

# Uniform Business Office Newsletter

*Helping frontline users perform their day-to-day jobs*

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**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** Due to Privacy concerns, all personal identifiers, such as names and personal e-mail addresses, have been removed from this newsletter. We apologize for this inconvenience. If you have questions about an article, please do not hesitate to contact the UBO Help Desk ([UBO.helpdesk@altarum.org](mailto:UBO.helpdesk@altarum.org)/703-575-5385)

## 1. 2005 UBO/UBU Annual Educational Conference

Get ready to attend the 2005 UBO/UBU Annual Educational Conference. Mark your calendars for **Tuesday May 17-Thursday May 19**. This year's theme is "Core Competencies: Coding and Billing." TPOCS and other computer system training will be offered on Monday the 16th and Friday the 20th. The conference is planned for the [National Conference Center](#) in Leesburg VA. Check the UBO Website [http://tricare.osd.mil/rm/ubo\\_home.cfm](http://tricare.osd.mil/rm/ubo_home.cfm) for the agenda and other important information about the conference.

## 2. 2005 Rate Release Delayed

There will be a delay in the release of the calendar year (CY) 2005 rates. This is due to the CHAMPUS Maximum Allowable Charges (CMAC) on which the third party and Medical Services Accounts (MSA) rates are based, being released this year on 1 Apr 2005. Usually the CMAC are released 1 Jan. Once this year's CMAC are released, we update our pricing tables. Then we submit them to the computer systems folks (e.g., CHCS, CHCSII, TPOCS) for testing. That takes ten weeks. The testing folks try all of the

things that have made the system "break" in previous years. When everyone is in agreement that the tables don't have any bugs (or there are workarounds for the bugs and we all agree to go forward), we set a release date. Last year, there were also funding issues, so the tables were not released until October. This year, we are anticipating the CY2005 TPOCS and MSA rates to be released in July.

## 3. Cosmetic Rate Table

The current methodology for establishing a rate for a requested (private pay) cosmetic surgery procedure is to multiple the professional service rate by two. This over estimates some office procedures while significantly underestimating some major surgeries. New rates are being developed. There will be a class at the UBO/UBU Conference to teach the new cosmetic surgery billing method. The new rates will include:

- Type of facility (hospital, clinic, office)
- Type of patient (inpatient, outpatient, office)

- Professional fee for specific procedure
- Institutional fee for specific procedure
- Anesthesia costs
- Assistants, implants, unilateral, bilateral, etc.

There will be a “Cosmetic Surgery Calculator” on a CD for those bases doing cosmetic surgery. Further information will follow after the annual meeting.

#### 4. UBO Help Desk Update

In the last edition, we announced that a new UBO Help Desk telephone line (703-575-8385) was available. A special email address [UBO.helpdesk@altatum.org](mailto:UBO.helpdesk@altatum.org) is also available. Remember, the UBO Help Desk is just one avenue by which questions can be submitted. Questions are also forwarded to the UBO Help Desk through the MHS Help Desk.

The answers to many of the questions we receive at the UBO Help Desk may be helpful to others. In the future, look for a frequently asked questions on the UBO Website at [http://tricare.osd.mil/rm/ubo\\_faqs.cfm](http://tricare.osd.mil/rm/ubo_faqs.cfm)

#### 5. The UBO Help Desk vs. UBO Compliance Hotline – What’s the Difference?

The purpose of the **UBO Help Desk** is to provide technical support for billing and reimbursement questions. The questions have ranged from cosmetic surgery rates to whether there is a standard time frame for collections deposits. Generally, a response to a Help Desk question is attempted within one business day of receipt of the question.

A UBO compliance **HOTLINE** is also available. A compliance hotline is *very* different from a Help Desk. A compliance hotline is used when someone believes that fraud, waste, abuse, or mismanagement is occurring at a facility. Calls that are received through the UBO compliance hotline are investigated and a summary of the issue(s) is forwarded to the UBO for further follow up. All calls to the hotline remain confidential and private to the extent possible. The hotline number is 703-575-5384.

It is important to remember that the compliance hotline is usually after all other actions have been unsuccessful. When possible, issues involving fraud, waste, abuse, or mismanagement should be addressed first with a supervisor at the facility and then up the chain of command. It is only when an employee does not feel that an issue is being addressed by the facility or respective Service should the hotline be used.

#### 6. EWS-R is coming!

The Enterprise Wide Scheduling and Registration (EWS-R) system is on the horizon. A representative from TRICARE Management Activity’s (TMA) Resources Information Technology Program Office (RITPO) presented an overview of the new system at the quarterly UBO Working Group meeting in February. When EWS-R is functional, it is where the patient’s insurance information will be collected. The EWS-R program will feed to CHCS which in-turn will feed to DEERS Other Health Insurance.

According to RITPO, the first system test is scheduled for February 2006 at Evans Army Community Hospital, located at Fort Carson, Colorado, the United States Air Force Academy Hospital, located in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and Jacksonville Navy Hospital in Jacksonville,

Florida.

## 7. UBO Metrics

By now your first quarter 2005 data should have been submitted to the UBO Metrics web site. Thank you for all your work. This input appears to have worked more smoothly than the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter data. Your second quarter data by should be submitted NLT 21 Apr 2005 (15 working days after the close of the second quarter which ends 31 March 2005). To make the address easier to remember you may now reach the UBO Metrics Reporting System by typing [www.ubometrics.org](http://www.ubometrics.org) into your browser address window. The old IP address (204.106.16.71/UBO/Login.htm) will still work as well. Both addresses point to the same site. It is important your data are correct. The collections data are reported quarterly to Congress. DoD's Assistant Secretary for Health Affairs personally looks at the Services' collections, collected to billed ratios, etc. The TMA UBO program office also uses the data. It is amazing how much a decimal point being off two places (e.g., 1,800 dispositions reported as 180,000 dispositions) can skew data.

## 8. UBO Website Upgrades

Over the next months the UBO website become easier to navigate. Some of the information will be updated and new information posted. A couple of the changes you see today include:

- More information on past educational training such as:
  - [2004 UBO Pilot Training](#) titled "MTF Revenue Cycle Management ... Strengthening the Back End Processes." Presentations geared toward those working in the Revenue Cycle.
  - [2004 UBO Pilot Training for Managers](#) - Producing clean claims and improving business processes.
  - [2004 UBO/UBU Conference](#) titled "MTF Revenue Cycle Strategies."
  - [2003 UBO/UBU Conference](#) titled "A 'U'nified Effort."
  - [2002 OIB Implementation](#) a review of Outpatient Itemized Billing.
  - The [SMART Book](#): Information, responsibilities and tips for clerks and receptionists at MTF outpatient clinics - produced by William Beaumont Army Medical Center.
- Updated SIT/OHI page with instructions, forms and contact information when making modifications or additions to the Standard Insurance Tables
- Information on the 2005 UBO/UBU Conference.

## 9. New VPOC

The new verification point of contact (VPOC) is [Name Redacted]. For extensive information on the SIT/OHI, [Name Redacted] advises everyone to visit the recently updated UBO Website-SIT/OHI option and review the various document links. Of particular interest may be the "How to" send temporary SITs to the VPOC. With her recent security access to the table, [Name Redacted] acknowledges that there is a backlog of requests to be reconciled. She appreciates everyone's patience, as she moves forward on this task. Her email address is: [Email Redacted] or by telephone at 703-575-1710.

## 10. UBO References and Web Portals

<u>Reference Sources</u>	<u>Web Portal</u>
UBO helpdesk/staff contact: <a href="mailto:UBO.helpdesk@altarm.org">UBO.helpdesk@altarm.org</a> (703-575-5385)	
UBO Web site: <a href="http://tricare.osd.mil/rm/index.cfm?pagelid=10">http://tricare.osd.mil/rm/index.cfm?pagelid=10</a>	

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Uniform Business Office (UBO)	<a href="http://www.tricare.osd.mil/ebc/rm_home/ubo_home.cfm">http://www.tricare.osd.mil/ebc/rm_home/ubo_home.cfm</a>
Uniform Biostatistical Utility (UBU)	<a href="http://www.tricare.osd.mil/org/pae/ubu/default.htm">http://www.tricare.osd.mil/org/pae/ubu/default.htm</a>
MHS Helpdesk	<a href="http://www.MHS-helpdesk.com">http://www.MHS-helpdesk.com</a>
Third Party Outpatient Collection System (TPOCS)	<a href="http://www.tpocshelpdesk.com">http://www.tpocshelpdesk.com</a>
CHCS Implementation Alerts and OIB	<a href="https://fieldservices.saic.com">https://fieldservices.saic.com</a>
UBO Questions	<a href="mailto:ubo@tma.osd.mil">ubo@tma.osd.mil</a>