

DON'T LET BIG DEDUCTIBLES SCARE YOU!
UTILIZE HEALTH SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

By Melissa Romanelli

It is becoming more popular to see deductibles well over a few thousand dollars. The common response of many providers is to try and discount the deductible in order to make care more affordable to the patient.

STOP!!

Very often these patients have some form of Health Savings Account (HSA) or Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) to cover these large deductibles.

HSAs are accounts where either the patient or the employer deposit funds equal to the amount of the deductible. These plans provide tax benefits to both the employee and the employer. The money placed into these funds is not subject to federal income tax.

By reducing your fees for this patient, you may not only be reducing income that you are entitled to receive, but you may be committing insurance fraud. Contractually, a patient agrees to a deductible with their insurance company. The insurance premium is calculated on having this high deductible. If you lower their responsibility, you are in effect changing that contract. Additionally, that patient's HSA may automatically cut them a check for the full amount of the deductible, because the insurance company is assuming they are paying your fee. This allows the patient to collect dollars that were not taxed.

Before you consider reducing any fees, first verify if the patient has a HSA or HRA. Do not assume that a huge deductible is going to have an adverse affect on the patient's ability to receive care. Also, if you determine that there is an HSA or HRA involved, verify how that money is distributed. It could be sent directly to you by an insurance company or you may have to provide documentation to the patient in order for them to make a claim.

As always, if you have any questions, we are here to help.