

Quick Look Inside!

- **The Influenza Season is here.**
Do you know what type of Influenza we have seen in December?
Learn what we have seen in the Resp-20 profiles at 4path in 2014
- **Ready for Your New Year Resolution?**
Here are a few quick tips on increasing your likelihood of success this year.
- **Simple tips about Motivation.**
Here are a few quick tips on increasing your success when instituting new projects in your practice.
- **Are you 70 1/2 this year?**
You won't want to get hit with this retirement account penalty...read more!
- **Is your data safe on your computers?**
Why is it important to keep your patient data safe?
What you DON'T do could cost you a lot in fines and damages.
Learn how to safely and easily encrypt your computer data.

Please feel free to share this newsletter with your peers...or send them to our website www.4path.com and sign up for their own copy! We welcome individuals from all specialties and locations!

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We are here for YOUR practice

This newsletter is provided to clients of 4path Laboratory Services and other practices in the Great Lakes region. It's our intent to provide you with actionable information to help benefit your practice, lifestyle and your patients.

-Stephen G. Ruby, MD, MBA



9050 W. 81st Street
Justice, IL 60458

Voice : 1-877-884-7284
(877-88-4path)

Fax: 708-929-4330

Visit us at : www.4path.com



Get your new year off to a great start with the tips in this month's newsletter.



This issue

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4path, Dedicated to Your Success

Happy 2015!

Another year is upon us. Another year completed. We are all a year wiser than we were last year at this time. And another year older.

With each new year, it's the custom to make "New Year's Resolutions". The freshness of the new year...a new start, makes people want to do things that improve their lives. Their health. Their relationships. Their businesses.

Yes, making resolutions IS a good thing, but they can also be very frustrating to most people...and why? Because most New Year Resolutions are gone and forgotten within the first few weeks of the new year. And next year at this time, we will only remember what we didn't get accomplished, not what we did.

So how about approaching resolutions differently this year? Make them really happen? What do you need to do differently?

First, let's start with SETTING the RIGHT GOAL. Did you notice that it was singular? It's harder to keep multiple resolutions than just one. Pick ONE thing that you want to get accomplished this year for yourself, and then ONE

thing for your practice. Make it something that is important to accomplish. And make it reasonable and achievable. It's easier to push out a goal a little further when you start to approach it...but it's much harder to stay motivated when the finish line seems unattainable.

Second, be sure you know WHY you want to accomplish that goal. Having additional benefits beyond the simple goal will help keep you motivated. It should include both a goal you want to achieve and some current state you want to move away from.

Third, WRITE your goal(s) down in a positive manner and SAY them to yourself several times a day. Your brain can't get you to your goals if it doesn't know what to work on.

Last, SHARE your goals with others around you. By creating accountability to others, you will have created another source of motivation to help you achieve those goals. Learn more at: <http://wp.me/p2Vlqd-Zk>

Influenza Season is Here

At 4path, we monitor what respiratory infectious agents present to our client's patients. Earlier in the fall, there was an increase in Enterovirus/Rhinovirus infections, most likely due to the presence of the Enterovirus D68 that was identified in the US. Through November, Influenza had not been seen in patients that we tested.

Then December came, and the Influenza season was upon us. Almost overnight, the predominance of Enterovirus was replaced with Influenza A, H3. Fortunately this year's Influenza vaccine has some helpful protective effect for this infection.

Have you gotten YOUR vaccination yet? It's never too late. Read more at: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/season/flu-season-2014-2015.htm>

Did you know?

Motivation. A powerful word, but often misunderstood. Did you know that there are two major forms of motivation? The motivation of moving toward an objective (positive motivation) and the motivation of moving away (negative motivation).

And did you know that research has found that moving away from a stimulus (negative motivation) is about twice as powerful? Knowing this can be a great help when instituting a new initiative in your practice. For example, acceptance of using a new system in your office can be enhanced by highlighting the benefits of leaving the problems of an old outdated system behind, and not just focusing on the advantages of new procedures.



Simple things to help you

Home Office Deductions

Do you think you would qualify to write off your home office? Could it be a good deduction on your taxes? Perhaps... but not so fast. Is your home office...

1. A principal place of business?
2. A place to meet with clients or customers during the normal course of business?
3. "in connection with" the business if the space is a separate structure from the residence (i.e. barn or detached garage). If you are an employee (rather than self employed) you also have to meet the "employer convenience test". If you are self-employed, it's generally required that the space is used regularly and exclusively for those purposes. Do you think that you may qualify for a deduction? Maybe it's time to discuss this with your tax professional.

Are you 70 1/2?

Tax law requires individuals with retirement accounts to take annual withdrawals (based on the size of the account and their age) during the year that you reach 70 1/2. Failure to do so can be quite a shock... with penalties up to 50% of the amount not withdrawn. Retirement account distributions can be very tricky to time your withdraws for optimal tax advantage. It's a good idea to talk with an expert to make sure you don't make an expensive error.

Contact an accountant or retirement advisor for these issues. This newsletter does NOT provide expert legal or other professional advice and assumes no liability for what you do, or fail to do with this information. Using it, or not using it, is solely your responsibility.



Know what laws the government have put in effect Jan. 1, 2015

This new law in Illinois can impact your practice...but it's an opportunity to improve your laboratory service and support...with 4path.

New Year - New Laws

With each new year, we have an additional present from our government regulators....New Laws!

Most of the time the laws have little impact on our practices. For example..if you live in Louisiana, you can get a \$500 fine if you order a pizza to be delivered to a friend without them knowing. And in Florida, a law accidentally banned all computers and smart phones... in Internet cafe's. And in Boise Idaho, , it's illegal to fish from the back of a giraffe! Talk about dumb!

But this year in Illinois, there is a law may impact your practice, and can result in problems for you if you don't follow the requirements. It goes into effect on January 1, 2015.

This new law prohibits the mark up of certain pathology services by other physicians who do not perform the services. This is what many call "client billing" of pathology services. It's where a practice "buys" the pathology service

from a laboratory. They pay the laboratory a discounted price, then charge the patient or insurance company for the service, and include a "markup" for the service. The law states that if such a service is purchased from a laboratory by a practice, then the practice is only allowed to bill the same amount that they paid the lab for the service (i.e. no markup). They are also required to provide that price and the name and address of the laboratory (or pathologist) who provided the service on the patient bill or insurance submission.

This law covers the following services: Anatomic pathology (i.e. biopsies); Cytology (i.e. aspirations, etc.); Hematology (i.e. bone marrows); Molecular pathology and Blood Banking services.

If you had a client billing arrangement with a laboratory, it's important that you are aware of this change in the law, and comply with it starting January 1, 2015.

With the increased regulatory

burden on your practice, and the loss of mark-up income, it no longer makes sense for practices to continue this practice, or to put your practice at risk for non-compliance.

Why not take this opportunity to make a change to 4path, your local provider of pathology services? Rather than sending your specimens to a provider outside of the Great Lakes region, make a change to support the local economy. Moreover, you will be making the change to a laboratory dedicated to your success and who has created jobs in this part of the country. Our goal is to help your practice be more successful.

Call or have your staff contact 4path at 1-877-884-7284 to have one of our client support staff get you set up with our services...and make a positive change for your practice in 2015.

Note: To review the specific provisions of the law, visit: <http://4path.com/?p=2795>



Encryption...and keeping data safe

Simple Encryption

In this month's Q&A Technology tips, we outlined the importance of maintaining your practice's personal health information private. This is essential because health care accounted for nearly 42% of all HIPAA documented breaches this year. This includes both accidental disclosures, but also professional hacking from far-away places like China. Yes, criminals know how to make money out of the information you have. And the government knows how to make money from these events also..with millions of dollars in fines assessed to health care organizations for these data breaches.

Think you are immune to this? Better think again. Do your own internal review and you may be surprised on much is at risk in your practice. Keeping PHI on your personal computers...at work, at home or on-the-go with a laptop can be a huge risk. But encrypting the data can done relatively easily. Because there are so many different operating system versions for windows and mac computers, it's beyond the scope of this newsletter to provide detailed instructions. But there are great instructions on-line on how to do do this by simply using Google. Search for "Microsoft encrypting folders windows X" where

X is the current version of windows that you are using. I recommend that you follow the "official" instructions provided by the Microsoft site, although there are many great on-line helpful tutorials by other computer experts. Are you a Mac user? Encryption of your entire hard drive its data is easy. Just follow the instructions for data security under "system preferences", "personal", "security & privacy", "file vault". And remember...in both PC and Mac, be sure you follow the instruction and keep your encryption keys in a safe place. Lose your key...and it's likely you too will be blocked from accessing your data!

This Month's Q&A Technology Tips

Q: Is there anything I should do to protect the patient data on my laptop?

A: Absolutely! This is a very important issue that is often forgotten by most practices. Patient data on a laptop may be one of the most common causes of "data breach" of PHI (personal health information), and is regulated under the HIPAA regulations. Required reporting and notification of patients after a laptop loss can be very significant ...and costly. But there are some simple steps that you can take.



First, don't put PHI on your laptop at all. That completely eliminates the problem! Check to see if your EMR or other vendor can keep data ONLY on the protected server. Second, if you must have data on a portable device, be sure the hard drive is encrypted and you have a sufficiently complex password to be an effective deterrent to anyone who may be in possession of your stolen laptop. Such simple preventative measures can help you eliminate many of the onerous reporting requirements by HIPAA. Learn more here: <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/administrative/breachnotificationrule/>

We want to hear from YOU.

Want to know a secret?

There something special that 4path has planned for the near future...and we are pretty excited about it. But it's not ready to be announced yet. Stay tuned and watch for the announcement, and more information in next month's newsletter!

4path, Pathology Services

4path Pathology Services is an independent, physician owned pathology laboratory dedicated to helping our clients be more successful. We provide pathology services for GI, GU, GYN, podiatry, dermatology, ENT, surgery and endoscopy centers and all types of physician and out-patient offices in the Great Lakes Region. KEEP YOUR BUSINESS LOCAL! Contact us today for more information on how we can help YOUR practice. **1-877-884-7284**

Do you have something to contribute?

Do you have a topic that you want to provide an article for? Do you have a topic that you would like to see covered here? If so, let us know about it! Send an e-mail to Dr. Ruby at SRuby@4path.com. You can include the article you want to publish or the topic you would like to learn more about. We reserve the right to select articles and topics that we feel best fits this newsletter and to edit any submitted materials prior to publishing.

Value, Service, Commitment....



Beyond the Diagnosis