

# PNN PREFERRED Network News

March, 2004

## Are We Communicating Yet?

A practical guide for everyone in your organization.

By Carl Mays

In order for workplace communication to be effective, it must be healthy both vertically and horizontally. The best way to communicate any message is in person. However, since in-person presentations are not always feasible and not necessary for every issue, you can take advantage of other available avenues.

E-mail is a valuable element of the workplace that has quickly changed the way the entire world does business. Interoffice memos are sent regularly, and virtual offices have sprung up by the thousands.

E-mail is a great way to communicate with people. It can also be dangerous. Make sure you convey what you intend, in as few words and as straight to the point as possible. Horror stories have surfaced as a result of poor usage. The entire Internet is paved with possibilities, but full of potholes. E-mail becomes one of the potholes when used incorrectly.

Here are some tips that can help insure the communication is effective:

- **Keep in mind** that receivers can't hear the tone, inflection, or any type of meaning in your words. What you intend to be humorous may come across as offensive; serious comments may be brushed aside; compliments may seem like complaints.
- **Using ALL CAPS** is the equivalent of shouting at someone when talking in person. When I receive such a message (which is often in bold), I feel like someone is either preaching to me, being discourteous or simply doesn't know much about e-mail.
- **Use the blind copy (bcc)** rather than the regular copy (cc) unless there's some reason for the receiver to see the names and e-mail addresses of others to whom the message is sent. If there is no reason, then you need to protect the privacy of others. Improper copying also takes up space - sometimes a lot of space.
- **Re-format messages** that you forward to others. Receiving disoriented messages full of >>> makes them harder to read and, again, takes up space. The little time demanded in order to remove the >>> with a word processing function will lead to easier reading and greater respect from your recipients.
- **Count to more than 10** before dashing off a message with strong emotions. If you are responding to an e-mail or some other situation, e-mail's speed can become a pothole. "Quick trigger" messages have caused hard feelings and broken relationships.

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Tactical Conference 12:

"Marketing from the Inside Out: Winning Strategies with Employees"

May 14th & 15th

The Radisson Resort & Spa

Scottsdale, Arizona

See page 2 for more information

## TC 12 Update

**Tactical Conference 12 Early Bird Registration deadline is Monday, March 15th.** Hurry and get your registration in to receive the Early Bird Discount.

Be sure to make your room reservations at the Radisson Resort and Spa soon to receive the conference rate. Room block is limited. Remember to indicate your confirmation number on your Conference Registration form for an additional \$25 discount (one discount per room). Please call the resort at 800-333-3333 to make reservations. Be certain to tell them you are with **PREFERRED** Therapy Providers' Tactical Conference 12 to receive the **PREFERRED** room rate.

If you have any questions or need more information about TC 12, you may contact Paula Sharits or Sandy Dodt at 800-664-5240 or by email [psharits@preferredtherapy.com](mailto:psharits@preferredtherapy.com).

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## Ohio Becomes 39th Direct Access State

Gov. Robert Taft signed legislation (SB35) Tuesday that provides Ohio residents with direct access to physical therapists. The signing marked the successful end of 25 years of advocacy efforts by the Ohio chapter to convince state lawmakers to eliminate referral requirements. No additional regulations are required to make the new law effective on May 3.

"This legislation certainly will improve access to physical therapy for Ohioans. I am especially pleased about the new opportunities that physical therapists will have to participate in education and treatment related to wellness and fitness," said Jonathan Cooperman, PT, JD, MS, president of the Ohio Chapter.

Meanwhile, the Indiana State Senate passed direct access legislation (SB360) Wednesday on a 47-to-1 vote. The bill now goes to the House, where chapter members will seek to revise the bill to include improved provisions negotiated with legislative leaders.

For more information on Direct Access, go to **PREFERRED's** web site, [www.preferredtherapy.com](http://www.preferredtherapy.com) and click on Legislation News.

Source: [http://www.apta.org/Bulletin?&id\[1\]=51292](http://www.apta.org/Bulletin?&id[1]=51292)

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## Contract Updates



**PREFERRED** was recently informed that effective October 31, 2003, One Health Plan of California, Inc. changed its name to Great-West Healthcare of California, Inc. Products and services sold by One Health Plan HMO/HCSC companies, Great-West Life & Annuity Insurance Co. and Alta Health & Life Insurance Company will do business under the brand name Great-West Healthcare. New member ID cards are being issued to new members and renewals. Please keep in mind that during this one year conversion period providers may continue to accept One Health Plan ID cards.

Beginning January 1, 2004, Great-West Healthcare began expanding their membership by contracting directly with several employer groups and benefit administrators to provide services to employees. Great-West Healthcare will provide provider network services, medical management services, claims processing support and stop loss insurance for these contracts, while the benefit administrators will perform all other services. Members will be given a provider directory and the Great-West Healthcare logo will be located on the member ID card and EOB.

**PREFERRED** is contracted with Great-West Healthcare only in California.

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## Foundation for Physical Therapy 2004 Car Raffle

**PREFERRED** is very happy to announce the winner of our "Support the Foundation" raffle initiative. Metro Physical Therapy in Scottsdale, Arizona purchased the most tickets and won a 2005 **PREFERRED** Annual Membership. A special thank you to everyone who supported the Foundation with the purchase of raffle tickets.

The lucky winner of the 2004 Mustang was Jennifer Meredith, a physical therapy student from Winfield, Tennessee. Congratulations Jennifer!

## **PREFERRED** Employee Profile - Jill Hayhurst

**Name:** Jill Hayhurst

**Nickname:** Jilly Bean

**Length of employment with**

**PREFERRED:** One year

**Job title and responsibilities:** Receptionist - answering phones, filing, faxing, direct mail, etc.

**What do you like most about your job:** I like a lot of things about where I work. I think any job (even the worst ones) can be great, if you work with great people. I love the whole atmosphere here; everyone is so nice and so fun, which is what I love most about my job.

**Favorite Pastime:** Watching "Friends", working out, and hanging out with my nephews.

**About your family:** I have 3 brothers, 1 sister and two nephews. I still live at home with my Dad while I go to school.

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## National Health Information Privacy and Security Week

The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) is sponsoring **April 11-17, 2004 as National Health Information Privacy and Security Week**. Privacy and Security Week is designed to raise awareness among healthcare professionals, their employers, and the public of the importance of protecting the privacy, confidentiality, and security of personal health information. We encourage you to use the free PowerPoint presentation, articles, quizzes and much more from the AHIMA Web site at [www.ahima.org/hipsweek](http://www.ahima.org/hipsweek).

There are also special posters, statement stuffers, t-shirts and much more to brighten up the event for you and your facility available at [www.imprintmall.com/hipsweek](http://www.imprintmall.com/hipsweek).

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## Payor Corner

### Health Plans - Their Hottest Topics

By Christy Beauchamp

The American Association of Preferred Provider Organizations (AAPPO) held its annual forum in Florida in January. The two hot topics - "*Evidence Based Medicine and Consumer Driven Healthcare*," two subjects worth discussing in this newsletter and future issues.

#### **EVIDENCE BASED MEDICINE**

*PROVE IT!*

*"Quality isn't an accident, it is the result of intelligent effort." - URAC*

Times are critical. You are expected to provide high quality care at "affordable" prices. But how exactly do you quantify quality so that health plans understand it; particularly when they are often challenging if certain services are even necessary? Better yet, how do you get health plans to agree on what constitutes quality?

During the AAPPO annual forum, it was clear that health plans and providers are at odds when it comes down to service and the bottom line. Health plans want to know what providers are doing to control costs and how they deliver quality care, while providers are wondering why health plans don't recognize their efforts with better reimbursements.

We have a tremendous opportunity right now to "bend the ears" of health plans, particularly in the PPO community. **PREFERRED** is well positioned within the AAPPO to help your voice be heard. If you are participating in the APTA's Hooked on Evidence program, please let us know by sending an e-mail to Hazel Valdez, our Director of Marketing at [hvaldez@preferredtherapy.com](mailto:hvaldez@preferredtherapy.com) and indicate if you are interested in collaborating on an article to be published in our quarterly payor/PPO newsletter.

Watch next month's newsletter for a look into Consumer Driven ("Consumer Choice") benefit designs.

# PREFERRED Vendor Profile - SME Inc. USA

**PREFERRED** Therapy Providers' is pleased to announce that we have signed SME, Inc. USA (SME) a new **PREFERRED** vendor. "We are pleased that SME is joining the family of **PREFERRED** vendors," said Jaxene Hillebert, President of **PREFERRED**. "Our **PREFERRED** vendor program demonstrates our commitment to providing high quality and cost-effective resources for our network of specialty providers. SME's outstanding customer service and discounts, will be a useful resource for our provider network."



Superior Medical Equipment  
800-538-4675 • (fax) 800-560-5424

Since it started in 1992, SME has established the reputation of being America's Leading Physical Therapy Discounter. SME offers the physical therapy industry: deeply discounted prices, one stop shopping and personal V.I.P. service. SME has a collection of 700+ vendors. This broad scope enables us to provide the latest Physical Therapy Products along with: OT, ATC, med-surg, electrodes, soft goods, bracing (42 manufacturers), lymphedema bandages, taping supplies, linens, durable medical equipment, capital equipment and everything else in a PT/OT clinic. For more information, or to place an order, please contact SME at 800-538-4675 or by e-mail at [ordernow@smeincusa.com](mailto:ordernow@smeincusa.com). When ordering, have your **PREFERRED** Member Number available to receive the **PREFERRED** discount.

**TC 12 Early Bird Registration deadline  
March 15th  
See page 2 for more information.**

## Are we communicating yet?

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- **Change the "subject" line** when the topic has changed. Often, after several e-mail exchanges, the topic moved from the original subject. It is easier to keep track of incoming mail if the subject line has been changed to reflect the new subject.
- **Don't expect an immediate reply** unless the receiver knows you want it. The receiver could be unavailable. Also, some people check e-mail infrequently. If you're out of the office, an auto-responder can be used to inform others you will get back to them.
- **Delete trailing messages.** Many e-mail programs automatically include the message to which you are replying. But if that was a reply, then your previous message trails below it, and below it is the previous message, and so on. Erasing all but the last message is usually more efficient.
- **Don't forward messages** just because someone asks you to. I don't know how many times I have received an "important" chain letter only to be notified later to disregard it because it turned out to be a hoax. Use your own judgment in forwarding inspirational or humorous messages.

**PREFERRED**  
Therapy Providers  
Connecting Payors and Providers

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