

JANUARY 2018

Magnolia minutes



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A Word From Our *President*



President
Jeremy Pittman,
CMPE

Administrator
Westridge Family Clinic
Laurel, MS

I don't know about you, but I was ready to get back to the office! I enjoyed the holiday season with my family, a few extra snow days with the family at home, and a few flu days off just to make sure I would appreciate my job when I got back. I missed the routine. With this crazy weather we have been experiencing and the amount of flu cases we are seeing, I'm sure I am not the only person these things have affected. So, welcome back to work. We are off to a late start!

The weather also got the MGMA board behind a little. Our planning meeting (which is my favorite meeting of the year, by the way) was cancelled due to weather. We were not able to reschedule, but we will get the job done over a couple of conference calls. I love the planning meeting because it always has such an optimistic quality about it. We look at the upcoming year and begin planning the meetings. Any unfilled chair positions are filled. And we talk about what we want to accomplish this year.

Having started late, we don't have dates available for everything we want to do. But I would like to share what we have so far. Joy Yates is on the Medicare Contractor Advisory Committee (CAC). Justin Rhodes is Blue Cross (CAP) committee. Janet Benzing will continue to serve as the ACMPE Chair. Cindy Kilgore will continue to serve as the Vendor Chair. Harold Ingram has agreed to serve as the Legislative Chair.

The meetings that we have scheduled so far are the Insurance Forum at The Bellhaven on February 9th. You should have received an email about this meeting last week. The summer meeting is scheduled for July 18-20 at the Golden Nugget in Biloxi. Once again, we are merging with MGMA of Louisiana for the summer meeting. The fall meeting is scheduled for November 9th at the Clyde Muse Center in Pearl.

The outreach meetings have yet to be scheduled, but we will be having four this year. Our goal is to host

an outreach meeting in Tupelo, Jackson, Hattiesburg and the Gulf Coast. If you live in one of these areas and would like to help with the meeting, your help would be appreciated.

I have been a member of MGMA for seventeen years. Every professional contact that I have stems from my MGMA membership. I could not imagine doing this job without the professional support of the friends that I have made in MGMAMS.

One of the key issues that I want to address this year is membership. That I why I have requested that we increase the number of outreach meetings this year. Also, we want our members to know what is available to them as members. We really do get a lot for \$125 a year. Did you know that as members we have access to monthly webinars? We will be sending out invitations to these. Also, the webinars are stored on the mgmams.com webpage if you want to see one that you may have missed.

As we look toward the year ahead, I can assure you that all of us are going to be facing challenges in our jobs. Let's keep the communication lines between each other to support and help one another. And, not to sound like I am preaching or anything, look to turn those challenges we all face into opportunities. I am reading the book "In a Pit with a Lion on a Snowy Day". It is about an obscure passage from II Samuel about a guy that chased a lion into a pit and killed him.... Obviously on a snowy day. The book uses the passage to illustrate that we should turn our problems into opportunities.

I hope everyone is looking forward to the upcoming year with excitement about what can happen in our work and lives. And keep in contact with your friends in MGMA Mississippi for support, encouragement and celebrations. I look forward to seeing all of you at the meetings this year.

Jeremy Pittman

From your ACMPE Forum Representative



MGMA of MS ACMPE
Forum Representative
Janet Benzing,
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It's a new year and that always means a fresh start and renewed gusto to set and reach goals. What's on your goal list for 2018? I'll bet starting or completing the certification or fellowship process is somewhere on there and hopefully near the top! If not, what's holding you back?

For me it was, honestly, a fear of failure. A fear that I wouldn't achieve my goal. I'd been a MGMA member for seven years and had over 10 years of medical group management experience. More than halfway through that 7-year membership I had one particular mentor strongly encourage me and told me "you can do it!". Even with that push, it still took me 3 more years before I registered. Guess what? I didn't fail! I now proudly display CMPE after my name and am on the path to Fellowship.

The certification process doesn't have to be scary as you can access numerous resources that MGMA provides to support you along the way. Let's take a look at just a few.

- **Body of Knowledge Review Series**

- This series clearly defines the knowledge and skills that you need to manage a medical practice in today's dynamic healthcare environment.

- **ACMPE Certification Workbook**

- Written by experts to help maximize your exam preparation time, the *ACMPE Certification Exam Workbook* is an essential tool to assist you as you approach your exam with confidence.

- **AMCPE Board Certification Review Cards**

Free from your Forum Rep)

- **2017 ACMPE Board Certification Study Group Series - On Demand**

- Recorded May 30 through July 25, 2017, at 1 p.m. ET. These webinars are eligible for ACMPE and CEU credit.
- The 2017 ACMPE Board Certification Study Group Series offers the chance for those pursuing board certification to learn in an online environment while preparing for the exams.

- **ACMPE Knowledge Assessment, 3rd edition**

- Discover your strengths and opportunities within the six [Body of Knowledge](#) domains necessary for success in medical practice management.

*All of these resources, and more, are available at <https://www.mgma.com/>. MSMGMA also provides a **lending library** available to MS MGMA members. Contact me to learn more.*

2019 will bring program enhancements to the Board Certification and Fellowship Pathways. I won't outline them here, but you'll definitely want to familiarize yourself with them to determine the best timing to complete the process. (available from your forum representative or on the MGMA website.)

Mississippi is on a roll with nominees, certifications and fellowships! 2017 saw six new nominees, one new CMPE and one new Fellow! Congratulations to Bridget L. for certification and Rita M. on her Fellowship! We look forward to seeing more of you reach your goal of certification or fellowship in 2018. Registration for the March exams is open now through February 8, 2018.

So, set your goals, put an action plan in place and set your sights on reaching those goals this year! I look forward to hearing from you and cheering you on! Have a great 2018!

Janet Benzing, CMPE
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Did you know that MGMA MS membership includes all of the following?

- Free monthly webinars for members
- Opportunity to upgrade skills, knowledge, connections
- Educational conferences, programs
- Resources on practice management issues
- Legislative advocacy
- Electronic News Digests and Alerts
- Research data
- Career enhancement
- Information exchange
- Problem-solving
- Networking
- Job Postings free of charge

Be sure to take full advantage of your membership today! Visit our website to check out our webinar library and career center. www.mgmams.com

Not a member of MGMA MS yet? Join us today!

Contact our office with any questions: info@mgmams.com



2018 INSURANCE FORUM

Friday, February 9

Belhaven Building, Jackson

*Meet the representatives who process your insurance
and discuss your issues with them face to face!*

Join us as we start off our day with a word from Bob Williams, Director of Life and Health Actuarial. We will then hear from the top MS payers who process your day to day claims. If you have any questions you would like to ask during the forum, please send them to our office at info@mgmams.com so that we may send them to the payers. There will also be time for one on one questions and networking with our payers.

Lunch will be provided.

We will hear from:

- Aetna
- Blue Cross Blue Shield
- Cigna
- Humana
- Magnolia
- Molina
- United Healthcare

COST: Only \$50 for MGMA MS members, \$75 non-members.

Join us! [Click here](#) to register now

*To register multiple attendees,
email our office for assistance: info@mgmams.com*

Thank you to our sponsor,



FEBRUARY

WEBINAR

Increasing Your Profitability Through Real Estate

February 13, 2108 at 12:00pm

ABOUT THE WEBINAR

Real estate is the second highest expense behind payroll for most healthcare practices. The type of property, location and space can impact every aspect of the practice, including the quality of care provided. Additionally, the difference between a properly or poorly negotiated transaction can benefit or cost a practice tens-to-hundreds of thousands of dollars. Understanding essential strategies, such as leveraging market knowledge and how to create a strong posture, can make a dramatic impact on the results available to practice owners. The information covered in our programs will educate and empower practice owners and administrators to increase their profitability through real estate while saving a substantial amount of time, stress and avoiding costly pitfalls.

We will discuss:

- *Key strategies during lease renewal negotiations
- *Achieving the most favorable terms on new office negotiations
 - *Commercial Real Estate Overview
 - *Purchase vs. Lease Analysis
- *Understanding how landlords value commercial real estate and how this impacts negotiations

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

CMGMA webinars are FREE for members! (\$25 non members)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

[Register Here](#)

The 2018 MGMA Mississippi State Salary Survey is now open!

By participating in this survey, you're contributing to gold-standard benchmark data and helping produce more Mississippi-specific benchmarking data.

Use this link <http://orca.mgma.com/statesurvey> to begin completing your 2018 State Salary Survey. This year, you have the option to participate in the State Salary Survey, or a combined version of both the Provider Compensation Survey and State Salary Survey.

Please select which survey you wish to participate in. From here, you won't have to navigate away from this page and only required questions are included.

Participation is easier than ever before!

Remember to bookmark this special survey link!

As a benefit of participating, you'll receive complimentary access to the results through MGMA DataDive. **Feb. 16th is the deadline** to complete this year's survey.

Need help getting started?

Check out the [State MGMA Survey Participation](http://www.mgma.com/state-survey) page [www.mgma.com/state-survey] to make sure you have everything you need to begin.

For more information on all MGMA surveys, please visit mgma.org/participate.

Need one-on-one help?

MGMA data analysts are available Monday through Friday, 6 am to 6 pm MT.

Toll-free: 877.275.6462, ext. 1895

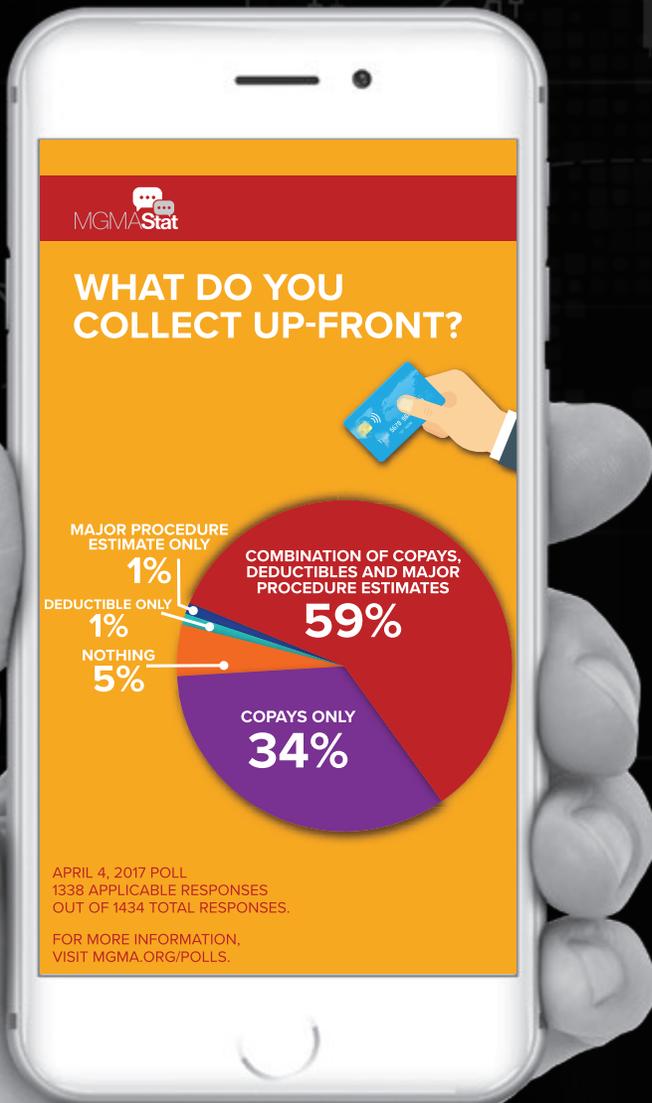
survey@mgma.org



**2018 Survey
participation is open!**

Join MGMA Stat

Curious to see if other healthcare professionals are experiencing the same issues you face? Get answers to your most pressing questions. When you sign up for MGMA Stat, you will benefit from industry polls and data-rich articles on a weekly basis via text message.



How does it work?

- Every Tuesday, participants receive a polling question on a specific healthcare topic via text message
- Within 18 hours, participants respond to the question
- Poll results and related content with actionable tips are delivered via text message within 48 hours

What is the value?

- Get credible insight on the most important topics around the business of healthcare
- Receive timely data and resources to help with practice management challenges
- Benchmark your performance relative to your peers

**Join MGMA Stat by texting
MSMGMA to 33550 – it's
that easy.**

SAVE THE DATE



MGMA of MS
2018 Annual Conference
July 18-20
The Golden Nugget • Biloxi, MS

The MGMA logo consists of the letters 'MGMA' in a bold, white, sans-serif font, set against a solid black rectangular background. A registered trademark symbol (®) is located to the right of the letters.

MGMA[®]

Medical Group Management Association

Mississippi



Interested in getting more involved with MGMA MS?

We are always looking for an extra hand to help make this association thrive.

Please contact Kristina at info@mgmams.com to see how you can help!

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Your Front Desk's Role in Reimbursement

By Reed Tinsley, CPA

Your billing staff handles securing payment for the care you provide, right? Actually, your billing staff finishes the job. Your front desk staff starts it by collecting complete, correct financial information from each patient — not to mention applicable co-pays and deductibles.



Beyond being the positive, helpful public face of your practice, make sure your front desk staff handles its role in the reimbursement process by achieving these three objectives:

1. Collect complete and accurate insurance information for each patient.
2. Understand the details of yourw insurance plans' requirements.
3. Pursue co-pays, deductibles and non-covered service fees at the time of service.

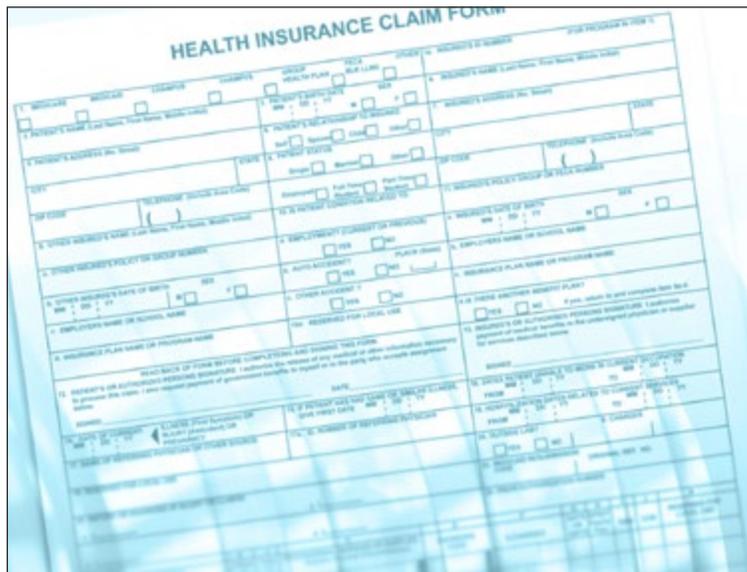
Insurance information. Include insurance information in your patient intake process. It can be part of your standard patient history form or a separate sheet. Make sure it includes all these items:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| * Patient name | * Type of plan |
| * Employer | * Major medical |
| * Insured's name | * Basic coverage |
| * Insured's ID or SS# | * Deductible |
| * Policy or Group # | * Coinsurance |
| * Plan effective date | * Copayment |
| * Authorization requirement | * Stop loss |

Train your staff to call the plan right away if all these answers aren't available.

Understanding plan details. If your staff understands its role in reimbursement, it's far more likely to perform it well. Even though your billers actually use the information, your desk staff must understand it enough to know why it's important. Your manager or lead biller could lead a lunch-hour training session on the topic.

Pursue co-pays and deductibles. Back in the days of the \$2 co-pay, you could argue that it wasn't financially worth the effort to collect those small amounts — even though your managed care contract obligates you to do so. But co-pays are rising steadily as insurers and employers try to partially offset rising health insurance costs. There's nothing unusual about \$10 primary care co-pays or \$25 for specialists. If a primary care doctor sees two managed care patients per hour, a \$10 co-pay



translates to \$25,000 yearly revenue.

And once you train your staff to pursue these amounts — and your patients to expect the effort —they're fairly easy to collect. You'll still hear some of those I-don't-have-my-wallet-with-me excuses from some patients, but most will allow such an embarrassing situation to occur only once.

Instructing your staff to tactfully insist on payment trains patients to see you only when they really need care. It sends your staff the message that these dollars matter too. And don't forget about those "non-covered services" that aren't part of your managed care contracts.

Collection tools

Give your staff the tools to collect "up front." That means your front desk people need enough small bills to make change, and the ability to accept credit card payments. Keep a small fund, perhaps \$75, in ones and fives at the exit station. Implement a simple system to reconcile and replenish the fund daily.

People will pay for almost everything with credit cards. Don't worry about the small amounts; a 3% credit card service fee on a \$10 copay costs less than a stamp to mail the statement. Shop around for a credit card merchant — your bank should be able to point you in the right direction. Medical practices are good small-business customers for banks, so yours probably will give you a reasonable deal to set up an account.

As credit card use grows in your practice, consider "pre-authorized" charges for co-pays, deductibles and visits. Retailers with regular repeat customers commonly use them. Asking your patient to sign the form on his/her first visit takes care of the collection hassle for future visits. Your staff can present this as a patient service benefit.