



Hi Ken,

We wish you all a happy and healthy holiday season! May the New Year bring you joy and happiness!

Our holiday office closings will be:

Monday, December 24

Tuesday, December 25

Tuesday, January 1

Collection Tip of the Month

The New Year is just 25 days away and you will be required to start collecting deductibles again. This month's collection tip will help you improve your point-of-service collections. Your medical practice cannot afford to allow many patients to be billed for their copayments and deductibles. Particularly, for most office visit copayments, the amounts to be billed do not merit sending out statements that could be costing you \$3 to \$6. Here are some ways to stop "lost" copayments and deductibles at the time of service.

When making the appointment, it is important to get the patient's health plan. It is most helpful, if the scheduler has a handy roster of the plans you deal with, and a listing of their copayments and deductibles. It is at that time that the patients could be told:

"Mr. Patient, as you know your plan requires a copayment of \$X (or Y percent) at the time of your visit."

1. When the Patient Calls

Early in the calendar year, it is equally important to ask the patients if they have paid their deductible for the year. If there is any hesitation, let the patient know that you expect the patient



to pay the deductible, as well as the copayment, at the time of the visit. If the patients now state that they "think" they have paid it, explain to them that you will be asking for their deductible and, if they have already paid it, their plan will notify your practice and the practice will refund their payment.

2. Reminder Calls

Two days prior to the appointment, reminder calls should be made. The reminder should include: the date and time of the appointment, plus any copayment and/or deductible.

3. When the Patient Checks in at the Front Desk

* If there is a deductible and fixed dollar copayment, make the collection effort at the time of check-in:

"Mr. Patient, as you know your deductible is \$X and your copayment for the day's visit is \$Z. How would you like to pay?"

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* If there is a fixed dollar copayment:

"Mr. Patient, your plan requires us to collect a copayment of \$X for today's visit. How would you like to pay that?"

* If there is a percentage copayment and you are not certain of the potential fees for the day's visit:

"Mr. Patient, as you know your plan requires us to collect a copayment of 20 percent for today's visit. We'll be collecting it from you when you are checking out."

In all cases, every effort should be made to collect copayments at the time of the visit, and not send follow-up mail statements. This is why it is good business to be able to process all the major credit cards -- Visa, MasterCard, American Express, and Discover.

Associate Spotlight

This month we are featuring Sherry Piesker

Sherry has been with CDA for over 10 years. Sherry started out as a collector and is now our Legal Department Manager. She works with our lawyers to provide them with accurate account information that is vital to the litigation process.

The favorite part of Sherry's job is making a final call to consumers to help them resolve their debt before it goes to court.



Sherry is happily married with 3 grown children. She enjoys spending time with her 8 grandchildren especially at the holiday season. See one of her easy holiday dinner dishes below.

Industry News

On November 27th, I went to our state capitol in Springfield with the Illinois Collectors Association for our annual legislation day. Our goal was to meet with as many State Senators and Representative's as possible to let them know that we support the legitimate and legal collection of consumer debt. Many of our legislators have the impression that the collection industry is the enemy of the consumer. So as an industry, we are making a concerted effort to make our law makers, regulators, media, and others aware of our value to the economy, introduce them to our blueprint on how to modernize the industry, and let them know that we have developed tools to aid consumers when they have a debt issue. I thought I would share our message with you this month.

Economic Impact

In Illinois, the collection industry collected \$2.7 billion that was returned to local businesses. There are 8,009 direct collection industry jobs in Illinois with a payroll of \$257 million. \$56.2 million was paid in state and local taxes by businesses in the collection industry.

Blueprint for Modernizing America's Consumer Debt Collection System

The explosive growth in the use of cell phones, the Internet, social media, e-mail and other new technologies has changed how people communicate. Our blueprint proposes to remove unnecessary road blocks to effective,

straightforward communications between consumers and debt collectors. Our goal is to collaborate with the law makers and regulators to develop guidelines to improve communication with consumers.

Consumer Education

Improving consumer financial literacy is important for developing a better working relationship between consumers, creditors, and debt collectors. By educating consumers about financial literacy and explaining their rights and obligations with respect to paying an existing financial obligation the industry is better able to the national economy. With that goal in mind, the ACA International has developed a website for consumers to help them understand debt collection and their rights. It's called Ask Doctor Debt. Here is the link

How Can I Earn CEU's By Attending a CDA Seminar?

Many of you belong to various professional medical office management associations and are looking for industry professionals to conduct a seminar at your local or state meetings. CDA is now offering a free seminar called "9 Red Hot Ingredients to Fire Up you're A/R Collections in Just 30 Minutes a Week?" for your medical or office managers association. We just conducted the seminar for the American Association of Professional Coders and they received 1.5 CEU's towards their professional certification for attending. Also, we were approved by the American Academy of Medical Administrators are allowing their members 1.5 CEU's for attending a live seminar or webinar.

You can view a short video on the seminar by going to <https://www.cdac.biz/spiceitup>

If you are interested in learning more about how you can bring our seminar to your association, please call Dave or Tony.

Thank You For Your Trust!!

We are looking to help more clients like you. The greatest form of flattery is when one of our clients refers us to one of their colleagues. If you know someone that can benefit from our services, let us know and we will be glad to follow up.

Chef Dave's Kitchen

Cheesy Potato Casserole (from Sherry Piesker)

1 Package Cubed Hash browns (thawed)

1 8 oz. Package Cheddar Cheese

1 16 oz. Tub Sour Cream

1 can Cream of Chicken Soup

1 medium onion diced

2 tbsp Melted Butter

Salt to taste

Mix all ingredients. Bake at 375 degrees for 40 minutes or until golden brown.

All the best,

Tony Muscato, VP of Sales

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