



Medical Identity Theft - Costly For Your Practice

For years, people have experienced theft of mail, checks, and other information that has led to personal identity theft. Now a newer type of identity theft has the potential to be much more serious for your practice and your patients. In medical ID theft, medical identification information is stolen or misused, which can affect decisions that health care providers make, especially when based on electronic claims information. In the absence of a hard-copy medical record, providers must rely on information available from insurance companies and electronic health records (EHR) or electronic medical records (EMR) systems.

To protect your practice, consider, at a minimum, verifying two forms of patient identification at the time of check-in (particularly a photo ID). In many instances, health care providers have difficulty verifying health ID cards; the issue of medical ID theft presents new challenges – such as identifying the person presenting the member ID card.

As this problem becomes more openly discussed, we want our providers to understand that members are being encouraged to contact their providers to review any service or fee they do not recognize on their explanation of benefits. If your patients begin asking, “What do you mean I don’t have any more benefits?,” something might be wrong. This is especially critical if more than one of your patients begins experiencing problems with eligibility and benefits.

For additional information on this topic, please e-mail the Provider Access and Servicing Strategy (PASS) at PASS_Workshops@bcbstx.com. If you would like a phone call, please provide your name, telephone number, and specific questions.