don't take your regularly referring physicians for granted. Continue to thank them for referrals even if they've already referred 150 patients to you. Handwritten cards from the clinic owner or individual physical therapists are a great, quick, and inexpensive way to thank them for the continued business.
5. Visit your referring physicians on a regular basis. Show them that you are taking time out of your day to visit their office and staff and that you personally are interested in their practices.
6. Make personal visits to physicians who have never referred to your clinic before. Never underestimate the power of a face-to-face meeting to make an impression.
7. Survey your referring physicians to find out what they want and their preferred forms of communication. Then abide by the feedback. Most physicians are willing to take 5-10 minutes out of their day to answer a quick e-mail survey if they know that they'll benefit. For example, if a particular physician lets you know that he or she prefers not to schedule office visits on Fridays, be sure to take note and respect his or her wishes.
8. Create a "Welcome to the neighborhood" packet for new physicians that includes a letter from the local clinic or company owner, information on your services, and something unique, such as a reprint of an article written by phone of your physical therapists or a DVD containing recent news coverage.
9. Position your company as a source on information for physicians. Distribute a newsletter or e-newsletter with useful information about industry trends and topics. Offer anything they might find useful. Make sure that it's not just a commercial about your clinic.
10. Deliver candy, flowers, apples, or whatever else is in season randomly to physician's offices with a handwritten note thanking them for their business. This

helps to build a personal relationship with the physician and also is a great way to move past the front desk, even in offices that typically discourage access.

Turn Patients into Fans

1. Individual physical therapists or the practice owner should send handwritten notes to new patients thanking them for choosing your services. Add a personal note, such as your company's strength in addressing their particular injury.
2. Give a gift certificate to a complementary business as part of the discharge process for all patients. When they use it they'll remember your thoughtful gesture.
3. Shadow a patient during one of his or her physician's visits. This will not only show that you support the patient and are interested in all aspects of recovery, but also provide you "face time" with the physician. That is especially effective in physician's offices that otherwise would not allow you beyond the front desk.
4. Create a 3-month callback program in which your facility's physical therapists personally contact discharged patients to check up on their recovery. This is particularly effective for direct access patients who are more likely to return because they don't require a referral from a physician.
5. Stay top-of-mind with past and present patients by contacting them at least once a year by mailing a birthday card. Most people greatly appreciate the sentiment.
6. Hold free seminars open to the public in your clinic. Invite former patients with injuries related to the seminar topic. After the seminar, thank them for coming with a phone call or personal note.

Creating a comprehensive marketing and customer retention program doesn't have to be expensive or difficult. It just has to make your target audiences happy enough to recommend your services. Small, thoughtful acts can go a long way in effectively differentiating your business from the competition.

Just a few well-planned gestures will keep your business top-of-mind and your customers happy. Soon enough they will become your biggest fans.

REHAB NET



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Medicare Physicians Fairness Act of 2009

While the US House of Representatives

Statement by APTA President R. Scott Ward, PT, PhD

October 22, 2009

The American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) is disappointed by the Senate's actions yesterday to block S. 1776, the Medicare Physicians Fairness Act of 2009, legislation that would have protected the ability of physical therapists to serve the rehabilitation needs of seniors and people with disabilities.

S. 1776, introduced last week by Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), would have eliminated the sustainable growth rate (SGR) and prevented a 21% reduction in Medicare payments to providers set to go into effect January 1, 2010. Though a 1-year fix of the SGR is included in the Senate Finance Committee's health care reform proposal, APTA supports a long-term solution to the flawed formula. Congress should eliminate existing flawed Medicare payment policies that impede patient access to cost-effective outpatient rehabilitation services provided by physical therapists, including repeal of the SGR and the arbitrary outpatient therapy caps on services.

Throughout the health care debate, APTA continues to work with members of Congress to ensure that America's seniors and people with disabilities have access to high quality care rehabilitative services.

Health Care Reform Discussions Continue on Senate Proposal

Sens Ben Nelson (D-NE) and Olympia Snowe (R-ME), met with Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) on two occasions this week as a part of their ongoing effort to shape the final Senate health care reform bill. Though lawmakers haven't been forthcoming with details on the discussion, Snowe said that whatever emerges, it would be hard to hold a vote on a final, amended bill by the end of November given the steps that remain to introduce the package, debate it, and consider amendments to it, says an article in [Roll Call](#). Democratic leaders in the Senate and the House of Representatives had hoped to hold votes on their health care packages by Thanksgiving.

APTA's [latest health care reform podcast](#) outlines the physical therapy priorities contained in the Senate Finance Committee's America's Healthy Future Act, including a 1-year fix on the sustainable growth rate and a program in the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' Innovation Center to research direct access models for expanding access to physical therapy for Medicare beneficiaries in rural areas.

**Owners' Retreat Coming Feb. 5,
2010 at Winrock Conference
Center on Mt. Petit Jean. Mark
Your Calendars!**