

News You Can Use

Vol. 8, Issue 1

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***The secret of
happiness is not
in doing what one
likes, but in liking
what one has to do.***

-- J. M. Barrie

Websites for YOU

www.cms.hhs.gov (Medicare)

<https://nppes.cms.hhs.gov>
(NPI application and tools)

www.wcscrivnerfoundation.org
(not for profit health
foundation)

www.despair.com (de-
motivation for all of us!)

President's Message

I majored in accounting and finance and even I don't like to do budgets! But a well-run business prepares a budget and monitors success toward the budget's goals on a periodic basis. And you want to have a well-run practice, right? If you already prepare an annual budget and monitor results – good for you! If not, the rest of this section is for you.

For first time budgeters, here are the basic tools and steps:



- Gather historical data on what you have generated in net revenue over the last two years.
- Gather historical data on what you have incurred in expenses over the last two years.
- Make an educated guess as to trends in revenue for the coming year. Will the Medicare cuts affect your specialty and by how much?
- Make an educated guess as to probable increases in expenses for the coming year. If you're completely unsure, you could use current cost of living percentages.
- Do you expect to increase or decrease your personnel expenses (payroll, taxes, benefits)?
- In what major equipment do you intend to invest? Lease or purchase?

You can take this data and “plug it” into a worksheet or do all the calculations on paper. When in doubt, the rule is underestimate revenue and overestimate expenses.

Your accountant should be able to help you with your budget or may even do it for you. Once you have it, don't shelve it! Instead, monitor it periodically (at least quarterly) to see how close you're coming to it. This exercise may also help you determine best time of year to make a big purchase.

Good luck!

www.designsontime.com

(Designs on Time)

www.wpc-edi.com/codes/

[taxonomy](#) (taxonomy codes for NPI)

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Problems are a major part of life.

Don't whine about why you always have problems... get on with the solving.

-- Grace Murray Hopper

Welcome to our Newest Client!

Precision Imaging Center

We wish the best to our newest client, as well as all our existing clients!

Nothing in this world can take the place of persistence.

Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent.

Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of

*Jerrie K. Weith, FHFMA
President*

Do the Holidays Leave You Feeling Snowed Under?

Pam Vaccaro, Designs on Time

Remember when you were a child and couldn't wait for the holidays? As an adult have you ever felt you couldn't wait for the holidays....to be over? Consider these few suggestions to insure more joy and less stress during the upcoming holiday season:

1. Question routine or precedent. Before investing your time in another year of making homemade candies for the staff (consider **your version** of holiday traditions at the home and office), reassess the value of this activity. It might be time to introduce a simpler tradition. This can be tougher than it sounds if others have come to look forward to the fruits of your time and energy.
2. Carry a recording device. Use your phone, pda, and mini-recorder to catch your thoughts about things to do. You think you will remember that perfect gift for staff while you are driving to work, but it is unlikely with so many other things going on. Your focus of attention is particularly maxed during the holiday season. A recording device keeps all your ideas in one place; avoid little scraps of paper to capture those important ideas.
3. Give the gift of time. If your holiday celebration includes gift giving, consider what so many of your colleagues and adult family members long for.... more time. An online gift certificate a few years ago seemed cold and "lazy." However, you avoid the **purchase line** and the recipient avoids **the return line** at Macy's when you select just the right gift card. We have all heard the stories of unused gift cards. To avoid this, include a paper store catalog with your gift. Many companies still offer these for the asking. This makes it easy for your recipient to browse at his/her leisure...not during work, of course!
4. Make sure you get a gift. Don't forget to put a gift of time on your desk too. Schedule 12 minutes a day just for you to do whatever you'd like. Watch how refreshed you'll feel and more open to enjoy the holidays nearly as much as when you were a carefree kid!

Thanks Pam! Pam Vaccaro is CEO of Designs on Time. (www.designsontime.com.)

**educated failures.
Persistence and
determination alone
are omnipotent.**

-- Calvin Coolidge
U.S. President

NPI Dissemination

NPI is now available for query. Check it out! <https://nppes.cms.hhs.gov/NPPES/NPIRegistryHome.do>

**Two roads diverged in
the wood,
and I took the one
less traveled by, and
that has made all the
difference.**

-- Robert Frost

From Pen to Presentation

HMAI is always willing to participate in professional development opportunities such as seminars, authorship, and networking, whether as a participant or the focal point. This is what we've been up to over the last few months:

- Co-Authored "Lockbox or Post Office Box?", St. Louis Metropolitan Medicine.
- Participated in Rotary

[com](#)). She speaks professionally on time and attention management and keeping organized. If you would like to consult with Pam, you can contact her directly at pamvaccaro@sbcglobal.net or visit her website at www.Designsontime.com.

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Did You Know?

- The number of Americans working in nursing is at an all-time high, but we have a shortage. How could this be? It isn't a shortage of nurses – it's a shortage of nurses who want to work in hospitals among other factors! (Source: "Nurses, Consumer Satisfaction, and Pay For Performance", *HFM Journal*, October 2007.)
- What a little scare! Tamper-resistant prescription pads in 30 days or less – without knowing the state rules! That's what was scheduled to happen in September. Very few providers question the value of tamper-resistant prescription pads, but the timing and requirement was way out of line. Reprieve! There's a six-month moratorium on their use until we get guidance from the government. Whew!
- Physicians who are employed by hospitals or health systems generally have less administrative responsibilities in their practices as well as less financial risk. The trade-off? Less compensation. But when you look at the data for internists (Source: MGMA Cost Survey 2006 Report), there's less compensation in part due to less medical revenue generated. Internists in hospital or health system owned practices generated net medical revenue of \$460,765 and earned compensation of \$169,291 (37% of net medical revenue). Internists in independent practice generated net medical revenue of \$592,387 and earned compensation of \$194,892 (33% of net medical revenue).
- In New Jersey, Aetna was fined \$9.5 million claiming that Aetna violated state laws by refusing to provide appropriate coverage for certain out-of-network services, such as emergency department. The state contends that Aetna didn't pay enough to non-participating providers for emergency department services, thereby causing non-participating providers to bill large balances to patients.
- Stark II, Phase III is here! And it's effective 12/4/2007. National

International Zone Training for District Governors.

- Attended Scrivner Foundation update for Illinois Department of Health Services.
- Moderated "Sustaining a Financially Vibrant Healthcare Organization" hosted by Greater St. Louis Chapter HFMA and Missouri HealthCare Executives Group.
- Attended MGMA of Greater St. Louis "Follow the Yellow Brick Road to Reimbursement".
- Participated in Greater St. Louis Chapter HFMA Strategic Planning Committee meeting.
- Presented "Sign In and Be Seated" to the Office Managers' Council at St. Anthony's Medical Center.

To request a speaker for your group of author for your newsletter, contact Jerrie at jkweith@aol.com.

Guest Columnists

Would you like to write for NYCU? If so, contact Jerrie for information. All requests

MGMA has a great synopsis that members can access at its website.

- Microsoft HealthVault has been unveiled. Touted by privacy proponents as well as providers, this seems to be a valuable foundation for consumers to get a handle on and share their healthcare information. More in the months to come!

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Medicare News

- Medicare Part B premiums/deductibles for 2008 have been updated:
 - ü Part B monthly premium \$93.50, up 3.1%.
 - ü Part B annual deductible \$135.00, also up 3.1%.
- If you utilize the services of nurse practitioners, be sure you check out the latest clarification from CMS on when their services can be billed as incident-to. It's in the September issue of the Medicare Part B newsletter at the www.medicare.com website.
- Effective 10/1/2007, you can bill Medicare beneficiaries for missed appointments. True. Of course, there are some guidelines to it, but basically, if you charge everyone else, you can charge them. And no, it isn't a covered service because it isn't an actual service. If you do file the claim to CMS, your denial code will be 204.

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Medicaid Update

- You should know by now that the new ICD-9-CM codes were required by Missouri Medicaid effective 10/1/2007. For the complete information, go to www.dss.mo.gov/mhd/providers/pdf/bulletin30-17_2007oct10.pdf.
- Missouri Medicaid is currently reviewing its critical care policy, utilizing community collaboration. Final decision on the policy is expected by end of 2007.

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will be judged on their individual merit and publication decisions are at the sole discretion of HMAI.

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Managed Care News

Aetna

There is a change to Multiple Surgery Concurrency Determination Policy, effective 11/12/2007. "Professional fee reductions for multiple surgeons will use the transitioned Relative Value Units (RVUs) for the appropriate place of service (facility versus non-facility)" as published by CMS.

GHP

You can now get status on authorizations on-line at www.directprovider.com. You can also edit an authorization on-line.

Dr. Richard Hamilton is the new medical director. Dr. Hamilton was an Ob/Gyn in California before taking this new position.

HealthLink

HealthLink will accept only NPI effective 5/23/2008.

Effective 3/1/2008, accreditation will be required for those providers who supply CT, CTA, MRI, MRA, Nuclear Medicine/Cardiology, PET and Echocardiography services.

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Service of the Month – Assessing Adequacy of Third Party Payers

Most providers complain about the inadequacy of contracted rates – hospital and physicians. Much anguish is experienced negotiating managed care contracts – when negotiation is even possible. But how do you know you're being paid your contracted rates?

To monitor this, you could rely on your billing software if it has such a module. Or you could rely on manual checking of EOBs. Or you may just not monitor it at all.

If you would like help determining the most efficient method for monitoring these contracted payments, or an external review of your current monitoring practices, give Jerrie Weith a call or email: 618-779-5508 or jkweith@aol.com.

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Hot Tip: Question and Answer Box

Question: Our practice continues to have poor results in collecting co-pays. What can we do?

Answer: How about these ideas?

- Patients will behave as they're expected. It takes more than posting a sign in the reception area. When the patient calls for the appointment, inform him that his co-pay is required at time of service.
- Be sure that collecting co-pays is the philosophy of your practice. If a patient presents without his co-pay for a non-urgent condition, are you prepared to reschedule the appointment when they do have the co-pay?
- Collect the co-pay PRIOR to the patient's visit. There is a message that the patient easily "reads" that says they can't see the doctor until the payment is made. You don't even have to say it out loud. Co-pay rule: It's easier for a patient to "forget his checkbook" after he's been seen than before.
- Make it easy to accept payment. Accept cash, checks, debit cards and credit cards.
- Consider an incentive for the front desk staff for meeting certain time of service payment goals.
- Consider charging a fee for patients who don't pay the co-pay. This has been met with mixed success – patients don't like it much!
- If you're going to see the patient without receiving the co-pay first, then hand them a self-addressed envelope for them to remit the payment within the next 5 days.

If you have a question, forward it to jkweith@aol.com and HMAI will get your answer for you.

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Coming Attractions

Greater St. Louis Chapter HFMA

Check out the chapter website for upcoming events, www.hfmastlouis.org.

MGMA of Greater St. Louis

MGMA of Greater St. Louis meets most months on the second Wednesday of the month at Ces and Judy's. More info available at www.mgma-sl.org.

Professional Women's Alliance

The St. Louis PWA meets on the first Wednesday of each month. Meeting times vary, so consult the website at <http://www.stlpwa.org>.

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