

In & About

The Official Newsletter of the Massachusetts Association of Patient Account Management, an Affiliate of AAHAM



March 2024

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President's Message

Dear MAPAM Members,

As the winter season gradually gives way to the approaching spring, I wanted to take a moment to bid farewell to the cold and welcome the promise of new beginnings. It is with great pleasure that I address you as the President of MAPAM and extend my warmest wishes to each and every one of you.

Winter has been a season of reflection, growth, and resilience for our organization. Despite the challenges we have faced, we have persevered, adapting to the ever-changing landscape of our industry and finding innovative ways to connect and support one another. Your dedication, commitment, and unwavering support have been instrumental in our collective success.

As we enter the spring season, I am filled with a sense of optimism and excitement. The days grow longer, the sun shines brighter, and nature awakens with vibrant colors and new possibilities. Similarly, MAPAM is poised to embrace this season of renewal. We have an exciting lineup of events, conferences, and educational opportunities planned for the coming year, all designed to empower you with the knowledge and resources necessary to excel in your professional endeavors.

In addition to our exciting lineup, I am thrilled to announce a new addition to our calendar: a "Top Golf Style" Social Event in August! This event promises a fun-filled gathering where networking, camaraderie, and enjoyment converge. Be sure to keep an eye out for more information in the future, as this is an occasion you certainly won't want to miss!

I also wanted to take a moment to express my gratitude and appreciation to our Board Members. Their dedication, hard work, and unwavering commitment to MAPAM have been instrumental in shaping our organization and driving its success. The collective efforts of our Board Members have allowed us to navigate through challenges, achieve significant milestones, and provide valuable resources and opportunities to our members. Their leadership and guidance have been invaluable, and I am truly grateful for their contributions.

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However, as the President of MAPAM, I recognize that the continued success of our organization relies not only on the existing Board Members but also on the involvement and support of our broader membership. It is through the collective efforts of passionate individuals like you that we can create a lasting impact on the healthcare community.

With that in mind, I would like to extend an invitation to each and every one of you to consider volunteering for a position on the MAPAM Board. Serving on the Board is an exceptional opportunity to contribute your unique skills, expertise, and perspectives to shape the future direction of our organization. Whether you have prior board experience or are looking to take on a leadership role for the first time, your dedication and commitment are what matter most. Together, we can strengthen our community, drive innovation, and enhance the support we provide to healthcare professionals across the region.

If you are interested in volunteering for a position on the MAPAM Board or would like more information about the available opportunities, please reach out to me or any other Board Member. We are excited to hear from you and welcome your involvement.

On behalf of the entire MAPAM team, we wish you a joyful and prosperous upcoming spring season. May it bring you new opportunities, fresh perspectives, and a renewed sense of purpose. Thank you for your continued support and for being an essential part of the MAPAM family.

Warmest regards,

Makayla Hussey

MAPAM President

The two-midnight rule and Medicare Advantage: 7 updates Becker's Healthcare By: Jakob Emerson

In 2024, Medicare Advantage plans must provide coverage for an inpatient admission when the admitting physician expects the patient to require hospital care for at least two midnights, otherwise known as the two-midnight rule.

The rule was included in the 2014 Medicare inpatient prospective payment system final rule. In 2023, CMS clarified in its final rule that MA plans must also follow the two-midnight rule, its case-by-case exception and the inpatient-only list beginning in 2024.

"It's going to be critical that hospitals work with their doctors to improve their documentation, not only to support the need for the patient to be in the hospital, but for how long they expect that patient to be there," Ronald Hirsch, MD, vice president of regulations and education group at R1 Physician Advisory Services, told *Becker's* in June. "MA plans are theoretically going to have to pay for a lot more inpatient admissions, so they're going to audit a lot more."

Seven key updates:

1. On Feb. 6, **CMS** issued guidance to insurers regarding implementation of the two-midnight rule. "MA plans are required to follow these inpatient admission criteria," the agency wrote, while clarifying that "MA plans do not have to follow the 'two-midnight presumption,' which relates to medical review instructions within traditional Medicare.

The agency also clarified that MA plans must provide coverage when the physician does not expect the care to cross two midnights but determines inpatient care is still necessary (case-by-case exception), and when the inpatient admission is for a surgical procedure specified as inpatient only under Medicare (inpatient-only list).

2. **UnitedHealthcare** issued its own two-midnight guidance in January, noting that MA plans may "adopt internal coverage criteria when the applicable coverage criteria in original Medicare laws, national coverage determinations and local coverage determinations are not fully established." CMS allows UnitedHealth to use InterQual criteria to assist in creating internal coverage criteria. InterQual is a clinical decision support software that was developed by Change Healthcare and purchased by UnitedHealth in 2022.

3. On Feb. 2, *Becker's* discussed the two-midnight rule with Chip Kahn, president and CEO of the **Federation of American Hospitals**.

"[The final rule] doesn't say MA plans have to adhere completely to the two-midnight rule per se, but it sends a clear message that they have to adhere to it, at least in spirit.

"If you look at data from the last couple of years, there's a broad disparity between denials from MA plans versus fee-for-service. Those denials from MA plans are just turning a lot of inpatient days into observation days.

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"At the end of the day, there is physician discretion here and the physicians are basically treating many patients in the inpatient setting. MA plans are going to find ways to contain what they're willing to pay for services. That's fair game to the extent that they have good clinical justifications, but if it gets in the way of the physician-patient relationship, then they're doing the wrong thing and Medicare isn't treating everybody the same.

"CMS now has a request for information out in which they're asking for information about what they should be measuring and looking at to make sure that the health plan is doing their job."

4. **Centene's** CFO, Drew Asher, addressed the two-midnight rule when asked by investors Feb. 6: "We've been on top of that, preparing for that, thinking through that as we formulated our forecasts for 2024, and we think we've got that captured," he said.

5. **CVS Health's** CFO, Tom Cowhey, said Feb. 7 the company has made internal adjustments in response to the two-midnight rule and rising MA utilization rates.

"One of the things that we spent a lot of time looking at specifically was inpatient," he said. "And there are some puts and takes there. But on the whole, that category remains consistent with our expectations. Now, we did make a provision in our bids, which is incorporated in our guidance for the changes that would happen in January from the two-midnight rule."

6. **Humana's** CFO, Susan Diamond, told investors Jan. 25 the company is "looking at" the effect of the two-midnight rule as one potential underlying cause for rising MA utilization rates and related financial losses in the fourth quarter.

7. Nashville, Tenn.-based **HCA Healthcare's** CFO, Bill Rutherford, told investors Jan. 30 that it is too early to understand the two-midnight rule's effect on the health system, but the company expects it to benefit patients.

"Over time, there could be some moderate positive results for us," he said. "But we've seen no impact yet.

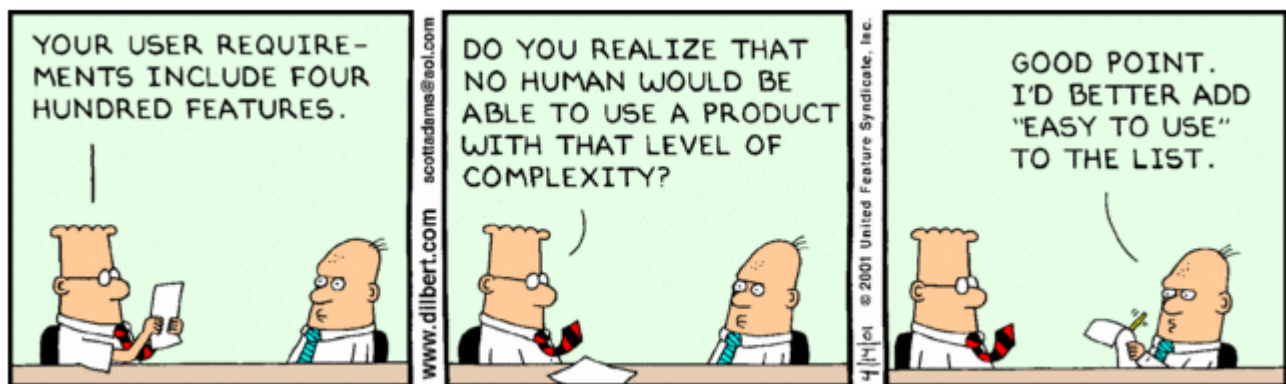
New Faces in New Places

Please join us in welcoming MAPAM's newest members. We are so excited to have you with us!

Elvia Pastoreck
Baystate Health

Kimothy Williams
Baystate Health

MAPAM's Comic Corner



March Revenue Cycle Meeting

Date: Thursday, March 28, 2024
Time: 1:00 pm – 3:30 pm
Location: Virtual Webinar

Registered attendees will receive an email with the meeting link 3 days before the meeting date. All registered attendees will be entered into a drawing to receive gift card raffles. Winners will be chosen throughout the meeting.

Topics: Managing Remote Teams for Optimal Revenue Cycle Performance and Wheels Up! A journey through POS Collections.

1:00 pm – 1:10 pm	Welcome and Introduction Makayla Hussey - MAPAM President
1:10 pm – 1:55 pm	"Managing Remote Teams for Optimal Revenue Cycle Performance." – Susan Graves, OPTUM and Jennifer Graves, ClearBalance
1:55 pm – 2:00 pm	Quick Break / Raffle
2:0 pm – 3:15 pm	"Wheels Up! A journey through POS Collections" , Stacie Artis: Sr. Training & Deployment Specialist and Pippa Tooley: Sr. Training & Deployment Specialist, Trinity Health
3:15 pm – 3:30 pm	Wrap up & Raffles!

This meeting is being offered at no charge to MAPAM Members and only a one-time fee of \$25.00 for Non-Members. To sign up, please visit: [MAPAM - Meeting/Event Information](#)

Announcements

IRI Announcement:

We are delighted to announce the newest addition to our team, Rob Gilbert, FHFMA, COC, who has joined us as Principal Consultant. His wealth of experience and expertise make him an asset to our growing company.

Rob comes to us with over fifteen years of experience in Revenue Cycle, Health Information, Chargemaster and Pricing Transparency work. We are confident that he will contribute significantly to providing our clients with superior guidance and support. His skills and integrity align perfectly with our mission, and we look forward to achieving new heights together.

Welcome aboard, Rob! We are thrilled to have you with us.

MAPAM's Board of Directors

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On behalf of everyone at MAPAM I would like to express our sincere gratitude for our 2024 sponsors!

