



Providing Ambulance Billing Service to New England Since 1984

# NEWSLETTER

from the desk of Rick Martin

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## ANNUAL RATE CHANGE NEWSLETTER

As reported in my September 2009 newsletter, the Ambulance Inflation Factor (AIF) for 2010 will be **zero** percent. Combined this with the final phase out of the New England regional rates and other factors detailed in my last news letter, the 2010 Medicare rates may be slightly lower than the 2009 rates.

As of 12/15/09. Medicare has not published the 2010 rates. Given the rise in operating costs we have all experienced and the potential for reduced Medicare rates in 2010, I suggest all services begin evaluating the following option now: increase your billing rates, for some of you, significantly to garner more funds from payers with whom you do not have a fixed fee schedule agreement.

On the back of this newsletter is a rate change form showing you your current rates, 2009 Medicare Rates (2010 do out soon) and a space to fill in your changes for 2010. Should you choose to change your rates, please scan/e-mail or fax the completed form to me. I will mail out the 2010 Medicare fee schedule as soon as it becomes available.

**This newsletter is not intended as legal advice. Consult an attorney for specific legal advice concerning your situation.**

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**I WISH YOU AND YOUR FAMILY  
SAFE & HAPPY HOLIDAYS AND  
GOOD HEALTH & PROSPERITY IN  
2010**



Some basic information:

- 1) A service can set rates any way they want. OIG guidance on this matter is just that. There is no law stating rates must be justified by cost (ie.. my 1<sup>st</sup> sentence rules, except for CT clients)
- 2) Services that “get together to discuss / set their rates”, anti-trust issues can be raised by a party that feels damaged by these actions.

A few practical items:

- 1) As your billing agent, Comstar will bill any rates set by our clients.
- 2) If rates are set higher, Medicare +50%, 100%, 200%.....whatever you choose, it will increase payments from non-contracted payers.
- 3) It will also increase the size and amount of unpaid balances (by both patients and insurance carriers). We would need to discuss and define what procedures and to what degree you want these unpaid balances pursued, with the carrier, with the patient.....
- 4) Amount to be reviewed for write off will be higher, again an administrative and disposition decision process that we can discuss and mapped out.
- 5) Public perception and reaction. There will be one, which we will work with you to anticipate and manage issues likely to arise should you decide on a large increase in rates.

My advice: Do what’s best for your City or Town and service. Comstar has the staffing and expertise to support your direction 100%. In these challenging fiscal times, all revenue opportunities must be evaluated and informed decisions proactively made. **Please contact me anytime to discuss your specific situation.**

Happy Holidays to you and yours,

*Rick*

**END**