

Third Party Cook Book

SAMPLES OF HOW IEP TEAMS APPROACH Parents with MA BILLING AND THEIR RESULTS.

Recipe submitted by Margaret Houge, ESLP, Castle Elementary

- I start with "We have a form we would like you to fill out."
- I tell them we've been in a pilot for a few years and now the state requires the district to ask them to fill it out. I explain that although we're required to ask them to fill it out, they are not required to fill it out.



- The explanation I give is that schools are asking the question about health coverage as a way to get extra funding for the district. Simply put, we are "looking for extra funding."

Results: Margaret reports that last year, she had all but one family return the approval form. Not all families gave approval, but nearly a 100% return rate is excellent. She reports the one family that did not return the form was having a difficult time understanding the information. According to Margaret, no families were upset by the request.

Recipe submitted by Heidi Davern, Psychologist, Richardson Elementary

- I always save it for the end so parents can be assured that their decision does not affect any of the process.
- Tell them it is something we are "required to give them by law" and it "won't change" the services. It's a "way for the district to get paid."
- I give them the packet of information to take home and return at a later time. This helps to make it a very "separate issue." It's important for the parent(s) to know the decision is "fully in their power."

Results: Sometimes the form does not come back. We need to start working on doing a better job of following up with a phone call or reminder. Sometimes, the parent may just have a simple question or simply have forgotten to return the form. Occasionally, when parents hear that this request is "mandated by law, they stop breathing." When

they do stop breathing, it is important to clarify that it is only the request that is mandatory and that it is not mandatory for the school to bill a third party for the services.

Recipe submitted by Kathy Lukin, Multiple Needs Coord., Oakdale Elementary

- Our team introduces third party billing by stating that "the law mandates we present this information for consideration."
- It's "so much better" to present third party information now that billing does not affect life-long or annual limits for Medical Assistance or Minnesota Care.

Results: Many parents are startled and go "What?!" Because they don't know anything about third party billing. The average parent today is different than parents of students in Special Ed were in the 70's. It used to be that once a child was diagnosed, the parent quit work and stayed home. Now, parents are too busy to know about allot of the issues. Most don't know about this. This means we need to tell them and help them to understand.

Recipe submitted by Jackie Schumacher, Early Education Coordinator, Harmony Center

- I tell families there is something else we still need to do. It helps if you have a feel for the family and know something about them. Some may want to take it home and others will just say let me sign it.
- It helps now that we can say that Minnesota state law has changed a little. I try to encourage families to be careful about giving approval for billing their private plan and I always tell them that one way or the other it "won't change anything regarding the IEP."
- A good line of introduction might go something like this: "There's a law that requires us to ask about your insurance coverage as a way of generating funding for the district."

Results: Over half of the parents say they know schools need the money and that they'd "like to help."

Recipe submitted by Shirley Schindeldecker, CCC ESLP, Carver Elementary

- Third Party Billing is a team effort at Carver School and I believe we are successful here because of that fact.

- After the IEP has been discussed and all health related services identified, the team member who knows the parents best presents the 3rd Party packet and says..... "MN law now requires the schools to ask for your permission to bill your insurance for health related services. You may say yes or no. Either way, your child will receive the services we have already represented in the IEP. It's a way for the schools to receive additional funds for special education."
- The parents are asked to take home the information packet and, if after looking it over, they have additional questions, they are encouraged to call the case manager.

Results: Most parents give permission right then. Some return the yellow form after taking it home. Also, most seem to think it's a good thing to do. This year, 98% of parents that we asked said YES (School year 2000-2001). School funding has been in the news so much lately that parents understand and discussion usually opens up right at the IEP meeting.

Carver Recipe Option: Our team uses a tracking log for this process (date informed and date returned). Sometimes, a second packet has been sent because the parents misplace the first one. This year, only 2 forms were not signed and that was because the parents did not have any health coverage. Our school nurse follows up in these cases and our team believes it's a great way to track and help those who need information about ways to obtain health coverage.