

## Pain Management Coding Alert

### Reader Question: Coach Up Staff With These Phone Tips

**Question:** We are a small practice, and everyone has to answer the phone from time to time. The problem is that often, the person answering the phone has no idea what to tell the caller. Is there a quick way to make sure each professional in our office answers the phone correctly for each caller?

Kansas Subscriber

**Answer:** When a staffer answers the phone at your practice, he needs to be ready for all types of calls a medical office might receive. Remember, it's not just patients who call.

According to the book *Medical Coding and Billing Demystified: Hard Stuff Made Easy*, you should have set responses for the following types of callers:

1. Patients scheduling appointments
2. Pharmacies calling about prescriptions
3. Medical testing services calling about patients
4. Other healthcare providers
5. Sales representatives
6. Payers

**Do this:** Brainstorm a bit and write down the basic information a staffer would need from each type of caller (name, date, reason for calling). Then, compile a list that addresses how to respond to each type of call.

For example, when a patient calls to schedule an appointment, you might want to make sure the staffer asks for the patient's:

- Name
- Address
- Telephone number
- Status (new or established).