



Elevating EMS agencies
since 2011

2020 Quarter 3 Newsletter

- With the summer months of 2020 behind us, we have reviewed the billing data from June through August to get an idea of the repercussions COVID-19 has had on the EMS community of Montana this summer. Each of you is aware of the individual efforts that have been made; extra training, extra time and effort every time you don PPE, anxiety and fear when responding where COVID exposure might happen, and possibly quarantining or infection. And there are the efforts made at the agency level; the extra meetings, the staff juggling, the struggle to stay current with ever-changing information and mandates, all looming without a real end in sight. From our perspective, we can look at the numbers in terms of your billed transports to see the effects this pandemic has had on volume compared to last year. While some agencies had a significant increase in their trip volume over the last 3 months as compared to 2019, most of our clients were either very close to the same or slightly below the numbers posted last year. I would attribute much of the gains we saw to new leadership within those agencies, and/or increased staffing in a few departments, and these factors combined to skew the average a bit high, at a 9% increase of transport volume for the summer. If you are interested, please contact me to obtain the numbers specific to your service.
- September is Suicide Awareness/Prevention Month. This is a good time to check in with your crews, and to review what resources are available for them...maybe there are some phone numbers that you can post in your barn or another useful contact that can be provided. Also, if you haven't already, take a look at www.codegreencampaign.org for some great resources regarding this topic. Among other things, they provide information specifically for the EMS community, including education on developing resilience which is so necessary in this field. Considering the compounding challenges presented by the pandemic, this is a particularly timely subject to review.

Meet Josanna Ferguson! Our office welcomed the "new" Josie at the end of June, and she has already made a positive impact on our team and is contributing to our success. Josie comes to us from a banking background, and also has an Associate's degree in psychology. She has already completed her Certified Ambulance Coder courses, and earned the certificate to allow her to work on trips. Her attention to detail and quick mind is a wonderful asset to our office, and she looks forward to working with each of you too.



Looking ahead to the next season, I'm sure we are all going to be faced with some new challenges. It is with gratitude and admiration that we acknowledge the hard work you are all doing, and we extend you support and partnership for continued perseverance through this time.

***WATCH FOR OUR VIDEO PLAYING AT THE VIRTUAL EMS TRAUMA CONFERENCE!
WE ARE SPONSORING THE "MASS CASUALTY EXPERIENCE & TRIAGE EDUCATION" SESSION.**

Compliance Corner: Signature Requirements- An Ongoing Improvement Area

By Jodi Paine, CAC & CACO

When it comes to signatures, the requirements for valid signatures and why they are needed are often an area where questions arise. Now with COVID-19 signature options, there are even more areas for confusion. In the most recent round of audits completed for our providers, 30% of the trips I reviewed did not have valid signature forms (though they were ultimately compensable as we work to obtain additional information prior to billing to ensure we meet requirements). If you'd like specifics on the audit results for your service, please feel free to reach out to me to discuss.

In an effort to help provide some clarification and improve signature compliance for our providers, I have created a guide explaining the requirements for signatures. My hope is that this will help improve reimbursement for your service and avoid frustration in the future due to questions from our office to your staff for corrections and clarifications of signatures. This guide can be found at <https://www.pintlerbillingservices.com/client-forms/>.

If you feel your service could use additional help with regards to compliance, please feel free to reach out to Jodi Paine, Certified Compliance Officer, at jodi@pintlerbillingservices.com or 406-297-1627. We offer a documentation training that includes information regarding signatures, and can also provide an annual compliance review and discuss the findings from our most recent audit for your service.

EMT SPOTLIGHT: NICK JACOBS



NAME & AGENCY: Nick Jacobs Columbus Fire Rescue, Assistant Chief

YEARS OF SERVICE: 17

CERTIFICATIONS/EDUCATION: National Registry Paramedic, Lead Instructor, CPR Instructor, Associate of Applied Science degree in Paramedicine, numerous fire/ems certifications.

BRIEF BACKGROUND I was raised in Choteau MT and graduated high school from there. After high school I attended the University of Montana for 1.5 years. I quickly realized the career path I had chosen was not what I was looking for. I began volunteering for Choteau VFD in late 2003 and fell in love with it. In 2004 I was hired by Frenchtown Rural Fire District as a resident firefighter; I quickly attained my EMT-B and other firefighting certifications. During my time in Frenchtown I realized and committed to fire/ems and knew 100% that this is what I wanted for my career path and life. I stayed in Frenchtown until 2007 and realized to move forward with my career I would need to become a paramedic. I moved to Billings in January of 2008 and began the paramedic program prerequisites. In July of 2008 I was hired by Columbus Fire Rescue to lead their newly formed mitigation crew. In 2011 I graduated from MSU-B, successfully passed the NREMT Paramedic exam, and transitioned to a firefighter/paramedic position with Columbus. In 2012 I married my best friend and we began our lives together and learned how to combine both our crazy worlds as she is a paramedic also and currently is a flight paramedic for HelpFlight at St. Vincent's Hospital in Billings. Over the years we have acquired many critters that we call our fur kids and live on 40 acres outside of town. We have everything from a mini pot belly pig, sheep, geese, horses/mule, chickens, ducks, dogs, cats, and a pet cow. They keep us plenty busy on days off! Since 2012 I have just been learning everyday and enjoying this crazy thing called life and work.

HIGHLIGHT OR FAVORITE ASPECT OF WORKING IN EMS: Everything involved with this industry I enjoy but at times as anyone knows can hate it. It is an ever-evolving industry that changes almost daily (COVID-19) and would not change what I've chosen for anything.

*"Save one life, you're a hero.
Save multiple lives, you're an EMT."*



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