

Risk Management

SNAPSHOT

Current issues and trends in healthcare risk management for practice managers.

September 2019

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention: More testing and education needed for HIV prevention.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that 80% of new HIV infections come from people who are not being treated for the infection. About half of those infected with HIV do not know they are infected and the other half know they are infected, but are not seeking treatment. Effective treatment for HIV is available and can help end the HIV epidemic.

The CDC states that when patients take their medications as prescribed they can reduce the amount of virus in their bodies and eliminate the risk of transmitting the infection to others. The [CDC site recommends](#) that everyone aged 16-64 be tested at least once in their lives and persons at high risk get tested annually.

Test tracking and appointment management is essential to assuring your patients receive the appropriate care and follow up. Your Medical Mutual risk manager can survey your practice's appointment and results management processes. Contact your MMIC risk manager today to find out how we can help you improve your processes.

Medical Mutual's practice tips [Appointments: Referral Not Completed, Missed \(No Show\) & Canceled Appointments](#) and [Diagnostic Test Tracking Systems](#) are two of our practice tips that can assist your practice in providing safe and effective care. To access all of our [practice tip](#) visit our website.

Dozens of doctors in Appalachia charged in opioid drug fraud.

In an area hard hit by the opioid crisis, dozens were charged with writing hundreds of thousands of illegal prescriptions for opioids and committing healthcare fraud. The providers charged in the investigation wrote opioid prescriptions in exchange for cash and sexual favors.

The charges came as a result of the work of a joint law enforcement agency created to combat the opioid epidemic. Charges were filed against dozens of individuals in seven states, including 31 physicians. [Reuters Health News](#) reports on the investigation and charges.

Medical Mutual's practice tip [Opioids and Chronic Pain Control: Avoiding Risks When Prescribing Medication Therapy in the Primary Care Practice](#) can provide you with useful information on safe opioid prescribing. The tip includes links to state regulations around opioid prescribing.

Your Medical Mutual risk manager can provide you with a medication safety survey to evaluate your medication processes. Contact your risk manager today.

World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations for reducing risks of dementia.

The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that 50 million people are currently suffering from dementia, which is a growing health problem across the world. While there is no cure for dementia, there are actions providers and individuals can take to reduce or slow the progression of the disease.

Studies have shown a relationship between lifestyle and cognitive impairment. This [WHO Foreward and Executive Summary](#) provides evidence-based risk reduction guidelines to combat cognitive decline and dementia.

Medical Mutual's practice tips [Communication: Strategies for Effective Communication](#) and [Health Literacy](#) provide useful tips on how to communicate health recommendations to your patients in a manner they can understand and follow.

Many in rural communities struggle with access to healthcare.

In a National Public Radio (NPR) poll, a quarter of people in rural areas reported that they had been unable to obtain needed health care in recent years. While more Americans now have some form of health insurance coverage, barriers to accessing care still exist.

The poll found many factors that limited access to care, including high cost, limited insurance coverage, transportation, and lack of healthcare providers in the area. Hospital closures, particularly in rural areas, have created additional barriers to obtaining healthcare. When hospitals close, people in rural areas must travel even longer distances to get the care they need. For more on the results of the poll, read the [NPR article](#).

Collecting payment from patients can be difficult, especially when patients have limited resources. Medical Mutual's practice tip, [Billing and Collection Practices Impact the Physician/Patient Relationship](#) provides you with steps to follow when dealing with these situations.

Insurers are increasingly interfering with doctors providing care.

An article in the Associated Press (AP) reports that physicians are concerned about the increased influence insurance companies have over patient care. Providers feel that the need for more and more approvals have caused delays in patient care.

While insurers claim that advances in medical care are the reasons for their increased review of care, physicians claim that they now need approvals for treatment that rarely needed approvals in the past. Many physicians believe the approval process causes breaks in patient treatment and can lead to delayed or missed diagnoses. For the complete story read the AP article [Hurry up and wait: Docs say insurers increasingly interfere](#).

Medical Mutual's practice tips [Appointments: Referral Not Completed, Missed \(No Show\) & Canceled Appointments](#) and [Diagnostic Test Tracking Systems](#) can provide your practice with helpful information to assure that your patients receive the appropriate care and follow up.

Contact your MMIC risk manager today to set up a survey to review your practice's results management process.