



## **An Integrated Solution to Your Medical Billing & Collection Needs**



*12708 Riata Vista Circle Suite A126 Austin, Texas 78727  
Phone: (512) 637-2002 Fax: (512) 637-2007  
[www.ascend-health.com](http://www.ascend-health.com)*



**S**econd in importance only to delivering quality patient care is the financial health of your practice. Collecting every dollar owed to you as quickly as possible is a key driver in the fiscal performance of your business. Getting coherent, timely financial reports that can assist you in making better business and practice decisions is also very important. Practicing great medicine and running a great practice are very different, and very difficult, issues.

### **Ascend Health Services can help.**

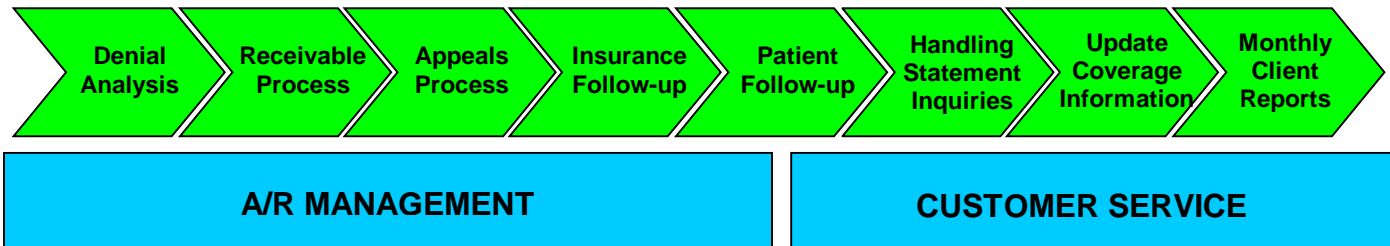
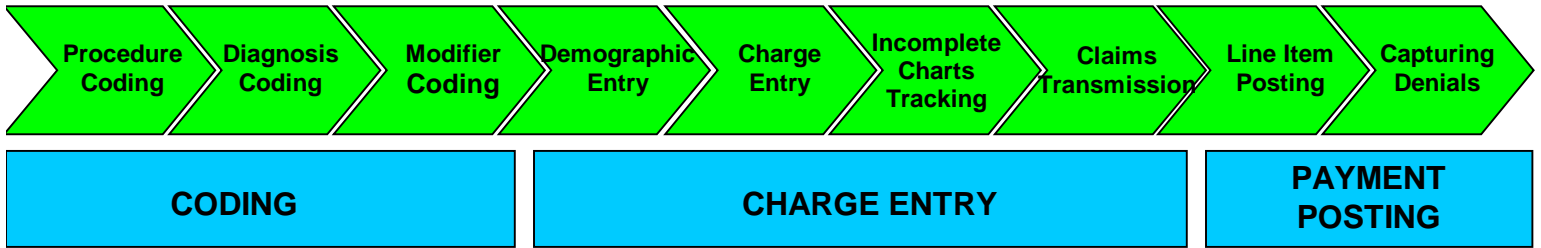
Timely and accurate billing, insurance follow-up, collections, and outstanding customer service is essential to the financial strength of your practice; and are the strength of our services. Ascend's medical billing services are designed to improve total collected revenues while simultaneously reducing administrative costs and effort. We achieve this goal through a combination of information technology, business process improvement, and highly trained, highly qualified personnel. From billing and collections to patient communications, we focus on integrating the services you need so you can focus your time and expertise on providing patient care.

Ascend will help improve your key business functions with integrated electronic solutions and your organization will experience:

- Improved cash flow through faster reimbursement
- Reduced administrative costs and paperwork
- Enhanced staff productivity
- Improved patient communications



# An Integrated Solution to Your Medical Billing and Collection Needs



Our services are individually tailored to suit the needs of each client:

## Information Exchange

Recognizing the varying nature of our client's practices, the various practice management information systems in use, and resisting the requirement that differing types of practices adopt a single methodology, we work with you to determine the best process for getting your patient billing data to us.

Ascend has a variety of options available to ensure that essential billing information is captured by our systems as rapidly as possible. These options range from a simple courier service (the so-called "FedEx interface") delivering Encounter Forms to Ascend, to the ability of your staff to directly input patient demographic information into Ascend's system. No matter which configuration is ultimately agreed upon, Ascend ensures that each patient account contains all of the information necessary to produce an accurate and complete invoice. Missing account data is reviewed with the physicians and/or medical records staff at the Client's office to retrieve additional documentation needed to support the coding used in billing.

## Coding and Compliance

Ascend's Certified CPT and ICD9 coders review the encounter forms for office charges and flag any potential problems that may cause claims to be rejected or delayed for payment based on problems with the coding. Medical records will be requested for flagged encounter forms to verify the procedures and diagnoses marked to match those described and documented; proposed changes will be forwarded to providers with an explanation and a form to sign if change is approved.



Ascend has implemented and maintains a strong program to ensure total compliance with CMS and HIPAA guidelines for procedure and diagnosis coding for all of our clients, including periodic training

sessions with physicians and mid-level providers to review documentation and coding issues. These coding and documentation sessions have proven to be of immense value to our clients. There is no separate charge for these services.

## Design of Patient Information Sheets and Encounter Forms

Ascend will work with its clients to design effective patient data collection forms and/or encounter forms to ensure appropriate documentation and capture of all medical services rendered. Ascend will also provide other forms upon request such as chart templates, health history forms, financial policies, etc.

## Computer System Management

Ascend operates the Misys Healthcare (formerly Medic) practice management and accounting system. The leading provider of healthcare information systems to physician organizations, Misys supports more than 18,000 medical practice locations and 85,000 physicians in over 55 major specialties.



Our billing systems are constantly updated and maintained to ensure Ascend has the latest changes to insure that we are compliant with the ever-changing requirements in Health Care Information Systems, including HIPAA. Our hardware and software network "firewalls" prevent unauthorized access to our system. All work documents and computer reports with patient information are shredded after use. Ascend backs up its system every night and archives the tapes securely off-site.

In one of our configurations, your staff may directly access Ascend's systems using Virtual Private Network (VPN), frame relay, or point-to-point technology. Ascend's system offers state of the art software, fast processing, and high-capacity data storage without the capital investment required if you were to purchase a separate system.

## Electronic Insurance Filing and Remittance

Ascend files insurance claims electronically, directly, whenever possible. Ascend uses a state of the art clearing house to electronically file to most carriers, minimizing paper claims. Daily claims processing ensures minimum delays in adjudication. Ascend's front-end "Correct Coding Initiative" (CCI) edits catch most errors and our insurance follow-up staff checks all on-line and mailed insurance edit reports to correct and resubmit claims promptly. This "scrubbing" by a state of the art rules management engine reduces the time to payment by eliminating submission errors.

### **Benefits of Filing Electronically:**

- Increased accuracy – Ascend will increase the accuracy of your claims filing process and ensure that the data submitted is ready for immediate adjudication so you have fewer rejected claims and faster turnaround.
- Improved cash flow – By filing claims electronically, your practice will experience improved turnaround time to payment, as well as reduced postal expenses and administrative costs.
- The transmission process is completely integrated into Ascend's system so that no additional keying or transfer of data is necessary.

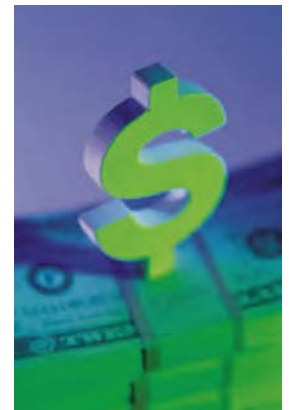


- Each claim is fully edited for the specific carrier selected, and accepted, rejected, and returned claims are created automatically.
- Accepted claims are reformatted according to each carrier's specifications for transmission of those claims.
- Paper claim submissions are available for carriers that do not have the capability to process electronic claims.
- Transmission and rejection reports are available via modem within two hours of transmission.
- Each carrier provides confirmation status reports to verify that claims have been received and processed

Ascend receives electronic remittance advices (insurance payment registers) for many carriers, saving time and reducing errors significantly.

#### **Benefits of Electronic Remittance:**

- Increased operational efficiency – By automating the insurance payment process, payment information from carriers can be posted more quickly and efficiently, eliminating the time-consuming process of manual entry.
- Expedite financial processing – By expediting the process of posting insurance payments to patient accounts, Ascend can significantly decrease the time between when care is rendered and when the patient can be billed for the balance not covered by insurance.



#### **Electronic Statement and Mail Processing**

Ascend sends statements each week, by billing cycle, and verifies every address before the statement is mailed, using the U.S. Postal Service address database. Any undeliverable statements are returned *before* mailing for us to correct, saving valuable time and money.

#### **Benefits of Electronic Statement and Mail Processing:**

- Reduced errors – Electronic processing eliminates the inefficiencies of manually generating patient statements in your office.
- Personalized message areas – There are three areas available for customized messages – patient correspondence, marketing communications and special announcements.
- Post net bar coding – Each statement is bar coded, enabling the postal service to electronically route your mail directly to the mail handler. This accelerates the delivery of your statements!
- Address verification – Ascend verifies the correct address information by cross-referencing the U.S. Postal Service database.
- An electronic mail-forwarding system will capture forwarding addresses when the bill is processed instead of upon return to the post office, speeding delivery time and eliminating forwarding charges.
- Address Correction Report – Ascend will generate a report containing all address corrections within 24 hours of transmission to notify client of any changes.

If the patient needs to make installment payments, our customer service staff can set up budget payment plans for the patient to mail in regular monthly payments. To make payments even easier, Ascend can also set up payment plans using whatever credit cards the Client's practice accepts.

## Bank Lock Box Operation

Ascend prefers that all receipts go to a lockbox, where they are separated from any correspondence by the bank's employees, and deposited immediately. Each day the bank sends deposit slips, copies of checks, and original attachments to Ascend. Occasionally, checks are sent directly to our office or to the Client. These are logged and sent on to the bank lockbox to provide a clear audit trail of all payments.

## Collections

Ascend takes a "customer service" approach to collection of past due accounts. After the bills become the patients' responsibility and no payment has been made after two statements and one pre-collection letter has been sent, our collection staff attempts to call the patient.

If in-house collection efforts fail, Ascend can automatically produce a collection report for the your review. Selected accounts may be removed from the collection list at the client's request leaving others to be electronically sent to an outside collection agency where they will be handled according to guidelines discussed and agreed to with you. After all, they are your patients.

## Document Storage and Retrieval

Ascend will store copies of patient demographic sheets, charge tickets, dictated reports needed for coding, and other source documents for up to two years. Payment registers, checks from the bank lockbox, Medicare, Medicaid, and other insurance company payment registers, and customer correspondence will be stored for as long as legally required and/or necessary to conveniently access while working the accounts receivable.

## Monthly Reports

Monthly reports are provided to show:

- Total receipts for the month by deposit date.
- Aged accounts receivable balances by payer.
- A summary of charges entered during the month by date of service.
- Year-to-date spreadsheet showing accounts receivable activity by month and the "collection ratio" for the month and year-to-date, average accounts receivable days, bad debt ratios, and other vital financial indicators.
- A report of accounts to be considered for turnover to outside collection agency for the Client's review.
- Special reports on request such as procedure and diagnosis analysis, transaction activity report, and reimbursement analysis are the Client's for the asking at no additional charge.
- Ad-hoc queries as might reasonably be requested by Provider.



Ascend reviews these reports with you each month, in person if possible.

## Fees

Making sure our financial incentives are exactly the same as yours, we base our fees on a percentage of collected revenue. You don't pay us for trying hard; we only get paid when we produce.

We understand that when contracting for billing services, the most important issues are cost, service and collections performance.

We are very price competitive, we have highly acclaimed service and we are always striving to improve collection and yield rates. You are the customer, and we never forget that the money we collect is yours.

## Technology and Process Improvement

*What is the best clearinghouse? Who has the best scheduling system? What is the best way to verify eligibility? What about electronic remittances?...*

Following and finding the right technology can be bewildering, and a little unnerving. A wrong decision can cause immense problems both financially and in practice disruption.

Ascend assumes this burden for you. We act as the "technology scout" for our clients in identifying the best providers of various functions and seamlessly integrating them into our service offerings to all of our clients. This is made more important by the wide variability of software vendors and the dynamic nature of technology that results in new innovations and options every day. It is highly unlikely that any one vendor would have the best solution for each different phase of the billing and collection process.

## Summary

**C**ombining highly automated services, highly trained and certified staff, and highly acclaimed customer service, Ascend can help you improve your financial performance, reduce your administrative headaches, and allow you focus more of your time on the practice of medicine, not the practice of the business of medicine.

### **Contact Information**

**April Arzate**  
**Chief Operating Officer**  
**Ascend Health Services**  
**P: (512) 637-2002, ext. 250**  
**F: (512) 637-2007**

[april@ascend-health.com](mailto:april@ascend-health.com)

[www.ascend-health.com](http://www.ascend-health.com)