NEPHROLOGY ASSOCIATES OF NORTHERN ILLINOIS/INDIANA

NANI TODAY

VOLUME 11, ISSUE III • FALL 2005

Special Points Of Interest:

NANI TECHNOLOGY HELP DESK

708 492-4534

Check out the NANI website at
www.kidneyphysicians.com

Looking into the future....

As we prepare for the end of the year and the celebrations that come with that I think it is time to reflect on the changes NANI is undergoing and celebrate the opportunities that come with change. The most significant change for the organization is the change that is taking place at the corporate office with the resignation of Dan DeFalco our CFO. Dan has dedicated many years to developing NANI with our Board of Directors and Executive Management Team. Dan worked to solidify the relationships between your independent practices and the corporate office, thus creating a financially successful group practice that is one of the largest Nephrology Practices in the Country. We wish Dan much luck in his new endeavors and with his family.

Brian O'Dea has joined NANI as our CFO. Brian is a graduate of the University of Illinois and DePaul University, and has extensive experience in accounting and finance. Most recently Brian was the CFO and effectively operated a fast growing group of nine companies in distribution and manufacturing. Mr. O'Dea is a CPA, has a Masters in Business Administration and brings with him the motivation to guide the financial aspect of our corporation as well as continue working to create strong relationships with the Practices you are all working hard to develop. As Brian moves into his new position he will be making every effort to meet all of you and is interested in your ideas to strengthen this already solid organization. His skills and energy will be a great benefit to our organization.

There are other changes in the works at the corporate office, which you may have started to see already. The Management Team has committed to being in your offices more often for on site education and to assist you in achieving the goals you have for your individual practice. Our Management Team has extensive knowledge and expertise in the industry and can offer individual consultation to your practices. Carrie Fontenot, Roz Tooman, Kelly McDonald and Sue Campell will be working closely with your staff on compliance/billing issues, technology and training as well as with the Board and Executive Team to create an environment that will allow our organization to maintain it's strengths and grow.

Many of you know that we have already begun to explore new services that our very capable practitioners can offer their practice communities. Dr. Rahman (Elk Grove Village) has begun providing Vascular Access services at an RMS facility in Rolling Meadows. As other practices in our group consider offering these services in their community NANI Corporate will be monitoring the success of this new line of service as well as working with our Malpractice Carriers and Payors to educate them on our outcomes and service success, thus maintaining our front end expenses to the greatest extent possible and monitoring our financial success through fee schedule negotiations when possible.

Under the direction of our capable Office Managers and Nurse Practitioners, in Fort Wayne and Winfield, we have seen increased services being offered with their new Anemia Clinics. These are off to a successful start and we are excited about the motivation of each of our practices to extend their staff and capabilities to offer their patients a wider range of care in an environment they are already comfortable in.

NANI corporate has created a qualified and experienced Billing Department and has taken "in house" the billing from several regions. This flexibility allows your practice coverage when your biller is going to be out for an extended period of time for Medical Reasons or Vacation. For the practices for which we do billing we will be able to offer assurance that charges submitted by the Practitioners are billed for in a timely manner. We are able to monitor errors and educate providers when errors are being made. The Compliance Committee has approved an audit schedule and procedure to monitor coding/billing errors and start an educational discussion appropriate to each practice or practitioner.

Medicare premium and deductible rates increase in 2006 Beginning Jan. 1, Medicare beneficiaries will pay $10.30 more per month to participate in the Part B program. Medicare patients' Part B monthly premiums will increase to $88.50, as required under a statutory formula. Additionally, the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement and Modernization Act requires that the Part B deductible, which group practices may collect, be increased to $110 in 2005 and indexed for Part B expenditures in 2006. Using the new formula, the 2006 Part B deductible is $124.

NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR OF BILLING

MEDICARE WATCH LIST

One of the services on the CMS/OIG watch list is Critical Care. It has long been maintained that critical care services should NOT be billed solely based on the fact that a patient is in a critical care unit. Now this service is being monitored and any physician with an excess amount of critical care services (based on the bell curve for that specialty) will be audited.

Critical Care should only be billed if the patients condition warrants that level of service, not based on where the patient is located.

The time the physician starts his/her visit with the patient and the time the doctor ceases care of the patient should be entered into the patients chart.

For example: Not one hour of critical care but 1:15pm to 2:20pm should be listed in the chart.

If you have questions or concerns about specific cases or need more information about when it is appropriate to bill critical care, please call Roz Tooman, Director of Billing/Education directly 708-492-4080.

IMPORTANT ILLINOIS MEDICARE CHANGE
EPO (ARANESP OR PROCRIT) WITH OFFICE VISITS

There has been a change in the way Illinois Medicare requires claims for EPO injections and office visits to be submitted. Office visits (99212-99215), EPO and the injection code may still be billed together, however a 25 modifier must be added to the office visit in order to receive payment on all three services.

Notes from our Compliance Committee

In order to develop a consistent review process of our billing practices and documentation, the Compliance Committee has been working to establish a process by which documentation will be matched to billing and audited for accuracy on an ongoing basis. Data will be collected from each practice for OIG target codes, Critical Care visits and consultations for established patients. Practitioners new to NANI will undergo documentation review shortly after their start date and will be given additional training in areas identified by Roz Tooman during the brief audit.

Billing Frequency data will be compared to the most current RPA and CMS data as well as to NANI as a whole and within your practice. When a practitioner shows an unusual billing pattern, documentation will be requested in order to audit documentation and necessity of care compared to level billed. Additional training will be offered to practices that have unusual billing practices or unsubstantiated billing levels.

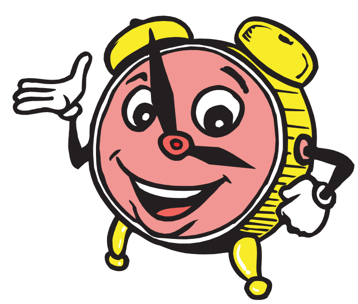
An outside auditor has been acquired through council for the purpose of auditing documentation/coding for practices notified by CMS that they are "outside" the normal billing profile. Recommendations made by the auditor will be presented to the individual practice by the Director of Billing/Education (Roz) and written documentation will be provided. If you would like more information about the timelines and goals set forth by the compliance committee please, contact Gregory Kozeny, MD directly at 630-690-1220.

NEW IVR TO SAVE YOU TIME!
(Illinois)

Patient Eligibility from IVR? YES you can!

WPS Medicare will implement a speech enabled IVR on November 11, 2005. How does this impact you?

You will gain the ability to obtain beneficiary eligibility information from the IVR. This function will allow you to check eligibility on an unlimited number of Medicare beneficiaries on one call. You will not be limited to three per call. Please keep in mind, the disclosure requirements will remain.



This new IVR, featuring voice recognition will be available on November 11, 2005. The IVR will still be able to accept touch tone entries; however, the voice recognition feature is recommended for eligibility inquiries.

We are moving very quickly toward implementation. Please continue to watch the Listserv e-mails for the most current information on the timeline for the new IVR. You can also visit the Website at: www.wpsmedicare.com/provider/provhome.shtml for updates.

HELP DESK TIPS

Using the IT Help Desk (708-492-4534)

Over the past year many improvements have been made to record and follow-up on technology/communication related issues within our organization. One significant change was the implementation of the IT Help Desk. By using the Help Desk you will assist our technology department to identify system wide challenges, training needs, and specific IT issues for your office. Our team is documenting the calls/questions and their resolutions and working to develop a comprehensive list of solutions for the issues our organization sees most frequently.

We ask that you call the Help Desk for all software and hardware related issues as well as any telephone related issues you may have (practitioner cell phones, pagers, answering services etc.). A Help Desk technician is available most days between the hours of 8:00 and 4:00 M-F. Every effort is made to answer all calls during those hours, in the event that you call and the Help Desk is closed, leave a detailed message on the voice mail and you will receive confirmation of your call the next business day.

What you can expect when utilizing the Help Desk?

Once you place a call to the Help Desk 708-492-4534 the issue is reviewed by the technician, who in turn decides if the issue can be resolved at that time or if it needs to be assigned to another member of the IT team (Rosamond, John, Sue or Sandy.)

If the problem is not resolved during the first call a "ticket" is created in our system and is e-mailed to the assigned tech and the caller. The ticket includes the detailed information about the problem and any specific challenges that may be noted.

A tech will follow-up with the requestor to obtain more information if it is needed to resolve the problem and to notify the caller of a reasonable completion date for the task.

Once the problem is resolved the caller will receive a notice that their "ticket" is closed including detailed notes about the resolution.

The IT Department is dedicated to improving the communication between the offices and our corporate team. Please feel free to bring us your feedback on this process.

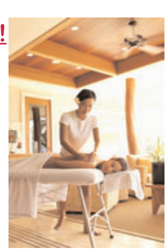
Introducing the next generation of employee perks

ADP TotalSource is excited to roll out their next generation of employee perks, which for sheer value and variety is, we think, unmatched anywhere. The program, ADP Personal Discounts, is designed to save you and your family money on hundreds of different premium-brand products and services.

Save on…

- Apparel and accessories
- Auto rental, loans and insurance
- Books, movies and music
- Computer and office equipment
- Diamonds and fine jewelry
- Home electronics
- Movie tickets, theme parks, concerts and other entertainment
- Financial services
- Flowers, gift baskets and related items
- Health and beauty products
- Restaurants, fine food and wine
- Home, garden and pet-related products
- Sports, fitness and wellness
- Toys, baby supplies and apparel
- Travel packages, including air and cruise tickets

And much more!



In addition to Personal Discounts, ADP TotalSource also offers discounted real estate and financial services to employees. Among the highlights:

- **Personal real estate assistance program (which includes relocation assistance and commercial real estate services)**
- **Preferred vendors for mortgages and property insurance**
- **Household goods moving assistance**

You can access these great perks via the My TotalSource Personal Page at www.adptotalsource.com. Simply log on using your My TotalSource username and password, then click on the Perks link and Personal Discounts link. If you have trouble logging on, please contact the Employee Service Center at 800-554-1802 from 8:00 am to 9:00 pm Eastern Time Monday through Friday.

Log on today and begin to save!

ADP ezLabor Manager Implementation Timeline

ADP's ezLabor Manager will allow us to streamline the collection of hours worked information for all employees. It will create a file to send to ADP for payroll processing that will require significantly fewer accounting staff hours to input and review.

All staff will be trained before the end of the year on using the website portion of this system. You will either punch in and out on the web if you are an hourly employee or report your PTO time taken if you are a salaried employee. The LaGrange and West Suburban offices have already started using this website and are doing a good job of helping us work through the bugs before we roll it out to everyone.

The following offices will be trained and start using the website by the 12/4/05 pay period:

· ***Blue Island***
· ***Downers Grove***
· ***Glenview***
· ***Hammond***
· ***Jackson Park***
· ***Lawn Terrace***
· ***Melrose Park***
· ***Oak Park***

The remaining offices will be trained and using the website by the 12/18/05 pay period.

After the first of the year the Oak Park office and several others will be getting a handpunch machine to use instead of the website. The schedule for this implementation has not been set yet, so we will keep you posted as we have more details. Please feel free to contact Sue Campbell or Brendon Dreps if you have any questions.

Best Practices

New Patient Appointment (stress relievers)

To avoid scrounging for records at the last minute, we tell the patient, when they call for a new patient appointment, to call their referring doctor and give them permission to send out their last three blood tests, their last three urine tests, and any abdominal study (no matter how old that one is). We take their name and phone number and start a chart then. When we receive the records in our office, whoever they were referred to, reviews the information and lets us know if they can wait until their next available new patient appointment (since most of them are two months out) or they need to squeeze them in somewhere.

We then call the patient back and set up the appointment at that time. It makes them feel better, if they have to wait two months, that the doctor has reviewed information and does not feel it is urgent (since most people freak out when told they need to see a Nephrologists).

Then we mail them our history and physical form and demographic sheet along with an appointment card. They fill this out at home and bring it in when they come (saves evil eyes, sighs, and the excuse of "I forgot my reading glasses" when in the waiting room).

So that's my story for this month. I have many, many more, but cannot overwhelm you all at once. I will save some and spread out the wealth!!

Have a good weekend!

by Lauren Reichs (LaGrange)
in her own humorous words.

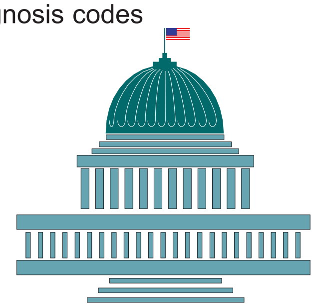
HIPAA...

House bill would establish new privacy standard

A House bill introduced by Nancy Johnson (R-CT) would require the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to develop a single privacy standard to replace current state and federal laws. The bill, introduced on October 27, aims to encourage the adoption of health information technology. “Information technology, e-prescribing and electronic medical records have the ability to improve healthcare quality, reduce errors and save lives,” Johnson said in a press release. “America’s healthcare system has lagged behind other sectors in maximizing its use of cutting-edge information systems, but now we are moving full speed ahead."

The bill would also:

- allow hospitals and group practices to provide physicians with information technology hardware, software, and training
- establish a certification program for technology, based on its interoperability with other systems
- update diagnosis codes



401K Corner

A reminder to everyone that the move to the new 401k Platform within MetLife took all participants' balances and moved them to the new plan over the weekend following September 16th. Here is a list of where your money is currently invested based upon this move. Please call Steve Juley at 773-864-8757 or the help desk at 800-I-GOT-MET if you have any questions.

Old Plan Investment Options	New Plan Option
American Century International	EuroPacific Growth
Black Rock Large Cap	American Funds Growth Fund
Credit Suisse Mid Cap	Alger Mid Cap Institutional
NEF Money Market	MetLife Stable Value
Harris Oakmark Focused Value	American Century Value
Janus Fund	American Funds Growth Fund
Janus Flexible Income	American Century Inflation Adj. Bond
Loomis Core Bond	Calvert Income
Loomis Small Cap	American Beacon Small Cap
Salomon Brothers US Govt.	Calvert Income
T.Rowe Price Equity Income	American Century Value
Templeton Foreign	EuroPacific Growth
Franklin Small/Mid Cap	Alger Mid Cap Institutional
Davis Venture Value	Davis NY Venture
Westpeak Equity Securities	Met Series Stock Index

As well as these fund changes, there were 5 new options added to your 401k.

Asset Allocation Models:
MetLife Conservative, MetLife Moderate, MetLife Aggressive.

Specialty Asset Classes:
Oppenheimer Real Asset, American Century Real Estate.

Coming Attractions & Events

NANI COMPLIANCE/BILLING TRAINING MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2006

Office Managers and Billers are required to attend all Billing / Compliance meetings. Meeting location has been changed to the Wyndham Drake Hotel (2301 York Road, Oak Brook IL) unless otherwise notified.
Large group meetings will be held in
MARCH and **OCTOBER**.
Watch your e-mail for more information and announcements.

According to the Employee Handbook 2006 corporate holidays will be celebrated as noted below:
New Years Day, Wednesday January 1, 2006
Good Friday/Easter, Friday March 24
Memorial Day, Monday May 29
Independence Day, Tuesday July 4th
Labor Day, Monday September 4
Thanksgiving, Thursday Nov 23, Friday Nov 24
Christmas, Monday Dec 25

NANI Contact Information

Fax Numbers:

Account Representatives/Billers
708-386-2394

Business Office Management
(Carrie, Roz, Kelly)
708-763-0970

Accounting Department
(Brendon, Brian)
708-386-2878

Administration
(Cindy, Rosamond, Doctors Balter, Carbon, Morris)
708-386-2606

Cash Application/Accounts Payable
(Bonnie, Alida, Bena)
708-386-8409

Technology **708-386-2394**

Don't forget to give our patients the Toll Free Number to contact the account Representatives:
866-288-6264

Phone Numbers:

Benefits/Human Resources (ADP Total Source)
800-554-1802

IT (Phones, Pagers, Computers (network or software)
708-492-4534

Call the Business Office Toll Free
866-288-6264

NEW NANI FAMILY MEMBERS.......

Madalyn Rose Chaney was born September 21, 2005 (Fort Wayne)
Angela Marie Fontenot born October 16, 2005 (Corporate)

PLEASE EXTEND YOUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS TO MEMBERS OF THE NANI FAMILY WHO HAVE LOST FAMILY MEMBERS OR LOVED ONES…

Theresa Parham (Rockford) *lost her brother Roy in May.*
Diane Castro (Naperville) *lost her father-in-law in November.*
Rose Sanborn (Corporate) *lost her nephew in April.*

WISH THEM A FOND FAREWELL...

Edward Lelonek MD (Fort Wayne) *is retiring from practice in order to teach.*
Dan DeFalco (CFO Corporate) *Moving on to new challenges, we wish him well.*
Pat Olafson (Rockford) *retired after nine years. The practice is hoping that she will get tired of playing bridge soon and come back to work part-time next spring.*
Flo Dutkiewicz (Winfield) *will be retiring in December after 27 years with NANI/Everest corporations. Need I say more?*
Ethel Ann Divito (Rockford) *will be retiring in December after 17+ years with the Rockford Group.*

Blue Ribbon Achievements

Ann Cosenza (Corporate) has been promoted to floor supervisor of the billing department and the account representatives. Congratulations Ann, we look forward to working with you in this new position.

May Chow, MD (LaGrange) received recognition from one of her Patients at Advocate Good Samaritan Hospital for being and outstanding care giver.

Krishna Sankaran, MD (Rockford) was awarded the GOLDEN APPLE for teaching the 4th year medical students during the Nephrology Rotation. The award was given by the 2005 Senior Class from University of Illinois College at Rockford. This is the second time Dr. Sankaran has been given this award.

Angela Johnson Bates, returned to the classroom at Rock Valley College this summer (after many years) and earned a 4.0 her first semester. Way to go Angela.

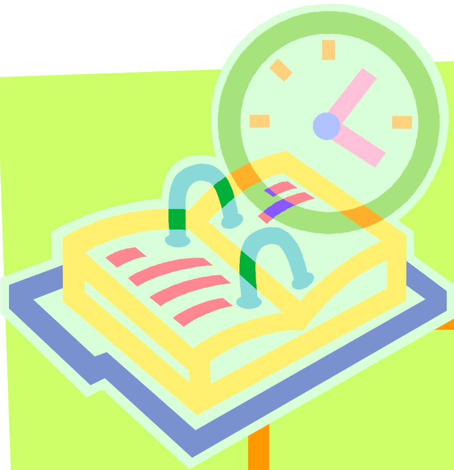
This summer the Rockford office staff and their families had a picnic. They cooked hot dogs, hamburgers and Italian Sausage, played volley ball and bad-mitten and had a good time together outside of the office. In September the office participated in America's Walk for Diabetes at the Klehm Arboretum and Botanic Garden near Rockford. They enjoyed a great day walking for a good cause and raised over $1,000 as a team.

Dr. Maynard and Jessica Archibald (front office) have created a wonderful new website for the Rockford office. You are invited to check it out at http://www.rockfordnephrology.org/. Look at it often as it has great recipes and other useful patient education materials.

Odds & Ends

PLEASE WELCOME.......

Venesia Kitchen *medical biller* (Elk Grove)
Margaret K. Komoll *cma/cert. Phelbotomist* (Elk Grove)
Brian J. O'Dea *CFO* (Corporate)
Nicole Valle *clerical* (Corporate)
Kourtney G.Fisher *medical assistant* (Merrillville)
Katherine Lelonek *front office clerk* (Fort Wayne)
Sharlette J. Steed *file clerk* (Fort Wayne)
Kathleen C. Vandermotten Tulley *cert. medical assistant* (Fort Wayne)
Dawn Renae Zumwalt *medical assistant* (Fort Wayne)
Kathleen D. Capriola *clinical nurse specialist* (Rockford)
Mary Jo M. Johnson *RN* (Rockford)
Ernest F. DeJesus *MD* (Winfield)
Tina S. Han *MD* (Glenview)
Richard Lee *MD* (Elk Grove)
Katrina E. Wright *MD* (Hammond)
Awad El-Magbri *MD* (Rockford)
Michael J. Robertson *MD* (Rockford)
Maureen Chapman *Nurse Practioner* (Winfield)



NANI clean off YOUR Desk week will be **December 5-13th**.

Awards will be given for the offices that:

Collect the most money at the office (Co-Pays and outstanding balances)

For every date you have office hours and <u>no</u> NO-Show's. (Make sure to bill their visit & get the co-pay)

Office with the most corrections to previously un-billed service items. (Correct and Bill! Or send the info to the billing office)

Do you have a creative way to wrap up outstanding items before the end of the year?

Let us know what you are doing in your office!