

PNN *PREFERRED* Network News

JANUARY 2004

How We Increased Income and Reduced Costs

Article written by Jack Pankow, Administrator of Sports Specialty and Rehab

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

INCREASE
INCOME 1

FIRST HEALTH
UPDATE 2



MARKETING 3

PREFERRED
VENDOR 4

Soon after opening our first of five clinics in 1996, we realized that in order to be reimbursed properly and more quickly, our notes needed to be in an easy-to-read printed format. We started with a very simple system which we continue to improve and refine. Two years ago we started to develop our own scheduling system because we could not find anything on the market that was specifically for physical therapy clinics. Our system allows us to schedule any clinic from any terminal, to instantly know that a patient's co-pay is due and to create a wide range of management reports.

At the same time, we noticed that it took a very long time to develop information about the daily activities in the clinics. We had one person almost exclusively dedicated to checking the daily notes against copies of each appointment book to determine if we had missing notes, which as we all know, leads to missing charges. By integrating the documentation software with the scheduler we were able to develop the ability to have instant information about our business. At any time, simply by accessing the system, we know how many patients have been scheduled on a specific day, how many have appeared, and how many have cancelled or were no-shows. We know at the click of a mouse if a daily note is missing, which allows us to address it right away instead of days later.

We have added additional refinements like a daily call-back list for the "front desk" person. No more having to leave files out on a desk as a reminder to call a patient or insurance company. This also helps with our HIPAA compliance. Here is the best part; by using our own software, we experienced a drastic reduction in documentation and billing errors, an average 7% increase in reimbursements, a reduction of administrative staff by 1 ½ employees and a 25% increase in co-pay and co-insurance collections. We are now more efficient, with less administrative employees and our clinicians are spending more time with their patients.

Mike Ball, PT, the clinical director of our Naples, Florida clinic says of the system "It has completely replaced our paperwork and saves so much time." When it comes to the documentation system, Mike says, "It is much easier to see what services have been rendered and coding is much simpler, allowing the practice to be reimbursed faster and at a higher rate." The program was developed "in house" with a great deal of input from clinicians and front desk personnel.

This article was submitted to **PREFERRED** by Sports Specialty and Rehab. Although this practice is not a member of **PREFERRED**'s network, we found their efforts to be interesting and worth sharing. This article is not meant as an endorsement, but rather an example of how private practitioners are becoming more innovative in managing their processes in order to continue to provide good care to their patients.



Take Our FREE E-Learning Demo Course!

Would you like to get a taste of what E-learning is like? Take advantage of our Free Demonstration course and let us introduce you to the Preferred-Dynamic web site and E-learning system. To access the course, just visit www.preferred-dynamiclearning.com and click on the word "DEMO" in the left hand column. You will gain instant access to a one hour mini-course that will introduce you to the basics of how our courses are laid out, the nuts and bolts of what is included in an online course, how to navigate through the courseware system, and how to access the many exciting and useful features within each course. You'll learn how to make the most of your online experience, access the various communication features, take notes, bookmark your spot, and much more. The second half of the course provides more detail about how to use your new skills to further help yourself and your patients by listing valuable informational resources and discussing how to develop your own web site, discussion/support group or email list. Join us today for our FREE Demo course and see why people are so excited about E-learning!

First Health Update

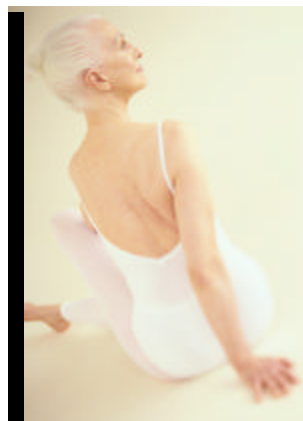
PREFERRED recently sent a contract memo to all network members who accepted participation with First Health. Here's a quick recap:

- Effective 3/1/04, participation with First Health will be mandated acceptance of all products. Providers who accepted participation through **PREFERRED** will automatically be added to all products unless we are informed otherwise. (If you previously declined participation, but would like to reconsider, call us at 800.664.5240)

- **PREFERRED** has added First Health's new Specialized Physical Therapy Program (SPT) to our contract. It is a cost containment program for a select group of Workers' Comp carriers (currently only Eagle Insurance and Liberty Mutual). The discount is the same as your regular First Health w/c discount. The SPT Program provides cost containment through pro-active involvement with the injured worker and physician prior to the initial referral to PT. Pre-established visit guidelines based on diagnosis and level of severity are available through **PREFERRED**'s website at www.preferredtherapy.com. You will need a user name and password to access the document (both are indicated on the First Health contract memo that was sent), or you can call **PREFERRED** at 800.664.5240 to have them mailed to you, ask for Maritza Wilson.

Audit in 2004

PREFERRED started 2004 with an audit by Healthsmart, once again passing with flying colors. Our Credentialing Board and Credentialing Coordinator, Vicki Salak with much help from Sandy Dodt, Tiffany Washko and Jill Hayhurst, have done an outstanding job in preparing and maintaining **PREFERRED**'s credentialing processes in order to retain our delegated credentialing status.



"PREFERRED has added First Health's new Specialized Physical Therapy Program (SPT) to our contract."



PREFERRED Employee Profile – Jaxene

Name: Jaxene Hillebert

Nick-name: “Jax”, “Big Kahuna”, “The Marketing Goddess”

Length of employment with Preferred: 12 years

Job Title and responsibilities: President - Operations, Sales, R&D

What you like most about your job: Meeting with our members and talking to

them about practice issues. Spending time at work with the greatest group of employees on earth.

Favorite Pastimes: Morning walks, reading...and grandchildren, my greatest joy (besides my children).

About your family: Husband, “Coots”: Retired Phoenix Firefighter (My hero). Daughter Beth:

Phoenix Firefighter/Engineer/Paramedic for seventeen years..... has two daughters, Reanne and Ashley.....

Daughter Christy: Vice-President of the best therapy network in the country, has a daughter Cassidy. My extended family includes two step-children and five more wonderful grandchildren.

Business Matters – “It’s Not My Job”

By Jaxene Hillebert

As those of us in the healthcare business analyze trends and economic influences on our industry and attempt to predict what the future will bring, we must also consider the effects of productivity -or lack thereof- and the impact to the bottom line.

Recently I spoke with a practice owner who had sought consulting services regarding productivity. One of the exercises the consultant suggested was to give each employee in the practice a job description template then ask them to complete the template defining their individual duties. Many of the tasks in the front office were being duplicated. There was confusion about responsibilities. No cross training had occurred for any of the jobs and often many tasks simply were not completed, and the main reason cited? “It’s not my job”.

Although this type of behavior cannot always be changed, the results of individual job descriptions to be used as a definition and communication vehicle certainly should create better efficiencies, and hopefully happier and more productive employees.

Marketing “Side by Side”

If you are accustomed to producing a newsletter, or thinking about the production of a newsletter as a marketing and communication vehicle, here’s an idea for you to consider.

Ask a referral source to write an article in his or her field of expertise, selecting a particular diagnosis or problem (orthopedic, for example) and have the physical or occupational therapist write an article about the rehabilitation process. And remember to include the media as recipients of your newsletter, particularly if the topics are related to seasonal or human interest subjects.

PREFERRED Tidbits...

PREFERRED is scheduled to attend the following conferences and would love to meet you face to face! Check out some of the dates, times, and locations for 2004!

APTA Combined Sections Mtg, Feb. 5-7, Nashville, TN.

Louisiana PT Conference, March 26-28, Lafayette.

APTA Annual Conference, June 30-July 3, Chicago, IL.

Florida PT Conference, August 12-15, Ponte Verde.

Texas PT Conference, Oct. 7-10, Austin.

California PT Conference, Oct. 20-24, Anaheim.



Contracts Corner

NEW CONTRACTS:

Accountable Health Plans: PPO Group Health contract for the states of AZ, FL, IA, LA, OK, ND, NE, SD, TX, WI

First Health Specialized Physical Therapy Program: Workers' Comp Cost Containment Program, National. For more information, see the First Health Update article on page two of this newsletter.

TC 12 Update

PREFERRED's annual conference is scheduled for May 14th and 15th, 2004, at the Radisson Resort and Spa in Scottsdale, Arizona. The title for the conference is "Marketing from the Inside Out—Winning Strategies with Employees." We are pleased to announce that two respected industry professionals, John Heinsman and Dale Vaughan will be speaking at the conference in an informative presentation entitled "Break Away from the Ordinary – A Timeless Strategy for Management of Change from Inside Your Organization." We know that you will want to attend, so be on the lookout for conference registration materials starting next week.

PREFERRED Vendor Profile – Ari-Med

Since 1987, Flexall gels have proven beneficial in sports medicine, injury prevention, rehabilitation, work hardening, and pain management programs worldwide. Discover how Flexall gels can help increase "at home" patient compliance and enhance ultrasound, cryotherapy, T.E.N.S., and massage therapies. Flexall and Maximum Strength Flexall are unique mentholated aloe vera gel formulas, enriched with vitamin E, that provide fast, long lasting relief from painful muscles and joints. Flexall gels are a top-selling brand in the consumer market and are well known by patients. Flexall gels also continue to be incorporated into the care of athletes of every age and skill level. Flexall gels absorb quickly and completely, are greaseless, non-staining, and gentle on the skin. Professional sizes available. You may place an order by calling Ari-Med at (800) 527-4923 or by faxing (602) 966-9806. Refer to your member number to receive your **PREFERRED** 15% discount when placing your order.

Read this newsletter online at www.preferredtherapy.com. Just click on "Newsletters".

Provider Newsletter Disclaimer

PREFERRED Network News is a **PREFERRED** Therapy Provider, Inc. publication produced for informational purposes and distributed to our providers and other members of the business community. Its contents should not be applied as definitive health, legal or business management advice. Readers should consult with their professional advisors prior to making any decisions based on information within **PREFERRED** News.

For additional copies of **PREFERRED** or to add other individuals to our e-FAX mailing list, please contact:

Tiffany Washko at 800.664.5240 or twashko@preferredtherapy.com

Fitness & Rehabilitation Videos

Titles include:

- Lower Back Care
- Shoulder Care
- Upper Back & Neck Care
- Stretch It Out
- Stop The Slouch
- No Hips, Thighs or Butts About It
- Fit To Break Par

Special Introductory Price

PREFERRED Therapy Member Price:

All 7 Videos for \$59 (plus s+h).



Call 1-888-467-3488 to order or visit our web site at www.gmpfitness.com