



ARIZONA
COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION

Arizona Collectors Association Newsletter

"Healthcare Collection Practices"

Friday, March 16, 2007

Embassy Suites Hotel
2630 East Camelback Road
Phoenix, AZ

7:30-8:00 am ~ Continental Breakfast & Registration
8:00-12:00 pm ~ Program

This new ACA seminar focuses on those who are on the phone making collection calls on healthcare accounts. Knowing the different types of accounts and healthcare laws will help collectors through the progression and cycle of the various healthcare accounts. Participants also will learn how to be, not only effective and productive but, professional in their day-to-day calls.

The topics of the seminar include:

- Types of healthcare accounts
- Lifecycle of a healthcare account
- Collections and applicable healthcare laws
- The healthcare collection call

The Healthcare Collection Practices seminar will bring you one step closer to becoming a Healthcare Collection Specialist (HCS). You will receive 1.5 Professional Development Units (PDU) for your attendance.

Registration Deadline – Monday, March 12th – No Cancellations/Refunds after that date

Fax registration to: 602-996-2330

Questions? 602-996-1220

Cost: First Registrant \$50

Payment Calculation: (#) _____ X \$50 = \$ _____

Additional Registrants \$30 each

Payment Calculation: (#) _____ X \$30 = \$ _____

Total = \$ _____

Check To: Arizona Collectors Association

Mail To: ACA, 10221 N. 32nd Street, Suite D, Phoenix, AZ 85028

Credit Card Payment: _____ Visa _____ MasterCard _____ American Express _____ Discover _____ Exp Date _____

Card #: _____ Cardholder's Name: _____

Name (#1) _____ Title: _____

Organization _____ Address _____

City _____ Zip Code _____ Telephone # _____ e-mail _____

Name (#2) _____ Name (#3) _____

Title _____ Title _____

Customer Service: Looking at Perception or Reality?- David R. Glezeman

Third party collectors often deal with hostile consumers who are reluctant, if not totally opposed, to resolve their delinquent accounts because of what they believe was poor service or inattention by the service providers. How creditors serve their customers and collectors handle delinquent consumers has a long-term impact for our businesses.

The health care and higher education industries enjoy many similarities, including perceptions that:

- Both industries are solely not for profit – meaning that cost containment and quality service are not important.
- Office employees do very little, are not caring and are interchangeable.
- Patients/students always are overcharged for service.
- Customer service is never good, or “what can you expect...”

How do our clients overcome the negative perceptions about customer service? Can they measure the quality of service and then show how their actions can improve customer service? In many ways, these questions are tied together as clients balance the development and maintenance of quality customer service programs and recovering outstanding receivables.

Patient negativity can result from many issues. Even something as innocent as asking insurance-related questions during intake can cause such reactions. “Why are you so concerned about me paying when I can barely stand up?” Emergency situations also can bring out the worst (or sometimes the best) in people. Yet, once the patient or their caregiver have calmed down, they don't remember the quality of care – only that someone dared to ask questions about money and insurance. Having

Many facilities use follow-up surveys to solicit patient feedback about the quality of service received during an office visit or hospital stay. This data can provide great insight into the service experience. These methods also can be used to verify consumer information in a non-threatening environment. In addition, it opens the door to identify information that was not correctly provided, thus reducing the potential for future disputes. From the creditor's standpoint, these surveys also will help pinpoint issues and concerns that should be addressed.

Comment cards also are a great source for instant feedback. Customers are more likely to acknowledge the services they receive, particularly high quality service, immediately upon completion of their appointment. Having this mechanism available can provide information about service quality while the experience still is fresh.

What should both creditors and collectors do when we are dealing with staff whose service levels need improvement? Training should be an ongoing process for any service provider (and third party collectors provide a critical service in today's economy). Employees who have been cited for poor service (e.g., poor telephone manners, not listening to the consumer) are likely to be defensive if confronted in the wrong way. Using the feedback about one staff member as a “case study” can be turned into a benefit for all staff. Posting positive letters and comment cards for everyone to see is a great way to reinforce quality performance and service.

In an era where patient and customer loyalty can easily be swayed, quality customer service often is as important as qual-

Message from the President Lou Valerio

As I begin my term as your Arizona Unit President I certainly have a number of people I would like to thank for this great opportunity and challenge.

Truthfully our state unit would not be in the excellent position it is in without the tireless effort of all my predecessors along with the volunteers who have served on our Board of Directors. It was an honor to have many of our units past presidents in attendance this last November at our annual meeting.

Our unit as many of you are aware is fortunate to retain the services of Silver & Cherner as our Executive Directors. Both Linda and Bob Cherner have made our organization a better run unit.

Previously I mentioned that this year we have a great opportunity and challenge ahead of all of us. The challenge is simply to be selected as a top performing unit by ACA Int'l at it's annual meeting this coming July in Chicago. To make this happen we will have to move diligently and improve a few areas that we are not highly ranked or competitive. As we are all in the collection business I can't believe we are not up to this goal. As I said in November each and every one of us or our businesses are goal driven.

I invite any member of the unit to contact me directly if you would be interested in helping us achieve our goal. We need people to help serve on many committees including, membership, ACPAC, education, communication, just to name a few.

The AZ Collectors Association will continue to offer to our members at reduced price educational seminars for all members of your staff. Please visit our new and revised web site for seminar announcements and other information important to our industry.

Finally I would like to invite any member would like to sit down and discuss the collection business with myself or other members of the Board to contact me directly so we can make plans to meet. Whether it is at your place of business or at my office in Tempe at Progressive Financial, I am sure we can all learn something new from each other.

In closing I wish all of you a great 2007. Hit the numbers!!!!

ity care for many individuals. As many of our customers shift from the baby boomer generation to Generations X and Y, known as Millenials, the expectations for quality service and immediate care are constantly increasing. As a result, even how we answer our telephones or how quickly we respond to consumers may influence their decisions on whether to pay or question their debts and whether the client will retain or lose these customers.

- David R. Glezerman is bursar at Temple University in Philadelphia, PA. An ACA certified instructor, Glezerman chairs ACA's Government Services Program committee and serves as a member of the Creditor's International and Education Council committees

Uninsured Discounting Policies May Impact Healthcare Collections

The healthcare collection environment continues to undergo changes in response to market and regulatory influence. Over the past few years, a lot of attention has been given to healthcare pricing, especially for hospitals. Traditionally, hospitals have had to maintain their pricing schedules to work with insurance reimbursement schedules and compliance concerns rather than in relation to the cost of providing the services. With the consumer directed Healthcare Savings Accounts and a larger portion of people forgoing insurance, there is also more shopping that is being done by consumers to get the best price for non emergency services.

In response to this, many healthcare providers over the past 1-2 years has been offering self pay (uninsured) discounts. There are many ways that healthcare providers craft these discount plans, but one method is to apply the average reimbursement rates for insurance payments as a starting point. This can be an incredible discount compared to standard billed charges and it is not unreasonable to see 15% to 70% discounts depending on provider and type of services provided.

This is a huge change in the billing practices of healthcare providers and everyone is wondering where this will shake out over time. Here are a few possible scenarios or issues to consider:

1. More people may be weighing the cost of paying insurance premiums and the cost they bear outside of their insurance (copays, deductibles, non covered services, out of network rates, etc). With liberal uninsured discounting being given by many providers, some people may decide that it is cheaper to go without insurance and pocket the difference (as long as they don't have a catastrophic illness). Will this increase the uninsured population in the US?
2. Providers may collect more before the accounts go to collections because patients feel they are getting a discount and the average size of the bills are going to be considerably less than they would have traditionally been. Will this impact agency recovery rates and write-off from providers? Will it reduce the average balance of assignments to agencies and, consequently, unit yield?
3. What will be the financial impact to providers? Will the increase in the self pay portion of the providers receivables be offset by increased collections or will it be compounded by lower margins and create financial difficulties for providers?

Where this all shakes out remains to be seen. Overall, it appears that these pricing changes are being received positively by consumers and regulators alike but the unintended downstream impact may change that outlook. Stay tuned because one thing we do know, it will continue to change.

Chris Becraft
President
Collection Service Bureau, Inc.
Chairman - ACA Healthcare Services Program Committee

Your ACA Board of Directors

President

Lou Valerio
Progressive Financial Services, Inc
Ph: 602-453-8752
Fax: 888-484-0013
lval@swlink.net

President-Elect

Joe Spiek
Healthcare Collections, LLC
Ph: 602-445-1912
Fax: 602-943-3931
joe.spiek@healthcareinc.com

Vice-President

Chris Becraft
Collection Service Bureau
Ph: 480-947-7657
Fax: 480-947-2170
Chris@csbcollections.com

Treasurer

Pat Esquivel
Jerol Kaplan Law Offices, PC
Ph: 602-258-8433
Fax: 602-258-4302
pesquivel@kdelaw.com

Director

Bob Antenucci
Phoenix, AZ 85051-9570
Ph: 602-371-1001
Fax: 602-371-0200
bob@jrbrothers.phxcoxmail.com

Director

Brad Klein
Paid In Full, Inc.
Ph: 623-580-7207 ext. 203
Fax: 623-298-5688
brad@WeCollectIt.com

Director

Greg Land
Progressive Financial Services, Inc
Ph: 602- 453-8790
Fax: 602- 453.8773
glang@progressivefinancial.com

Director

Chris Lehr
Healthcare Collections, LLC
Ph: 602-445-1922
Fax: 602-943-3931
chris.lehr@healthcareinc.com

Director

Bob Schunn
Canyon State Professional Services, Inc.
Ph: 602-995-9110
Fax: 602-995-9110
canyonstate@hotmail.com

Past President

Scott Sievert
Audited Financial Management
Resolvment, Inc
Ph: 480-634-6045
Fax: 480-634-6047
scott@auditedresolvment.com

MAP Chair for Arizona

Pat Esquivel
Jerol Kaplan Law Offices, PC
Ph: 602-258-8433
Fax: 602-258-4302
pesquivel@kdelaw.com

2007 Program Schedule — Mark Your Calendar

June 15, Friday

September 21, Friday

November 16, Friday - Annual Meeting

Arizona Collectors Association
12001 N 32nd St Ste D
Phoenix, AZ 85028-3849