**Strategizing to Reopen: Suggestions and Needed Actions from your Billing Partners at Doctors’ Choice Medical Services, Rockville, MD.**

Dear Physicians and Members of MCMS

The following is a list of suggestions we would like you to consider as you begin the process of reopening your practices. As your prime partners in the service of Revenue Cycle Management and Return on your Investments, Doctors’ Choice Medical Services, will continue to support your billing needs and act as advisor to systems and processes that impact your business.

While going through the suggestions, please use the attached grid as a resource for your staff to reference as they do your billing, keeping in mind, that we have seen daily changes in the rules by payor.

* **Telehealth is here to stay!**
* **How will you compete with companies** that move to “virtual only” services- increased competition for medical practices? What can you do to maintain your edge? Consider having RN’s and PA’s provide ongoing virtual services only with expanded hours and services.
* **We anticipate that payors will be extending** their Telemedicine policies beyond June, but it is important to monitor if there will be modifications to their policies.   Continue to provide virtual care whenever possible.
* **Adjust schedule templates to allow** new clinical protocols and varied appointment times for preventive vs. sick care: prioritizing older patients and patients with chronic illnesses in the mornings. Designate specific areas for sick patients
* **Continue reaching out to patients now to fill up your schedules**- try proactively managing chronic conditions such as hypertension and diabetes.
* **Educate staff on how to schedule** in a way that creates a safe environment in waiting rooms
* **Require masks** be worn by all staff and patients
* **Conduct Antibody** Screening of Employees
* **Expand pre-operative testing** to include testing for COVID
* **Keep staff at the front desk at a minimum** (move any non-essential employees to other areas of the office or allow remote work)
* **Install Plexiglass** between front desk and patients
* **Complete as much of the registration** at the time the patient schedules the appointment (demographics and insurance policy info).  Consider using patient registration applications such as Phreesia/Simple Interact to automate registration, eligibility and collecting of copays on a tablet which can be disinfected between patients and minimize interaction between your staff and the patients.
* **Keep your infrastructure lean** and consider outsourcing certain functions such as billing.  This way you will be able to manage overhead as this pandemic continues, without being concerned about generating income or furloughing employees.

**To optimize revenues:**

1. Make sure you are carefully monitoring Explanation of Benefits for down coding and partial reimbursements.
2. Make certain that your claims are being billed with the correct CPT codes (covered codes vary by payor), Place of Services and Modifiers to avoid denials, delayed payments and reduced reimbursements.  This means also making sure that your practice management systems are pulling the correct place of service by payor- or that someone is manually reviewing them before claims are transmitted.
3. Ensure that billers stay informed weekly about payor changes such as covered services, place of services/modifiers or extension of telemedicine benefits.  This is an evolving process and we have seen numerous changes on a weekly basis.
4. During this Pandemic, payers are required to reimburse the same fee schedules as a face-to-face visit.  Monitor this as we have seen several payors struggling to get this right: Especially Aetna, United and Cigna.

**What can we expect to see in the future?**

1. Capitation plans emerging
2. Increase in Risk Contracting Models with payors
3. Telehealth probably will not be reimbursed same as face to face visits
4. Practices will learn how to become more efficient and lean with their operations
5. Innovative ways to secure patient loyalty and enhancement of communication practices

To the above point E, Communication will remain the priority in ensuring a robust practice of caring and information. The new ‘Normal’ of everyday business will depend on the efforts to engage all patients on shared platforms of knowledge to build the trust and credibility of services provided. This will continue being the key action to demonstrate.

If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact us. We are here to support you!

A salute to all our Physicians and Healthcare Heroes!

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