

## Optometry Coding & Billing Alert

### READER QUESTIONS: Head Off Copay Problems With Proactive Phone Work

**Question:** We are in the midst of a copayment crisis. In the past month, we have had four patients report for services with no way to pay. What can we do to stop these copayment catastrophes?

Missouri Subscriber

**Answer: Robyn Lee**, of Lee-Brooks Consulting in Chicago, calls this problem a -tough one.- But Lee does have a course of action that may reduce your copay no-pays.

-I would suggest that the office call patients the day before the visit to confirm their appointment,- Lee says. Most medical offices may already do this, but she says you must do more than just remind the patient of the appointment if you are having payment problems.

**Important:** When you have the patient on the phone the day before his appointment, be sure to remind him to bring his copay (in the form of cash, credit card or check). Also, remind the patient of any other balance he owes the practice, Lee says.

Remember, the billing department should also consult with physicians before making any final decisions on patient copayment notification.

-Billing office actions are typically driven by the physicians- billing philosophies. Billing and collections strategies should be developed with the physicians- input and consensus,- Lee says.