

# PNN PREFERRED Network News

NOVEMBER, 2009

## EXCITING TIMES!

October was a very exciting month for **PREFERRED** and our members! Not only were we privileged enough to visit with several of our members and payors at our Open House, but we also were quite busy with some exciting new offerings! Just to recap October's accomplishments, we announced two new payor contracts and a new marketing service:

**ACS** (Ancillary Care Services) is our new nationwide payor contract effective 10/15/09. According to their website, they service more than 120 million lives throughout the country, and are the exclusive ancillary healthcare system for Principle Edge, HealthSmart, InterPlan Health Group, and Emerald Health Network, representing only primary in-network benefit plans.

**NSG** (Network Synergy Group) is a Worker's Compensation contract for the states of AL, CT, FL, GA, KY, KS, MO, NC, NJ, PA, SC, TN, TX and VA. NSG will be effective 12/30/09. In addition to their worker's compensation services, they also provide outcome reporting and feedback on your facility's success with NSG's patients.

**PSPN** (Preferred Sports Provider Network) is a new marketing service for those contracted providers who have Sports/Athletic Performance Enhancement Programs in their private practices. There is no additional fee to participate. We've already had a terrific response from our providers and we are looking forward to marketing on your behalf as soon as possible!

**PREFERRED wants your practice to succeed, and will continue to pursue new payor contracts and other marketing opportunities on your behalf.**

**More to come!**

### *A note from PREFERRED President, Jaxene Hillebert...*

Next month I will be celebrating my 3<sup>rd</sup> year of telling myself... "I am going to retire and this time I mean it"! And then I talk to a provider who has been with **PREFERRED** for sixteen years and we discuss the changes that have affected private practice and continue to do so. This of course reminds me of the reason I became fascinated with physical therapy in the first place. An accident which disabled me for several months sent me to a physical therapist in private practice, long after the referral should have been made. Nevertheless, I was able to be weaned from the drugs that left me listless and miserable and obtain the treatment, education and encouragement to heal.

Times are tough, no doubt about it. As long as I can somehow help the profession that helped me through a very tough time, I'll just continue the "celebration".

### YOU'RE INVITED

**PREFERRED** will be attending the Private Practice Section Meeting in November, and we'd like you to join us in our Hospitality Suite!

*Please see page 2 for details...*

**PREFERRED IS  
ON FACEBOOK  
-----  
BECOME A FAN!**

**Do you have more than  
one clinic location and  
are thinking of adding it  
to your contract?  
Call PREFERRED at  
1-800-664-5240!**

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## THE PPO INDUSTRY IS A CIRCUS THESE DAYS!

By Christy Beauchamp



*“We were disappointed. We were also extremely encouraged. While one would think this would turn into a complete circus, the opposite (for the most part) actually occurred.”*

The American Association of Preferred Provider Organizations (AAPPO)'s Pacific Regional Chapter held a pretty controversial educational forum in October. The event was titled, “PPOs, TPAs and PROVIDERS: TRANSFORMING CHAOS INTO CONSISTENCY”. Speaker panels consisted of what most would consider “opposing forces”; an unlikely gathering of highly ranked professionals to collectively walk a few verbal tightropes for the audience. PPOs, TPAs, UHC, the American Medical Association, the Arizona Hospital Association...even a Subrogation Attorney for one of the panels ...all in the same room at the same time! This was going to be juicy - we were eager for the show to begin.

We were disappointed. We were also extremely encouraged. While one would think this would turn into a complete circus, the opposite (for the most part) actually occurred.

These various heavy-hitters had a single goal at this event; to come together and engage in candid discussion from all perspectives about the main causes of animosity and angst throughout the industry and what steps can be collaboratively taken to work towards better solutions. It got a bit heated a couple of times, but then again, we're talking healthcare. Truly, this platform was used to discuss commonalities, to better understand some of the roadblocks and challenges from the each side of the proverbial schoolyard.

Without question, there are glitches and inefficiencies in our healthcare system and in the ever-convoluting leasing and cross-pollination of services between PPOs, healthplans, intermediaries, etc., which leads to inaccurate provider data loading, which leads to erroneous contract links with leads to erroneous payment and frustrating circle after circle of attempts to resolve the same issue on the same

claim. There are too many layers on the onion and a lot of “finger-pointing” going on about who is to blame regardless of the source of the issue. However it is also without question that there are many dedicated professionals who work diligently to get it right and to fix what can be fixed, whenever possible. We are fortunate to work with many such individuals and appreciate their time and efforts when we reach out on a provider's behalf.

Is the problem always fixed to satisfaction? No, not always. Many times? You bet, but sometimes only through sheer tenacity. There are forces beyond the control of even those with the best of intentions. Conversely, there are plenty of folks with the best of intentions still out there working, talking to one another, talking to us, collaborating with oft perceived “adversaries” to find common ground and keep moving forward.

## PRIVATE PRACTICE SECTION

**You're  
Invited!**

On Wednesday November 11, 2009, **PREFERRED** Therapy Providers Inc. will be hosting a Hospitality Suite following the Opening Reception of the annual Private Practice Section Meeting in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

The meeting, held once again at The Broadmoor, will be a busy event. We look forward to taking a relaxing break with our network members, therapists interested in learning more about **PREFERRED**, as well as representatives from various payor groups in Colorado.

Desserts and Beverages will be served.

**RSVP Required.** Please contact Alma Neira or Julie Jones at 1-800-664-5240 .

We hope to see you there!

## POST-SURGICAL EXCEPTIONS TO 24 VISIT LIMIT IN CALIFORNIA WORKERS' COMP

By Bill Hutchins\*

For the majority of you who treat injured workers in California, you've likely struggled with patients coming out of surgery and knowing that they will need more than 24 visits to return to their job. If you've ever wished for just a few more visits, there are some regulations adopted a few months ago to help those post-surgical patients.

### Background

In 2004, the Labor Code was modified to state an injured worker shall be entitled to no more than 24 physical therapy visits per industrial injury. The Labor Code was amended by AB 1073 (2007) to create a post-surgical exception to the cap stating that the limitation does "not apply to visits for post-surgical physical medicine and post-surgical physical medicine services provided in compliance with a post-surgical treatment utilization schedule established by the administrative director...".

### How It Works

The regulations essentially allow that the 24-visit limit be set aside for a period of time so the injured worker can benefit from additional treatment. The example below shows that this particular patient would be able to receive up to 16 additional visits over an 8-week period of time before the 24-visit limit is started. The treatment must be completed within that 6-month period of time and if not, treatment reverts back to the applicable 24 visit limit.

*For example:*

Displacement of cervical intervertebral disc (ICD 722.0):

Postsurgical treatment (discectomy/laminectomy):  
16 visits over 8 weeks

\*Postsurgical physical medicine treatment period: 6 months

### Summary

The specific surgeries that have a variance from the

24-visit limit all have different allowable visits and timeframes so you must be clear on the surgery that was done and the date it was completed. Further, only the physician who performed the operation, a nurse practitioner or physician assistant working with the surgeon, or a physician designated by that surgeon can make a determination of medical necessity and prescribe post-surgical treatment under this guideline.

The guidelines do require the documentation of functional improvement for further approval of care. A full version of the regulations can be obtained by emailing Bill Hutchins at the address below.

*\*Bill Hutchins works with physical therapy clinics to optimize reimbursement and issues affecting payment for their services and is endorsed by PREFERRED Therapy Providers, Inc. as a resource for their network members. He can be reached at 916-300-2289 or via email at [billhutchins59@gmail.com](mailto:billhutchins59@gmail.com).*

***"The regulations essentially allow that the 24-visit limit be set aside for a period of time so the injured worker can benefit from additional treatment."***

### **THANK YOU!**

Our sincere thanks to all who attended our Open House!

We enjoyed visiting with you all and appreciate you stopping by to see our new office!

## NEW iTUNES APPLICATION: "MY THERAPY EXERCISE"

Apple's iTunes recently released the My Therapy Exercise application-- the world's only custom exercise video application for the iPhone™ and iTouch™ designed specifically for physical therapy.

The My Therapy Exercise app is not just for people who are beginning an exercise program, recovering from an injury, surgery, or illness, but for those who want to improve posture and core stabilization as well. The app can also be tailored to athletes by designing sport-specific (running, golf, tennis,

etc.) stretching and strengthening routines to reduce risk of common injuries.

The My Therapy Exercise App was created by Robert E. Adams, PT. To learn more, please visit [www.mytherapyexercise.com](http://www.mytherapyexercise.com).



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**WANT TO LOCK-IN YOUR ANNUAL RATE?**

If you've been with **PREFERRED** for more than a year, and would like to "lock" in your annual fee so that it'll never increase during the duration of your contract, check out our Multiple Year Payment Plan (**MYPP**)! Call **PREFERRED** for more details...

***PREFERRED** Therapy Providers, Inc. is the largest specialty network of its kind, representing private practice physical, occupational and speech therapists throughout the country by contracting on their behalf with PPOs, Healthplans and Third Party Payors. Founded in 1992, **PREFERRED** continues to bring exceptional value to both the providers and the payors accessing the network's services.*

**DID YOU KNOW?**

In an effort to reduce costs to your clinic and free up your fax machine, **PREFERRED** now offers the **PREFERRED** Network News (PNN) via email. If you would like to receive PNN via email, please contact **PREFERRED** at 1-800-664-5240 or by email at: [preferred@preferredtherapy.com](mailto:preferred@preferredtherapy.com). You can also read PNN by visiting [www.preferredtherapy.com](http://www.preferredtherapy.com) and clicking on **PREFERRED** Network News!

**PREFERRED VENDOR NEWS**

Don't forget your **PREFERRED** membership includes access to over 20 fine Vendors offering discounts from 5% to 45%. For a complete listing please visit the **PREFERRED** website at [www.preferredtherapy.com](http://www.preferredtherapy.com) and click on the vendor link under "Therapy Providers". Have your **PREFERRED** membership number handy when placing your order to receive the discount.

**WE HAVE MOVED**

Our new address is 23460 N. 19<sup>th</sup> Ave., Suite 250, Phoenix, AZ 85027. Our phone number, fax number and email remain the same.

**Member Get-A-Member Program**

Do you know of a practice that could benefit from **PREFERRED**'s services? Well, great news! Refer one practice which qualifies and subsequently joins, and you will receive a 25% discount on your next annual fee. Refer two practices which qualify and subsequently join and you will receive 50% discount.. Three?...**FREE!** Call **PREFERRED** for more details at 1-800-664-5240.

**QUOTE OF THE MONTH**

"One of the secrets of life is to make stepping stones out of stumbling blocks."

*Jack Penn*

**ON THE ROAD WITH PREFERRED. . .**

Private Practice Section of APTA Annual Conference & Expo	Nov. 11-13, 2009 The Broadmoor, Colorado Springs, CO
Arizona Self-Insurers Association Annual Conference	November 18, 2009 Fiesta Resort, Tempe, AZ
AAPPO Annual Conference	January 31—February 2, 2010 Marco Island Marriott Beach Resort & Spa, Marco Island, FL
Combined Sections Meeting of APTA 2010 Conference & Expo	February 17-20, 2010 San Diego, CA

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