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## 3 Lessons Learned: Selecting a True Medical Billing Service Partner

Selecting the correct partner is extremely important to the success of your practice and begins with asking the correct questions. Here are three valuable lessons learned and questions to ask to help avoid costly mistakes.

### **Lesson #1: Cheap typically ends up exactly that, cheap; leaving you with less revenue.**

Full service medical billing companies providing experienced certified billers, certified coders and advanced revenue cycle management technology are commanding a premium for their services. Their total collections are often noticeably higher, days in A/R are lower, and they are often providing front office support. Be warned, history has proven there is a greater chance of overly cost-conscious practices realizing far less revenue in the end.

You want U.S. based, certified billers working as an extension of your practice. They should be in-sync with your practice workflow and staff making them highly productive and less prone to errors.

Helpful questions to ask:

- Does the billing service include a company conference call to gauge culture, staff personalities and friendliness?
- Does the company provide an organization chart to review stability and commitment to the industry?
- What is the company history, certifications, billing policies, procedures and standards?
- How much experience does the company have in my specialty?
- What on-going training does the company provide for its billers?
- What are the average days in A/R?
- Does the company balance billing and take patient calls?
- How, when, and why are charges turned over to a collection agency?
- What is the process for HIPPA compliance?
- What type of insurance coverage does the company carry?

### **Lesson #2: A single point of contact for technology, medical billing and support is the key to a thriving practice.**

It does not matter if you are on electronic medical records or not, whatever the technology in your office, it should be married to your medical billing partner. Practices that must contact multiple vendors to support their practice will suffer higher costs.

Having the right software, appointment scheduling, patient registration or medical records means your office can be connected to the remote medical billing service office. If your medical billing service offers such technology integration and support the end result will be a streamlined workflow and cleaner claims.



Front desk solutions such as patient insurance eligibility should be verified prior to visits, as well as the day of the visit. Billers should have direct access to patient data, insurance data, and clinical notes ensuring fewer denials.

Denial management must be dealt with quickly to keep days in A/R down.

Helpful questions to ask:

- Will you use my existing software?
- Do you have your own software, is it cloud-based?
- Could I have it in my office if I choose?
- Does your software offer an integrated EHR, or will it integrate with my EHR?
- Does your claim management system check for claim deadlines and denials that need to be addressed?
- How do you handle payers that only accept paper claims?
- What is your backup and disaster recovery procedure?

**Lesson #3: If a medical billing service company won't give you complete access to view and report on your practice – look elsewhere.**

Other than non-payment, the scariest stories have been when a practice has NO IDEA what the medical billing service is doing and why! Transparency is key.

A professional and premium medical billing service not only opens all their doors to you, but also provides training on how to request, create and read reports.

You should expect 24/7 access to all technology your medical billing service provides as part of their service to your practice.

Helpful questions to ask:

- What reports will we receive?
- What access and training are provided?
- Are there additional fees for add-on features?
- What level of personalization will you provide?
- What monthly reports are provided with our bill?
- Do you provide an ongoing reimbursement/fee analysis to assure insurance payments are being paid appropriately?
- Will you provide quarterly reviews to let us know how we are doing and provide any follow-up training?

The correct medical billing service partner personalizes their services to meet your needs. They must provide experienced, qualified and proficient billing staff, industry leading technology and a management culture that focuses solely on your success.

Selecting the correct partner starts with asking the correct questions.