

# W a l k e r & C o m p a n y

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## News YOU Can Use

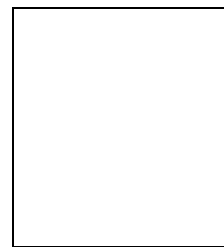
### HIPAA Update

Lots of new information regarding HIPAA compliant electronic billing has been released in the last few weeks, much of it important to DOCS users. The area of concern has to do with the transition schedule to the new required format for Form 837 claims. The format that must be used is labeled ANSI4010A1. For DOCS users it is applicable for only four carriers: Medicare, Medicaid, Workers Comp, and BCBS. Let me give you an update on each of these.



**Medicare** – Walker & Company was notified on December 15, 2003 that its latest test of ANSI4010A1 submitted to Palmetto GBA had been successful and was approved for production. In September 2003 Medicare announced that the previous October 16 deadline to be submitting all electronic claims in the new format had been extended. But they did not say when the new deadline was. Thus I will be moving slowly, but as quickly as necessary, in converting all my clients to the ANSI4010A1 format.

**Medicaid** – The transition to ANSI4010A1 for Medicaid has been complicated by the fact that WV is changing its Fiscal Agent from ACS to Unisys at the same time the format changes are taking place. Through the month of December Unisys conducted a series of provider workshops to explain how the transition would take place. After attending the Beckley workshop my opinion was that Unisys was not truly ready for the transition and did not appreciate all the ramifications to the providers that would result from their plans. As of late December Unisys announced a delay that would postpone the deadline at least until March 29. ACS will continue accepting claims in our current format (NSF) at least until then.



One of the main problems, from my perspective, is that Unisys has not yet issued its Supplemental Guide describing its particular implementation of the ANSI4010A1 guideline. I cannot prepare the program module for Medicaid electronic billing until that is issued.

**Workers Comp** – Getting confirmed and clear information regarding HIPAA-compliant electronic billing requirements has been difficult. The web site for comp does not address the issue and the web site for ACS says that WV Workers Comp is

making the transition to ANSI4010A1 in October, 2003. However, I believe they were using that date simply because that was the last published deadline. In actuality, ACS is continuing to accept NSF claims and I have received not indication as to if and when that might stop. As with Medicaid, I cannot change the billing program until Comp or ACS issues a companion guide instructing us as to how they want ANSI4010A implemented. Stay tuned.

**MSBCBS** – In mid-December BCBS amended its deadline for requiring all electronic billers to use the ANSI4010A1 format. The new deadline is now March 31, 2004 but will be re-evaluated in mid-March. BCBS has announced that testing guidelines are available.

So, to summarize, Walker & Company has invested significant resources over the last two years to prepare for the transition to HIPAA compliant electronic billing. It seems no doubt that such transition WILL be required, but there seems to be great doubt as to WHEN. Therefore, my intention is to proceed slowly but purposefully to move all clients to the appropriate formats as necessary.

### **Other Electronic Communication**

Once all claim forms for Medicare and Medicaid are using the ANSI4010A1 format, the next important step will be to enable DOCS clients to receive and automatically POST remittance information (form 835). DOCS co-author, Dr. Robert Pulliam, has been working on the programming to do just that. While a date-certain cannot be set, especially since the entire HIPAA compliance schedule is in flux, it seems likely such software will be available in 2004. Be prepared to be pleased!

### **Internet Access**

Most DOCS clients have internet access of some form, but not always is it of the kind that fits the demands of a physician's office. As the final transition to HIPAA compliance takes place it seems quite sure that speedy, reliable, secure, integrated internet access will be desirable at least, and nearly required. Walker & Company, and its business partners, stand ready to help you improve your business practices in this area. The best access will contain these features:

- High speed (not dial-up)
- Fully secure (virus and fire wall protection)
- Fully integrated with the DOCS computer thus allowing PCs in the building as well as any PC with internet access to log on to DOCS.

Please contact me for a quote on upgrading your office.

### **Imaging – Your Key to Data Control**

A number of clients have asked in the past about imaging systems that would allow them to convert charts to digital media.



While I have investigated some systems I have refrained from recommending any because either the systems were very expensive and/or they really did not make using the data after conversion very practical. However, I have found a system I can recommend. It is called Impact.MD from LANtek Medical Systems in Pittsburgh. They have just opened an office in Charleston. Contact me if you would like more information.