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PULASKI COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY

NEWS

When you think professional, ethical, quality healthcare, think physicians of Pulaski County Medical Society.

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AWP Bills SB 43 & 44 Return Patients' Rights to Choose

Senate Bills 43 and 44 (Patient Protection Act 2005) were approved in an 81-14 vote when the AR House of Representatives voted to return patients' rights to choose their physicians. The bills, which are not expected to face major Senate opposition, will go to the governor's office following Senate approval. Governor Mike Huckabee is expected to sign them into law.

SB43 prohibits health insurance carriers from discriminating against

healthcare providers that meet the carrier's requirements. SB 44 covers violations. The bills were strongly opposed by some of the state's largest major lobbying groups including Arkansas Blue Cross & Blue Shield, labor unions, Tyson and Wal-Mart.

PCMS members joined with physicians from throughout Arkansas in lobbying efforts by the Arkansas Medical Society to pass the bills. The Patient Protection Act (PPA) which passed in 1995 was never enforced. A ruling by the 8th Circuit Court is expected soon.

Excerpt from Pulaski County Medical Society Minutes, 1958:
"Dr. Choate then called on Dr. Hollenberg who is on the Medicare Committee to help straighten out claims. Dr. Hollenberg said the job was very 'ornery.'"

REMINDER: Carrier Relations Entering Claims Denials Arena

The Carrier Relations Committee is entering a critical phase of its work: claims denial. In order to more strongly focus our efforts, we need your help.

You may have already received a letter with a short survey enclosed about on-line claims processing. Clinic administrators were asked to complete the questionnaire and return in the



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Continued From "Claims Denials"

self-addressed, stamped envelope enclosed for your convenience. If you did not receive a questionnaire but would like to participate, the survey is attached with this newsletter. Just complete the survey and FAX to 663-1737.

As you know, we have recently looked at the results of the survey of claims denials that clinics have experienced with the insurance carriers, and our consultants reported on the results of H.E.L.P. log tabulations from data provided by many of you. Many clinics have participated in the past three years in the H.E.L.P. study, and we have learned many valuable things about problem areas with the carriers.

At this stage, we are looking more closely at ways that clinics and hospitals can shorten their contact time and payment delays in the future. On the

following page, you will find a few questions about carrier relations that we are asking you to consider. Based on the data from this short survey and some in-depth surveys later, we hope to offer several alternatives to improving the interaction between providers and insurance companies.

Please try to complete your responses and return the survey page by March 5th. To encourage wider participation, we will conduct a drawing from the names of those who return this questionnaire, for dinner for two at the Capriccio Grill Restaurant at the Peabody Hotel. The results of this survey and the latest findings from the H.E.L.P. logs will be presented at the next Carrier Relations luncheon meeting to be scheduled in April. You will be notified of the date.

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Concealed Health Care Costs:

Most health insurance companies refuse to make their list of medical fees available, keeping patients and physicians in the dark about the cost of health care services. In response, the American Medical Association voted in December to call on insurance regulators to require all private insurers to make available the fee schedules used to determine payment for medical services.

Initial Clinic Manager Meeting a SUCCESS!!

The initial session of clinic manager meetings went well. Illness held attendance down, but there were 25 representatives from 23 different clinics participating in the February meetings. More than 35 clinics have confirmed their attendance for the March meetings. We encourage your participation in future meetings and hope the attendance grows each month.

In the initial meetings, we were able to identify many problem areas that clinics are facing. While some issues were the same across the board, we did find that small clinics and mid-size clinics face a very different set of issues than the larger clinics.

Not only will these meetings be an opportunity for the Pulaski County Medical Society to develop new programs and services to assist members, but will also be a convenient forum for clinic personnel to network with each other and gain insight into the handling of common problems in the daily business of running a medical practice.

We would like to thank all the first-time participants for your attendance. We know you are very busy and will continue to do our best to make the meetings both worthwhile and responsive to your needs. Our hope is that, through this collaborative process, we can facilitate solutions that will improve efficiency and result in cost savings for your clinics.

In the next series of meetings we will address issues that were not covered in the February meetings. If you were not in attendance for the February meetings, but would like to participate, please call Brent Stane at 501-653-0700 or email brent@pulaskicms.org.

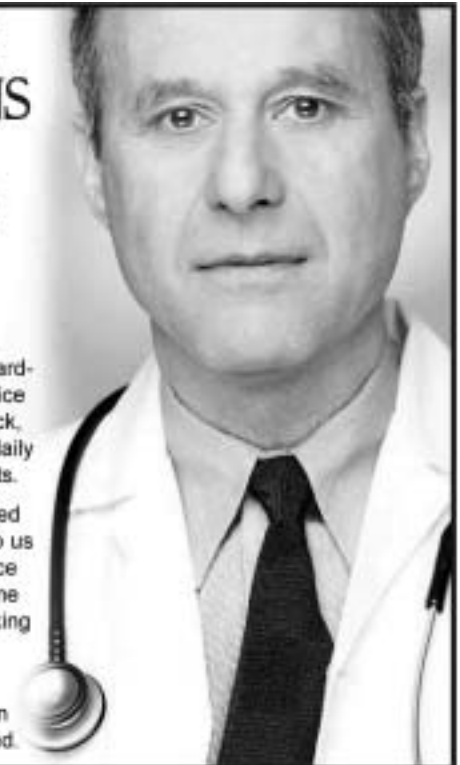
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Calendar of Meetings and Events

CLINIC MANAGERS MEETINGS

Meetings will be held in the 8th Floor Conference Room of the Doctors Building at 500 S. University.

Small Clinics (1 - 3 Physicians):

- Thurs. March 3, 2005 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Thurs. April 7, 2005 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Mid-Size Clinics (4 - 9 Physicians):

- Thurs. March 10, 2005 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Thurs. April 14, 2005 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Large Clinics (10+ Physicians):

- Thurs. March 17, 2005 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Thurs. April 21, 2005 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

- March 8 PCMS Board of Directors
6:00 p.m.
The Hilton Little Rock Metro Center
at 925 South University
- April 19 PCMS Board of Directors
6:00 p.m.
8th Floor Conference Room,
Doctors Building
- April 27 Carrier Relations Committee Meeting
5:30 p.m.
8th Floor Conference Room,
Doctors Building
- May 6-7 "The Medicine Show"
AMS Convention Chateau on the Lake,
Branson, Missouri
- May 17 PCMS Board of Directors
6:00 p.m.
8th Floor Conference Room,
Doctors Building
- July 28 Carrier Relations Committee Meeting
5:30 p.m.
8th Floor Conference Room,
Doctors Building

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Welcome New Members

- **D. Peter Han, MD**
- **D. "Bud" Dickson, MD**

Pulaski County Medical Exchange Notice

The PCME Board of Directors authorized a Medical Exchange dues increase of \$10 per month.

The increase will become effective with the 2005 second quarter billing.

QUESTIONS FOR CLINIC MANAGERS

February 2005

1. Do you use on-line contacts with some or all of your insurance carriers?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Uncertain

1a. If yes, what percent of your contacts use a computer connection?

_____ 25% _____ 50% _____ 75% _____ 100%

_____ Other (please enter your best estimate): _____

2. With which carriers have you used this same on-line system?

_____ BC/BS _____ QualChoice _____ United Health _____ Medicare/aid

_____ Others (any in particular?) _____

3. Do you find the on-line systems more helpful, less helpful, or about the same in resolving claims questions as telephone or mail contacts?

_____ More helpful _____ Less helpful _____ About the same

_____ Uncertain (please explain) _____

4. What can the carriers do that would help improve on-line claims resolution?

5. If you are having problems with specific on-line claims processing, which carrier(s) and type(s) of problems are you having? (If your answer is lengthy or complicated, we would be glad to call you and discuss this in more detail.)

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February | 2005

Pulaski County Medical Society News

- Medical clinic office space available in Bryant. Contact Anita Middleton at 607-2321 for details.
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- Conversational Spanish classes beginning week of March 14. For more info contact Arkansas Institute of Languages at 312-2220.
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- Land available for medical facility site in Little Rock. For details call LaShawnda Williams at 664-7807.
- Arkansas Hospice now taking applications for dayshift CNA positions at Little Rock and North Little Rock Inpatient Facilities. To schedule an interview please call 501-748-3333.
.....
- Place your advertisement/listing here: Equipment for sale, job postings, employment wanted, real estate listings, special announcements, etc. Contact Brent Stane (PCMS Consultant) at 501-653-0700 or brent@pulaskicms.org (listings start at \$20.00 per month).

CLASSIFIEDS