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JANUARY 2007***

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***OUR 2007 WISH TO YOU
- JAXENE HILLEBERT***

Success: "The achievement of desired aim; achievement of something planned or attempted."

Related words:

Accomplishment

Victory

Triumph

In the past year, success for many private practitioners was simply sustaining their practice through some very unsettling times. Just as Katrina wreaked havoc on our associates in Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas, so have industry upheavals such as POPTS, changes in legislature, payor consolidation and the shifting economy affected practices from coast to coast.

As in years past, and in years to come, we forge ahead diligently with determination and the desire to succeed, in our business and in our personal lives as well.

Our monthly newsletter includes a vignette on a member of our staff, and this month our Renewal Coordinator, Wendy Woodward is featured. I mention this because I feel that Wendy has achieved success not only as an outstanding employee of Preferred, but due to the values and morals she instills in her children. Of particular importance is the commitment of Wendy and her sons to our troops overseas.

Whether or not we believe individually or as a country in the 'success' of our efforts on the other side of the world, we should constantly remind ourselves of our great good fortune to be an American. Wendy, Dominic and Justin epitomize an American spirit.

On behalf of all of us here at *PREFERRED* Therapy Providers, Inc., here's wishing all of you a most wonderful 2007 with our appreciation for your being a part of the *PREFERRED* network.

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**STAFF MEMBER SPOTLIGHT ON:
WENDY WOODWARD**

NICKNAME:

Woo

LENGTH OF TIME AT PREFERRED :

9 months

POSITION:

Renewal Coordinator

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES: As the renewal coordinator, it is my responsibility to audit, prepare, send out, and keep track of outstanding renewals on a monthly basis.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT YOUR JOB: Between my position as a renewal coordinator, part-time auditor for various in-house functions, a co-chair for the fun committee, and pseudo editor for the PNN Newsletter, each and every day has become a giant puzzle. (Sometimes, the amount of paper on my desk actually looks like a giant puzzle.) I love the art of fitting a million different projects into an 8 hour day – and making it all work.

ABOUT YOUR FAMILY: I am a single parent of 2 boys – Dominic 11, and Justin 6. There is no doubt in my mind that they are the reason for my constant dance on the edge of insanity. They have talked me into adopting Max, our 6 month old beagle... which is only fair since I talked them into adopting nearly 320 soldiers overseas. Every night as a family we write letters to our guys and gals away from home to let them know that they're not forgotten and that we're always thinking of them.

FAVORITE PASTTIME: The mother in me wants to say that watching the boys grow into young men is my favorite... but it's hard because it means that they're actually growing up. A distant second is tied between reading mystery who-dunnit's, and watching black and white movies. Any movie with Cary Grant, Elvis (go ahead and laugh, everyone else does), or any type of explosion, and I'm there!

**PREFERRED VENDOR SPOTLIGHT:
EMPI**

For over 11 years, Empi and PREFERRED have worked together sharing information about insurance coverage and compensation issues. Based upon the recommendations of PREFERRED staff and member clinicians, Empi and PREFERRED can now offer value-added programs designed to help clinic owners operate their businesses more efficiently, and perhaps more importantly, save money!

- **EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT:** Empi will continue to support educational needs by sponsoring and providing presentations for CEU credit and marketing programs like "Getting the Back Back" which is a program detailing how to market PT capabilities to win lower back patients in a competitive environment.
- **DISCOUNTS ON ALL PRODUCTS:** Customers are aware of the traditional Empi products of Dupel and home patient devices, but may not realize that Empi is also a full line distributor offering everything from therapy putty to treadmills. Empi also offers electrical modalities from Chattanooga Group as well as equipment from other well known brands. As a member of PREFERRED, clinics qualify to receive discounts on catalog items or may choose to receive a custom quote for large purchases and capital equipment.
- **CAPITAL LEASING:** Need to expand and preserve cash flow? Empi has relationships with several leasing providers who can provide leasing/buyout options at substantially discounted rates that have been customized especially for PREFERRED members.
- **NETWORK ADVANTAGE PROGRAM :** If you find a lower price on an item, let us know. If it makes business sense to match the price, we will do it not only for your clinic, but for the entire network!
- **FREE UPS GROUND FOR ORDERS OVER \$250:** Tired of paying high shipping costs for supplies? Going forward, all orders eligible for UPS Ground with a combined value of \$250 will shipped for free.

If you have any questions, or need additional information about any of these programs, please call Scott Grimsley at 800-328-2536 x1641.

**TRACKING PATIENTS: THE MISSING LINK PART I OF III
- CHRISTY BEAUCHAMP**

As one year comes to a close and a new one begins, many providers are crunching numbers, pouring over billing reports, and finalizing projections for their budget. One of the main questions we get from practice owners this time of year, is **"How many patients have I seen through my PREFERRED contracts?"** The answer lies, at least in part, in what I am now referring to as "THE MISSING LINK"

THE MISSING LINK = the PPO/Network affiliation. First, you, the provider, must understand that the PPO network reflected on each Explanation of Benefit patient receives (EOB) is often **different** from the actual payor of each claim (see sample spreadsheet below). For example, by contracting with PHCS (a PPO who does not pay claims), you become a participating provider for 300+ insurance carriers and administrators who are "clients" under PHCS, who actually pay the claim, such as Fortis, John Alden & Zenith.

Next, because claims do not route through PREFERRED, we do not track patient data. Therefore, it is critical for providers to learn **how to track PPO affiliations** within their billing or practice management system, and to understand not only which contracts they have, but how they are contracted (it could affect their reimbursement), particularly as they most likely also have independent healthplan contracts, or may be contracted through a source other than PREFERRED. Most software systems have extra fields which you can designate for your own purposes. If your system has that flexibility, consider the following "crash course" of steps which you might consider taking, to tackle PPO/network tracking.*

Step One:

- Understand the difference between a PPO and the actual Payor of the claim
- PPO: builds a network of providers willing to take discounts (e.g. PHCS, Beech Street, First Health)
- Payor: pays the claim (e.g. Fortis, Zenith Administrators, John Alden, or employers such as Walmart)
- *Note: Sometimes the payor and the PPO are one and the same (e.g. Blue Cross, UHC, PacifiCare, etc.)*

Step Two:

- In your billing system, label one of the empty fields "PPO/network", and another "How Contracted"

Step Three:

- Upon receipt of each EOB, record the PPO/network entity which applied the discount along with the rest of the claims data. You'll need to stay on top of which contracts you sign, and how you are contracted.
- EXAMPLE: (Obviously you will record more information. The emphasis here is on the **MISSING LINK**, which is the PPO/Network name from the EOB):

New Patient Name	New Patient DOB	Referral Source	Insured's Name	Insured's SSN	Employer	Payor / Insurance Carrier	PPO/Network Name from EOB	How are we contracted?
John Doe	4/5/65	Dr. Jones	John Doe	555-55-5555	ABC Video	Fortis	PHCS	PREFERRED
Susie Smith	12/10/88	Dr. Hart	George Smith	000-00-0000	Alliance Laundry Systems	Wassau Benefits Inc.	Beech Street	PREFERRED
Lisa Lynn	1/1/77	Case Mgr PacifiCare	Lisa Lynn	222-22-2222	Joe's Grill	PacifiCare	PacifiCare PPO	Independent

*Additional info can be found in the Patient Tracking section of your PREFERRED Users Manual ... if you need a new copy, call us at 800.664.5240 or email a request to preferred@preferredtherapy.com.

Although there are no "absolute" processes, finding a way to track PPO/network affiliation(s) in your system is a step in the right direction for accuracy in payment and contract analysis.

Part II of THE MISSING LINK will be in our February Newsletter....stay tuned!