

The AAPP M Quarterly

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Confused about coding and billing	2
Staying Positive in Practice and Life	3
Pillars of Success	3
10 Steps to a successful practice	4
Be aware! Be Prepared! Be Proactive!	5
Please make me feel important	6

Dr. Weaver's Top 10 Keys to Success

- ✓ Define success for yourself, as it is different for everyone.
- ✓ Body language is important. Make the patient feel comfortable and in control of their own decisions as to their treatment options.
- ✓ Make things convenient for the patient to improve compliance. Examples include access to additional resources, in-house disposable supplies, PT care, orthotics, shoes.
- ✓ Find the right practice for the individual practitioner.
- ✓ Keep a journal of likes and dislikes.
- ✓ Combine best patient care with optimal results while profiting from routine practices.
- ✓ Establish Protocols and Standard Operating Procedures – don't reinvent the wheel each time.
- ✓ Organize instruments/procedure rooms efficiently to optimize time.
- ✓ Send staff to other offices to learn.
- ✓ Make a plan.



From left to right:
Keith Arbuckle,
Julie Chatigny,
Isaac Palacios,
Dr. Benjamin Weaver

Anne Wakefield — AZPOD

Congratulations to the Dr. Les Appel Leadership Award Winners

Outstanding Club Officer

Kristen Blanchet — BUSPM



Outstanding Club Member

Wendall Wallace — OCPM



Confused about Coding and Billing?

Are you worried that billing and coding will require more years of training? Don't go running off to add more letters to the long list already behind your name just yet! Get ready to enjoy the fast paced, migraine filled lifestyle of The International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision, Clinical Modification (ICD-9-CM).

Simply put, medical CODING involves using a specific set of codes to identify procedures/services for billing based on proper documentation. The diagnosis is translated into an ICD-9-CM code; while the procedure is translated into a five-digit CPT code. Medical BILLING is exactly as it sounds, involving submitting and following up on claims to insurance companies in order to receive payment for services. Another tool in the shed is a MODIFIER.



These are used in many scenarios, including a physician performing multiple procedures, bilateral procedures, an evaluation & management service done on the same day as a procedure, along with several other "unusual" circumstances.

So let's try a scenario regarding a patient with Medicare. A patient is treated for three mycotic nails that produce pain upon ambulation or wearing shoe gear, you can use CPT code 11720 to bill. More difficult would be a patient treated for three mycotic nails on Left foot

(CPT 11720), and seven normal nails on Right foot (11719). They also have absent Dorsalis Pedis pulses bilaterally and three advanced trophic changes (nail changes, skin color, and skin texture), which are coded by Medicare as a Class Finding Code (Q8 based on B3, B2b, B2d, B2e). Last but not least, since services were

rendered to both feet, the modifier to denote this is 59. Head spinning yet? Although coding and billing can be a very precise and exact science, while simultaneously very questionable with many gray areas, knowing boundaries and exercising caution and vigilance are crucial to preventing any unfortunate circumstances encouraging or resulting from an audit. Good luck!

Special thanks to Dr. Larry M. Newman, DPM, FACFAS

Jordan Meyers — TUSPM

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Staying Positive in Practice and Life

“If you think you can do it, you can!” These words echo the theme highlighted by the keynote speaker at a PPMJC meeting back in early April. Dr. Hal Ornstein came to Des Moines University with a positive energy that was absolutely captivating. In the midst of studying for exams and worrying about the future, his speech was a great encouragement to the students at DMU.

A big point Dr. Ornstein highlighted was the importance of treating patients and staff with respect, humility, and friendliness. A study he highlighted suggested that patients will largely judge a doctor based on whether or not he or she smiles and is friendly. The study also showed that most patients are satisfied with about 5-10 minutes of your time. Another piece of advice was to treat everybody and not to discriminate based on Medicaid status or personal bias.

This may all seem like common sense, but Dr. Ornstein really seemed to raise the bar in terms of building patient relationships. For example, his office sent each patient a free book of stamps as a simple reminder that stamp prices were set to go up in May. It's the little details like that which can make a huge difference to our patients.

Back in March, his New Jersey practice experienced its best financial month on record, but despite Dr. Ornstein's success, he has certainly seen his share of setbacks. Through it all, he has learned to navigate through the ups and downs of business and life. He lost \$25,000 his first year in practice, but by making adjustments and maintaining a consistent effort to learn and work hard, he made \$250,000 his second year and has continued to change and strive for excellence ever since. “I love to fail,” he said, “If you're not failing you're not growing.”

Grahm Bahnson — CPMS



Pillars of Success



When Dr. John Guilana spoke to members of the OCPM AAPPM he shared with us very valuable pearls of wisdom for not only running your Practice in the future, but also how to manage your life in every spectrum. In Dr. Guilana's own words he spoke to us about how important it is to "Learn the secrets of effective time management, proper patient flow, how your office, should be run to maximize your productivity, and the critical nature of balancing your personal, and professional life for success, good, health and happiness."

Dr. Guilana believes in the “THE PILLARS OF SUCCESS” and that Podiatry is what you make of it, the harder you work the more reward you get out of it. The first pillar is attitude – your outcomes are determined by your thoughts. Stress management is the second pillar, there will always be stresses in life, learning how to deal and cope with these stresses is what will make you successful. He stressed the importance of keeping your life in balance and referencing life to a coffee table with Health, Family, Work, and Spiritual needs being the four legs that keep your life in balance. One of the legs cannot overpower the other three or your “coffee table” would be out of balance and thus your life. The third pillar was the ever-important skill of time management (80:20) – Key result areas (KRA). Finally, change management or learning to adapt and mold to different situations. Medicine, is always changing and as future Podiatrists we cannot have “Analysis paralysis” – fearing failure and not doing anything because of that, it is necessary to embrace change and not be afraid of it.

The final topics that Dr. Guilana stressed was the importance of both communication and comprehension. As Podiatrists we must become not only great listeners but empathetic listeners as well; so we must not only be able to listen to our patient's needs but be able to show that we are empathetic to them as well we have to not only look for symptoms but be able to listen and feel for all of them.

Mia Fiegelist — OCPM

10 Steps to a Successful Practice

Behind every successful practice is a doctor with great leadership qualities. Here are 10 ways to improve the performance of your practice, quality of care for patients, and your leadership skills.

1. **Establish clear goals.** Guide your staff in the direction of where you want the practice to go.
2. **Define roles and responsibilities.** One must know the duties of his position to perform well. You and your staff are responsible for all procedures and their outcomes.
3. **Communicate.** Have monthly meetings to keep everyone informed of the office's performance. Commend good work!
4. **Make effective decisions.** Your staff and patients will respect and believe in you and your vision if you make quick, knowledgeable decisions.
5. **Have a positive work environment.** People work more efficiently in a happy, upbeat environment! Make patients feel good about choosing your office.
6. **Display integrity and respect.** People desire to work with and be around others who display these qualities.
7. **Continue learning.** Read journal articles and attend seminars to expand your leadership skills and experience in the profession.
8. **Make patients feel important.** Ask about family or hobbies during visits. Call patients a week after procedures to check on their progress.
9. **Make time for family and friends.** A healthy balance between work and fun is necessary for a less stressful life.
10. **Reach out to the community.** Give lectures to schools. Participate in health fairs. Show your passion and commitment!

Kelli Ashe — BUSPM

Frederick, J. *10 Steps for Leading your Office to Success*. AAPP M Magazine. February 2006. Accessed May 17, 2009

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From left to right:

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Be Aware! Be Prepared! Be Proactive!

The AAPPMM at the Scholl College of Podiatric Medicine joined forces with the Medical Business Association of the Chicago Medical School to present malpractice attorney Mr. John Floyd in an interprofessional setting. This Tennessee lawyer presented his advice with a dose of whimsy, humor and a trademark Southern accent! A most excellent speaker, Mr. Floyd kept the audience engaged in his talk about Avoiding Malpractice: A Proactive Approach! Mr. Floyd bestowed his precious pearls of wisdom regarding the clinician/patient setting, office management, doctor/lawyer relationships and offered tips on preventing a lawsuit.

1. DO NOT be in a hurry with patients. Patients are much more likely to sue if they feel that the doctor was hasty and in a hurry to get them out. For example, avoid placing your hand on the doorknob while asking the patient if they have any more questions.

2. DO NOT modify your records! You will raise suspicions if you are served papers and then suddenly your notes are "updated." It is very easy to track note changes ESPECIALLY in computer systems.

3. AVOID aggressive bill collections or any bill collections at all!

Set up a payment plan, your patients will appreciate it!

4. Hire quality people. Invest in your employees! It takes MANY hardworking employees to establish a practice, but only ONE disgruntled employee to ruin it!

5. BE ACTIVE in your community! Foster a reputation of kindness and caring and you will be much less likely to be sued! Remember, patients talk and they will probably talk to other people before they decide to sue!

6. If you find yourself sued contact your malpractice insurance immediately and then contact your (or a recommended) malpractice attorney.

The advice that he gave to the students attending the lecture resounds with all current and future health practitioners, so make these pearls a part of your healthcare life!

Nisha Krishnan — SCPM

How to get PM NEWS

All podiatric students are entitled to receive *PM News*, the daily Internet newsletter of Podiatry Management. PM News reaches 11,500 podiatrists and students and provides news, coding information, practice management advice, as well as clinical cases submitted by podiatrists. To subscribe send an e-mail to bblock@podiatrym.com. It's best to provide a non-school email address, such as gmail, aol, hotmail, etc., as some school ISPs block PM News.

Barry H. Block, DPM, JD
Editor, Podiatry Management Magazine

The AAPPMM Quarterly is an publication of the student AAPPMM organizations nationally and is not intended to be a source for legal information regarding any issue. The purpose of the newsletter is for educational sharing of ideas.

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Please, make me feel important

Mary Kay Ash, founder of Mary Kay Cosmetics, says that her secret to success is making believe that every person you're speaking with is wearing a sign around their neck that says "Make me feel important!" One of the most basic human needs is to feel valued. The goal of the doctors and assistants in our practice is to make each and every patient feel that they are special and number one. This may appear colloquial and elementary, but is not done in most practices.

With this in mind, much of our practice's effort and focus are not just on satisfying patients, but "wowing" them. This begins with training our staff on phone etiquette and making our expectations clear. Our guidelines include answering on less than three rings, identifying your name in your greeting, asking permission to put a patient on hold, thanking them for holding, and asking at the end of the call if they have any questions or need help with anything else. Patients are welcomed when coming into the office with eye contact and a smile from the receptionist. If behind scheduled, patients are told and kept apprised of the wait. A variety of magazines are kept current, and a small television is in the reception area with a local news channel.

When entering the treatment room, we always shake a patient's hand and enter with an enthusiastic smile. I've always been quite amazed how patients are so impressed by rudimentary people skills. Patients already assume that we provide quality medical care—so it is our people skills that give us the competitive edge. When presenting to a patient, we always outline the approach clearly, stating to the patient "we want you to know what you have, why you have it, and what the options are to take care of it." This statement and the presentation is then given in a comprehensive manner. Patients appreciate communication that is clear, understandable, and thorough. When we present to our patients that way, their perception is that care above and beyond has been provided.

When confronted with an angry patient, we approach the situation with the philosophy that a problem is an opportunity dressed in work clothes. Patients expect that if they have an issue or problem with a practice that a battle will ensue. When faced with a problem, we then focus on listening skills. We listen to the complaint with our eyes, ears, and heart, repeating their concerns back in a way to let the patient know we understand what they are expressing. What most angry patients are looking for is an "I'm sorry," which is simple to deliver. All efforts then focus on addressing the problem, and the patient then contacted afterwards to ensure there has been a resolution to their concern.

When patients leave the office, it is our goal that not only their medical concerns are addressed, but that they leave feeling that we care. That attention to making patients feel valued and important is what sets apart service and treatment that "wows" a patient, from that which is only satisfactory.



Hal Ornstein, DPM
Chairman of the National AAPPM
Affiliated Foot and Ankle Center — New Jersey

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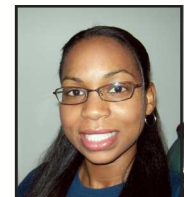
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