

April 2006



HEALTHCARE COMPLIANCE + NETWORKING INC.

UNEXPECTED VISITORS

If you have not yet been visited by an unannounced payer or government representative, it is almost certain you will. Do you know what to do? The first thing to remember is – **do not panic!** Easier said than done? Here are some helpful hints on how to handle an unannounced visit from a non-law-enforcement agency.

- Be proactive and educate your front office staff about the visiting protocols. Conduct a self-assessment to test your compliance with the condition of participation.
- Make certain your entire staff understands that no one can come into your facility and walk around without proper screening and supervision. Be courteous but firm about this.
- Verify who the person is. Ask for a picture ID and/or call the agency he or she represents to confirm that they know about the visit. Please feel free to ask why he or she is there, and what might have triggered the visit.
- Contact your consultant to let him or her know about the visit.

THERAPY CAP

Although the approved exception to the therapy cap gives us a little breathing room, keep in mind that it expires on December 31, 2006. We urge you to continue applying pressure. Contact your congressional representative, and ask for a repeal of the cap.

To learn more about your congressman, see <http://www.congress.org/congressorg/dbq/officials>. You can find model letters on our web site at <http://www.hcan.net/documents.asp>. We are already three months into 2006; please make this a priority!

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OUTSOURCING BILLING DUTIES

Here are some important points to consider when you are thinking about outsourcing billing tasks:

- **Knowledge & Skill** – How many years has the company's staff been involved in the billing process?
- **Experience & Added Value** – What are the credentials of the staff and/or principals of the company? What did they do before becoming billing agents, and for whom? Are other services included in the billing fee (consulting, for example)?
- **Infrastructure** – What kind of billing system will the company use? Is the system capable of generating integrated reports? Did the company invest in the system, or do they use billing software that some payers give away free? Will the company do your billing in-house or outsource the tasks further?
- **References** – It is wise to contact at least three references and ask questions. "How do you receive your reports?" "Does the billing company respond to your inquiries, and always answer questions promptly?" "How do you perceive staff turnover within the company?"
- **Rate** – The company's rate must be competitive. Do not choose your company on the basis of price alone. Remember, you get what you pay for. A lower rate is not always your best value. When billing is not properly performed, you end up paying eventually!

REMEMBER THIS QUARTER!

File your Medicare Credit Balance Report! You can download instructions from our web site at <http://www.hcan.net/documents.asp>. Look for the *Credit Balance Report*. Remember, you must file with help from your billing agent, and the report is due 30 days after the end of each quarter. Failure to file results in 100% withholding of your Medicare payments!

want more information?

Visit www.hcan.net or call 904.398.0506

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