



MAG Advocacy Brief

MAG'S THIRD PARTY PAYER PROGRAM HELPS MEMBER PRACTICES GET AND KEEP THE MONEY THEY'VE EARNED

MAG's Health Policy and Third Party Payer Advocacy Department continues to create value for its members by helping them and their practice staff resolve third party payer problems so they can get and keep the money they have earned.

Gulshan Harjee, M.D., credits MAG with helping her First Medical Care practice in Lawrenceville recover thousands of dollars from Coventry Health Care, which had withheld payments for every claim that was submitted in 2015 because the company said the practice had failed to submit the requisite medical records. "We are a primary care practice, and our only revenue is patient care, so we always face a cash crunch," says Dr. Harjee. "But with MAG's assistance, we were able to resolve the issue and we are now receiving the payments that we are due for 2015 – as well as payments that we are due for as far back as 2013 and 2014." Dr. Harjee referred to MAG Health Policy and Third Party Payer Advocacy Department Director Susan Moore as a "wizard" in a recent note of thanks.

MAG helped the Family Physicians of Evans practice get paid by BlueCross BlueShield of Georgia for claims – which were mostly related to the State Health Benefits Plan – that had been denied for a variety of reasons, including "provider not found" or "license number not available" systems messages. "We are talking about more than 1,000 claims and some \$150,000," explains Family Physicians of Evans' Practice Manager Candace Duncan. "This was crippling our practice." She adds that, "I greatly appreciate the assistance and resolution that I always receive when I reach out to MAG for matters that are related to insurance companies."

In 2015, MAG teamed up with the Bibb County Medical Society (BCMS) to help area physicians recoup some \$4 million from Medicare – payments that its contractor, Cahaba GBA, had delayed making as a result of revalidation problems. "After caring for Medicare patients for more than 20 years, Cahaba said that we were not a participating practice and held my partner's payments and my payments," recalls Maria H. Bartlett, M.D., a cardiologist and former BCMS president. "This was an error on Cahaba's part, and MAG was instrumental in helping us correct the error – which resulted in a big, overdue payment from Medicare."

Finally, Stephen Jarrard, M.D., says that MAG made a big difference when he made the transition from being an employed physician to private practice. "I was having so much trouble getting credentialed by the insurers that I was starting to wonder whether if it was worth it," explains Dr. Jarrard, who is a general surgeon in Tiger. "But MAG's Third Party Payer office got involved at my request, and through its knowledge of the system and contacts with the different payers I was able to start getting revenue flowing right away...I only wish I had called MAG sooner."

MAG member practices who need advice on ways to resolve a third party payer issue – including claims disputes or assistance with coding or audits – can contact Bethany Sherrer at bsherrer@mag.org or 678.303.9275. Go to www.mag.org or call 678.303.9261 to join MAG or for additional information.