

AMA practice tips

The American Medical Association Practice Management Center has compiled the following set of useful practice management tips to help physicians and their practice staff deal with various office issues, such as negotiating contracts, collecting payments and dealing with the claims submission process.*

As a physician, you know there is strength in numbers. The AMA helps all physicians, regardless of specialty or practice setting, speak with a unified voice on the most important issues facing medicine. Please encourage the physicians in your practice to join or renew their AMA membership by visiting www.ama-assn.org/go/membership or calling (800) 262-3211.

AMA practice tip: Mastering the claims management cycle

The first step in the claims management cycle is to improve physician practice viability through efficient contracting. When entering into negotiations with the health insurer's representative, physicians need to be well prepared. The more physicians understand about health insurers, the better they will be able to decide if a health insurer is suitable for their practice.

Visit the American Medical Association (AMA) Practice Management Center Web site at www.ama-assn.org/go/pmc to access educational resources, such as "[A guide to working with health insurer representatives](#)" and "[15 questions to ask before signing a managed care contract.](#)" AMA members can download these informative practice management resources free of charge.

AMA practice tip: Establishing a cost-based practice fee schedule

The American Medical Association (AMA) has developed the educational resource, "[Fee schedule analysis: Using your complete practice cost as a guide.](#)" to help physicians and their practice staff recognize the need to establish their practice fee schedule based on what it actually costs to provide a service rather than basing their fee schedule on what a third-party payer or other entity decides is fair payment. This resource includes a 12-step guide to help physician practices create their own unique physician practice fee schedule with an easy-to-complete spreadsheet that will allow physician practices to include additional markup percentages, profit contributions to reserves and future expenditures.

Visit the American Medical Association (AMA) Practice Management Center Web site at www.ama-assn.org/go/pmc to access educational resources, such as "[Fee schedule analysis: Using your complete practice cost as a guide.](#)"

AMA practice tip: Improving practice efficiencies with electronic claims submissions

The American Medical Association (AMA), in collaboration with the Connecticut State Medical Society, developed the educational resource "[The benefits of electronic claims submission—improve practice efficiencies](#)" to help physicians and their practice staff understand the electronic claim submission process and

* The AMA Practice Management Center is a resource of the AMA Private Sector Advocacy unit.

the many benefits that may be realized by submitting claims electronically to health plan payers. The resource discusses the reduction of claim submission costs and errors, and offers tips on getting started with electronic submission.

Visit the AMA Practice Management Center Web site at www.ama-assn.org/go/pmc to access the educational resource “[The benefits of electronic claims submission—improve practice efficiencies](#).” AMA members can download this informative practice management resource as a member benefit.

AMA practice tip: Selecting a clearinghouse to process claims

Physicians and practice staff—are you considering selecting a clearinghouse to handle your practice’s claims process and submission functions? If so, you are encouraged to review the “[What is a clearinghouse?](#)” resource developed by the American Medical Association (AMA) Practice Management Center unit and the Kentucky Medical Association. Designed to educate physicians and practice staff about the clearinghouse function, this resource explains the nuances that relate to the submission and transmission of the physician practice's claim information by an outside clearinghouse.

Visit the AMA-PSA Web site at www.ama-assn.org/go/pmc to access the educational resource, “[What is a clearinghouse?](#)”

AMA practice tip: Taking an active approach to the claims management process

The American Medical Association (AMA) developed the booklet “[Prepare that claim](#)” to help physician practices review the efficiency of their current internal claims management process. This booklet contains sample forms and policies that can be adapted to fit the specific needs of a physician practice.

Visit the AMA Practice Management Center Web site at www.ama-assn.org/go/pmc to access the educational resource “[Prepare that claim](#).” AMA members can download this informative educational resource as a member benefit.

AMA practice tip: Claims submission, processing, adjudication and payment

The American Medical Association (AMA) developed the booklet and wall chart “[Follow that claim](#)” to provide physicians and their office staff with an understanding of what happens to a claim once it leaves the practice. A claim is followed as it moves along the claims submission and health processing networks. Understanding this flow will enable physicians to better address the delay, denial and reduced payment tactics used by third party payers.

Visit the AMA Practice Management Center Web site at www.ama-assn.org/go/pmc to access the educational resource “[Follow that claim](#).” AMA members can download this informative educational resource as a member benefit.

To receive the wall chart, please call (800) 262-3211 and ask for AMA Practice Management Center.

AMA practice tip: Taking an active approach to the appeals process

The American Medical Association (AMA) developed the interactive resource “[Appeal that claim](#)” to simplify the claim audit and appeals processes for physicians and their practice staff. This interactive resource can help reduce the administrative burden by delivering a step-by-step course of action to appeal an underpaid, delayed or inappropriately denied claim.

Visit the AMA Practice Management Center Web site at www.ama-assn.org/go/pmc to access the educational resource, “[Appeal that claim](#).” AMA members can download this informative educational resource as a member benefit.

AMA practice tip: Protecting your practice from inappropriate discounts

Multiple payers could be taking advantage of your lowest contracted payment rate through the use of a rental network preferred provider organization (PPO). The American Medical Association (AMA) developed the booklet “**Read your contracts: Is your practice losing revenue through rental network PPOs?**” to educate physicians about how to identify and protect their practices from inappropriate discounts.

Visit the AMA Practice Management Center Web site at www.ama-assn.org/go/pmc to access the educational resource “**Read your contracts: Is your practice losing revenue through rental network PPOs?**” AMA members can download this informative educational resource as a member benefit.

AMA practice tip: Getting paid what you deserve for out-of-network treatment

The American Medical Association (AMA) has developed the educational resource “**Out-of-network payment challenges for the physician practice**” to provide physicians and their office staff resources to understand the health plan payer’s obligation for payment to out-of-network providers. The resource explains some of the payment challenges that arise when a physician who is considered out-of-network requests payment from a patient and/or health insurer.

Visit the AMA Practice Management Center Web site at www.ama-assn.org/go/pmc to access the educational resource “**Out-of-network payment challenges for the physician practice.**” AMA members can download this informative educational resource as a member benefit.

AMA practice tip: Receive payment for your out-of-network services

Physicians’ ability to provide their communities with quality care is dependent on their ability to keep their practices financially viable. It is therefore important that physician practices pursue appropriate and fair payment that is consistent with legal and community standards for legitimate services provided. The American Medical Association (AMA) Practice Management Center has developed the educational resource, “**Holding health insurers accountable for out-of-network services.**” to help physicians as they seek appropriate payment from health insurers that consider the physician out of network. This resource provides details about what out-of-network physicians might expect when dealing with the health insurer, how these physicians might stay informed about payment laws and issues, and how they might collect fair and accurate payment for their services.

Visit the AMA Practice Management Center Web site at www.ama-assn.org/go/pmc to access the educational resource, “**Holding health insurers accountable for out-of-network services.**” and other educational resources.

Questions or concerns about practice management issues?

AMA members and their practice staff may e-mail the AMA Practice Management Center at practicemanagementcenter@ama-assn.org for assistance.

For additional information and resources, there are three easy ways to contact the AMA Practice Management Center:

- Call (800) 262-3211 and ask for the AMA Practice Management Center.
- Fax information to (312) 464-5541.
- Visit www.ama-assn.org/go/pmc to access the AMA Practice Management Center Web site.