

Reimbursement Issues

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Ambulance Reimbursement

□ Facts

- There are always hospital and physician charges to the ambulance patient.
 - Government payors limit allowances.
 - Much under-compensated and uncompensated care.
 - GAO Study 07-383 – Medicare allowances are 6% below average cost of transport. Medicaid is much lower.
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Medicare

- ❑ Noridian – MAC Contractor rarely allows for non-emergent transports.
 - ❑ Deny for alternate means. “Stretcher vans”. Non-covered by Medicare.
 - ❑ **No licensure for stretcher vans in MT.**
 - ❑ 525 denials for non-emergent transports, 200 of which are in appeals. 2006- 228 denials - 70 appeals in previous year.
 - ❑ Senator Baucus is involved.
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Montana Medicaid

- Pays less than Medicare.
 - Does not pay loaded mileage in city limits.
 - Does not pay Medicare copay.
 - Patient eligibility without notification.
 - Numerous hoops to jump for processing.
 - ALS transport often reduced to BLS reimbursement.
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Montana Medicaid

- Process for non-emergent transports:
 - If eligible patient is Medicaid eligible,
 - Call MPQHF for “Prior Authorization” 24 hours per day. MPQHF only open Mon-Fri, 8-5. After hours we leave message.
 - If “Prior Authorization” is given, transport is still subject to denial based on medical necessity.
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Montana Medicaid

- ❑ If ambulance fails to obtain “Prior Authorization”, ambulance cannot bill for transport.
 - ❑ Misuse of ambulance services by Medicaid Beneficiaries.
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Other Payors

- ❑ Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) – Does not cover ambulance.
 - ❑ Commercial Insurance – Best coverage. Some use “Customary and Usual” allowances.
 - ❑ Veterans Administration- Similar to Medicare. 6-10 month behind.
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Indian Health Services

- IF they pay, pay %100 of claim.
 - IHS attempts to enroll Tribal Member in MT Medicaid. Can take up to 3 months.
 - If Member becomes Medicaid eligible:
 - No notification to provider.
 - Must accept Medicaid allowance.
 - IHS has denied payment stating, "The patient may be eligible for Montana State Medicaid, patient must apply."
 - It is common to wait 2-3 years for payment if IHS funding runs out.
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Auto Claims

- If patient or party has auto insurance,
 - Benefits are limited.
 - Payment is dependant on early submission. First come, first served...
 - Legal liens help by directing payment to provider of service.
 - Helps reduce double billing.
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Issues

- ❑ Tort reform is necessary
 - ❑ Regulating automobile insurance premiums so more drivers are insured.
 - ❑ Stiffer penalties for DUI offenders.
 - ❑ Prohibiting Counties and Cities from charging unnecessary fees to ambulance services.
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Access to Billing

- ❑ There are numerous billing services much like Healthcare Billing, Inc.
 - ❑ Cost is minimal. Either a flat fee per transport or a percentage of monthly collections.
 - ❑ Any income can help with operations and equipment.
 - ❑ Healthcare Billing works for any size service.
 - ❑ Healthcare Billing handles credentialing and setup for free.
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