

## **Maximizing the Revenue Stream**

On October 3, 2006, MBI Solutions Fire/EMS Billing Services kicked off our “Documentation and Revenue Enhancement” initiative. Chiefs, EMS Officers and/or Financial Officers from 28 department joined MBI in Fairborn, Ohio, at our 2006 EMS Billing Conference.

During these times of tight budgets the same question is asked from the smallest of volunteer departments to the largest career department. “How can we maximize our revenue and decrease our write offs?” We have identified areas where your department’s input can improve our revenue recovery processes fulfilling your revenue potential.

### *Patient Signatures*

A beneficiary signature to release payment is required to submit Medicare claims. During transport of 911 emergency calls these signatures can be rather difficult to get.

On a “typical” non-emergency call, signatures can be much easier to get from patients. Just ask them to sign on the signature line as required by your department. Always explain why they are signing your run sheet. Many departments will include a statement to cover assignment of benefits, HIPAA Privacy Rights, and permission for treatment. Consult your department Officers for instructions in signatures policies.

Emergency transports are times where it can very difficult or impossible to get a patient signature. Fortunately Medicare allows for situations such as these. Any patient unable to sign due to any mental or physical condition may have a relative, friend, governmental agency providing assistance, or the provider rendering care sign for the patient. This gives you a variety of options to acquire a valid signature. If a friend or relative is present giving patient information, have this individual sign for assignment of benefits. This signature does not make this person responsible for the charges incurred as a result of the transport. If no one is present, a crew member may sign their name and credentials on the signature line. **In either case, you must document the reason the patient was unable to sign.** For departments who have data reporting software, click “signature on file”.

### *Patient Information*

Correct and complete patient information is invaluable to the billing process. The EMS crew in the field is the eyes and ears of the billing company.

Of most importance is a correct, full name is essential. Medicare policies and procedures match your patient to their system by the beneficiary’s name on file with Medicare. If a patient who is typically known by “Bob” is actually on file with Medicare as “Robert”, Medicare may not recognize the patient as a subscriber.

A social security and date of birth allows us to locate your patient much more effectively using our electronic insurance queries as well as matching patients to their insurance policies. The patient's correct address and nine-digit telephone number allows us to communicate in writing with that patient. One suggestion is to ask for the patient's driver's license and copy the patient's information directly from the license. Make sure to verify that the information on the license is current.

A full and complete list of procedures, list of medications given and narrative is a must for billing as well as legal purposes. Always remember that if you didn't write it down, you never did it! To assist providers in writing narratives, MBI Solutions has revised the "DocuAid" originally published by Premier Health Care Services. The pocket sized "DocuAid" was developed using the Modified Chart System of documentation. To use the "DocuAid" the provider can quickly refer to a page devoted completely to a particular chief complaint and flow through a series of questions. If the provider can answer all the questions with the narrative then a complete narrative has been written.

For information on patient signatures, you may refer to Medicare Benefit Policy Manual Chapter 10 Section 20.1.2. For any questions about documentation, the "DocuAid", or to schedule an information gathering and documentation training session, contact Andy Cook at 937-619-3003 or 800-875-0136 extension 3003.