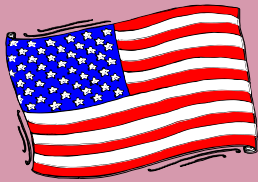


*A Newsletter  
From the Desk  
of  
Rick Martin*

*Dec. 7, 2012*



*America  
Land of the Free  
Home of the Brave*

*BMM 9/11/2001*

# COMSTAR

## Ambulance Billing Service

### **Bundling Your Services Ambulance Billing Rates**

Comstar is recommending that all clients that have not already done so, transition their rate structure from the traditional “a la carte” rate structure to a bundled rate structure during CY 2013.

Bundling rates will not result in higher total reimbursement of clean claims. Increasing rates could achieve this but this is not the intent of this specific advice. The intent here is to position your service well for the time if/when Obamacare becomes fully implemented and provider reimbursements begin to flow through Accountable Care Organizations, ACO's, (new managed care entities envision under the Obama plan).

We advise that presenting ACO's with a consistent and simplified fee structure that mirrors the current CMS fee schedule structure will position your service to attain its equitable portion of the funds allotted to the ACO for a specific (in its totality) patient care event.

#### Important Notes:

- 1) The specific cross walk from a la carte to bundle rates will be unique for each client as your rates and number of a la carte charges do differ. Please contact me via e-mail, [rick.martin@comstarbilling.com](mailto:rick.martin@comstarbilling.com) or my direct line, 978-771-6482, to discuss and map out your specific cross walk plan
- 2) The cross walk process from a la carte to bundled is not intended to increase your rates but must be done thoughtfully and conservatively to ensure that your service does not unintentionally reduce its rates. Again, I can discuss crosswalk approaches that will assist you with this process when you contact me.
- 3) Your crews documentation and Comstar's coding requirements are not changed by bundling of rates.
- 4) The transition to bundled rates from a la carte rates is a “industry best practice” recommendation for the reason previously stated. It is not a mandated change.

\*\*\*\* continued on next page \*\*\*\*

**COMSTAR**  
AMBULANCE  
BILLING SERVICE

8 Turcotte Memorial Drive  
Rowley, MA 01969

Phone: 800-488-4351  
Fax: 978-356-2721

We are on the web at  
[www.ComstarBilling.com](http://www.ComstarBilling.com)

***The only way of  
finding the limits  
of the possible is  
by going beyond  
them into the  
impossible.***

**Arthur C. Clarke**

*A Newsletter from the desk of Rick Martin.*

## **Bundling Your Services Ambulance Billing Rates (continued)**

A side by side example of a la carte and bundled rates is shown below. I have **arbitrarily** chosen to use values that are Boston area Medicare +100% rates rounded to near whole dollar for this example.

|                 | a la carte | Bundled               |
|-----------------|------------|-----------------------|
| BLS Emergency   | \$773      | \$883                 |
| ALS-1 Emergency | \$918      | \$1,592               |
| ALS-2 Emergency | \$1,329    | \$2,505               |
| Mileage         | \$30/mi    | \$30 per mile         |
| Oxygen          | \$110      | included in base rate |
| Airway          | \$267      | included in base rate |
| IV              | \$235      | included in base rate |
| Cardiac Monitor | \$329      | included in base rate |
| Defibrillation  | \$235      | included in base rate |

Again, the specific cross walk from a la carte to bundled rates will be unique for each client as your rates and number of a la carte charges do differ.

Please contact me via e-mail, [rick.martin@comstarbilling.com](mailto:rick.martin@comstarbilling.com) or my direct line, 978-771-6482, to discuss and map out your specific cross walk .

CT client, obviously, stick with the state mandated rates and structure.

**COMSTAR**  
AMBULANCE  
BILLING SERVICE

8 Turcotte Memorial Drive  
Rowley, MA 01969

Phone: 800-488-4351  
Fax: 978-356-2721

We are on the web at  
[www.ComstarBilling.com](http://www.ComstarBilling.com)

***The only way of  
finding the limits  
of the possible is  
by going beyond  
them into the  
impossible.***

**Arthur C. Clarke**

## 2013 Medicare Rates — Annual Rate Review/Change

**CMS is unlikely to be able to publish final rates for CY 2013 until the budget situation in Washington is resolved. Comstar will issue updates and client specific rate review/change forms as soon as information is available .**

At this time, there are still a number of variables that must be resolved before we can definitely calculate payments under the Medicare Ambulance Fee Schedule for 2013. The most important question is whether Congress will pass legislation extending the temporary adjustments. Based on early numbers, the ambulance inflation factor for 2013 will be approximately 0.5%. This can easily change, slightly, if adjustments are made to the CPI, or if the MFP increases or decreases. In addition to the AIF, the other factors that will impact Medicare reimbursement for ambulance services in 2013 will be:

**Temporary Adjustments – Ground** – The temporary adjustments for ground ambulance transport (urban – 2%, rural – 3%, super-rural – 22.6% base only) are due to expire at the end of 2012. Further legislation is required to extend these adjustments into 2013.

**Temporary Adjustment – Air** – The temporary adjustment for air ambulance transports is set to expire at the end of 2012. This adjustment allows the point of pickup to be paid as “rural” to the extent it was considered rural on December 31, 2006. Further legislation is required to extend this adjustment into 2013.

**Sequestration** – Effective January 1, 2013, all Medicare payments are scheduled to be cut by 2% as a result of the Budget Control Act of 2011. This was the result the so-called “Super Committee” failing to reach agreement on proposed budget cuts. Further legislation is required to avoid sequestration next year.

**Medicare Ambulance Relief Legislation** — The *Medicare Ambulance Access Preservation Act of 2011* (MAAPA) was introduced in the Senate on March 1, 2011 and would provide a 6% increase under the Medicare ambulance fee schedule for ambulance transports originating in urban or rural areas and extend the bonus base payment of 22.6% for ambulance transports originating in super rural areas. The increases would be for five years starting January 1, 2012.

**COMSTAR**  
AMBULANCE  
BILLING SERVICE

8 Turcotte Memorial Drive  
Rowley, MA 01969

Phone: 800-488-4351  
Fax: 978-356-2721

We are on the web at  
[www.ComstarBilling.com](http://www.ComstarBilling.com)

***The only way of  
finding the limits  
of the possible is  
by going beyond  
them into the  
impossible.***

**Arthur C. Clarke**

*A Newsletter from the desk of Rick Martin.*

## EMS Law Corner

Please go to our website, [www.comstarbilling.com](http://www.comstarbilling.com) , to view the latest Sample Signature Form for use by your crews.

Many clients have or will receive a **Medicare Revalidation** Notice. The Affordable Care Act created a new set of criteria for the screening of Medicare enrollments. The purpose behind these new criteria is to identify prospective providers or suppliers that may pose a significant risk of fraud and abuse. The new criteria went into effect on March 25, 2011. In order to apply these same criteria to existing Medicare providers and suppliers, the Affordable Care Act is requiring Medicare Administrative Contractors (MACs) to revalidate the enrollment information of all providers and suppliers that were already enrolled in the Medicare program as of March 25, 2011. The current revalidation cycle will be completed by March 23, 2015. However, MACs get to set their own timetable for when they will ask specific providers to revalidate. If you receive such a notice, please contact Comstar for assistance in the compliance of this Medicare requirement.

**New Hampshire Medicaid** is requiring a re-enrollment for all providers enrolled within the NH Medicaid program. ACS will be taking over the NH Medicaid in the near future so Medicaid wants to verify Provider credentials prior to setting them up in the new Medicaid system. ACS expect full implementation by 2013. At that time NH providers will gain access to Electronic Funds Transfers for services rendered to Medicaid patients. NH Clients will receive a letter from NH Medicaid Title 19 program. This may be a reminder or a direct request that the provider complete the re-enrollment. Re-enrollments should be addressed immediately after receiving the letter. If you received a letter it should be sent to Comstar Attn: Tiesha Braley, Provider Relations Manager. This can be sent via facsimile to 978-356-2721 or e-mailed to [tbraley@comstarbilling.com](mailto:tbraley@comstarbilling.com) to expedite the process. We will fill in the electronic requirements on your behalf and send all signature forms for completion along with an instructional letter. Please mail the originals via U.S Postal Service Attn: Tiesha. We will submit the re-enrollment and monitor it through completion.

Any questions can be directed to Tiesha Braley directly through the means referred to above or by phone at 800-488-4351.

**COMSTAR**  
AMBULANCE  
BILLING SERVICE

8 Turcotte Memorial Drive  
Rowley, MA 01969

Phone: 800-488-4351  
Fax: 978-356-2721

**We are on the web at  
[www.ComstarBilling.com](http://www.ComstarBilling.com)**

***"Behold the  
turtle. He  
makes  
progress only  
when he sticks  
his neck out."***

***James Conant***

***A Newsletter from the desk of Rick Martin.***

***"Comstar supports your operations as well as billing....."***

Thank you for your continued business with Comstar Ambulance Billing Service. We appreciate the opportunity to provide services to you. As a company, Comstar strives to add value to all of our clients. We have the most robust array of service options, some of which you may not be aware of.

**EMT Training Course -- Practical Consideration in Drafting the PCR Narrative**

This course 2 hr training course is provided to upon request to all clients. The objectives of this course are: To refresh and reinforce EMT's patient care report (PCR) writing training. To refresh and reinforce EMT's knowledge of the uses and importance of the PCR. To provide insights and guidance that will result in improvement in the quality and usefulness of the PCR. Note: Though applicable to EMT's in all states, this course is approved by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Office of Emergency Medical Services. Massachusetts certified EMT's can earn 2 (two) credit hours of continuation credit toward their Basic, Intermediate, or paramedic certification by attending this course.

**Software and Data Integration Support and Services**

Comstar has been using the Zoll Data Systems billing software as its billing platform since 2002. We send and receive data in an electronic and seamless manner with existing clients using Zoll's ePCR software. Comstar can also integrate seamlessly with other ePCR software vendors to the point where I guarantee that Comstar will integrate with any ePCR solution that a client may select to use. Comstar is very flexible in this manner, because we feel it is important for you, and every client to select an ePCR solution that you feel most comfortable with and best fits your needs. Our five person in-house IT staff has successfully integrated our Zoll software with the following nine (9) EPCR software solutions: AmbuPro, emsCharts, ESO Solutions, Firehouse, Healthware Solutions, ImageTrend, IMC Public Safety, PURVIS Public Safety, and Zoll Data Systems. Given Comstar's integration guarantee, this list will grow as clients select different ePCR products. In most cases, bridge programming is required to make such integration successful. Comstar's IT staff performs the bridge programming at no additional cost to Comstar's clients. They also will work with your chosen ePCR software vendor, as your technical advocate, should you have any issue with their product.

***"Comstar provides a cost effective ePCR Solution....."***

Comstar has an ePCR Partnership Agreement with Zoll Data Systems. Ambulance services that desire to use the Zoll ePCR solution but do not have the capital resources to fund the cost of deployment, server setup and license purchase now have a cost effective alternative through Comstar. For more information, please contact Jeff Tassi immediately at 800-488-4351 or [JTassi@comstarbilling.com](mailto:JTassi@comstarbilling.com). Jeff is prepared to demonstrate the Zoll ePCR product, discuss Comstar's capabilities to provide the web hosted solution, present a full service outline and discuss pricing.