



CLIENT FOCUS

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SOUTHEASTERN PATHOLOGY

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The "Red Flag" Rules and Identity Theft

You may have already received a letter from SEP containing a copy of our Identity Theft Prevention and Detection and Red Flag Rule Compliance Policy and Procedures. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has established regulations in concordance with the Fair and Accurate Credit Transaction Act (FACT) of 2003. Effective August 1, 2009 the FTC will enforce the "Red Flag" rules.

To Whom Do These Rules Apply?

Red flag rules apply to all entities that extend credit. Healthcare providers that do not demand payment in full are considered creditors and are required to have an Identity Theft Program/Policy in place.

What are "Red Flags"?

The FTC defines a "red flag" as any "pattern, practice or specific activity that indicates the possible existence of identity theft". Potential red flags may include, but are not limited to, complaints from patients about billing, inconsistencies in information, etc. Please refer to our letter for more detailed information about Red Flags.

What does it mean to me and to my patients?

Each creditor must take adequate steps to assure the identity of the person whom they are serving. This may mean requesting additional information at sign in, as well as taking steps to investigate "Red Flags" that come up in the billing process. It may mean added inconvenience, but the FTC hopes it will lead to better protection for our patients. Remember that because SEP generally gets all information about a patient from our referring clinicians, we have to work together to make this process effective.

If all of this information is overwhelming or confusing, we are happy to speak with you about this topic. You may also want to review websites such as the following for additional information.

Identity Theft Red Flags and Address Discrepancies Under the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act of 2003; Final Rule, Federal Register/Vol. 72, No. 217/ Friday November 9, 2007

<http://www.ftc.gov/os/fedreg/2007/november/071109redflags.pdf>

Fighting Fraud with the Red Flags Rule-A-How -To Guide for Business, FTC <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/business/idtheft/bus23.shtm>

The "Red Flags" Rule: What Health Care Providers Need to Know About Complying with New Requirements for Fighting Identity Theft, Steven Toporoff <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/articles/art11.shtm>

Protect Your Patients, Protect Your Practice: What You Need to Know About the Red Flags Rule, AMA

<http://www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/368/red-flags-rule-policy.pdf>

Contact Becky Junkins if you would like more information about Red Flag Rules.

We will be closed on September 7, 2009 in observance of Labor Day.

This newsletter is also available on our website.

Get To Know SouthEastern Pathology Employees Who Serve You

Did you know that: ⁽¹⁾

- Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States?
- More than one million skin cancers are diagnosed annually?
- Each year there are more new cases of skin cancer than the combined incidence of cancers of the breast, prostate, lung and colon?
- One in five Americans will develop skin cancer in the course of a lifetime?

Patients are becoming increasingly aware of the risks of prolonged exposure to the sun and increasingly concerned about any abnormal areas on their skin. **Dermatopathology** is a subspecialty of pathology concerned with the unique histologic appearance of skin biopsies. Fellowship training in Dermatopathology is necessary for board certification. A Board Certified Dermatopathologist is the most qualified physician to examine skin specimens, to communicate with the physician performing the biopsy, and to arrive at the correct diagnosis. SEP is proud to have two Dermatopathologists serving you and your patients.



Dr. Chris Kligora completed both his Pathology Residency and his Dermatopathology Fellowship at the University of Virginia. He is board certified in Anatomic and Clinical Pathology and Dermatopathology from the American Board of Pathology. He served as an Assistant Professor of Medicine at the Kansas University Medical Center where he taught Dermatopathology to dermatology and pathology residents. He is co-author of Sauer's Manual of Skin Disease, 9th edition.



Dr. Erin Thibault joined SouthEastern Pathology in July, 2007 after completing her Dermatopathology Fellowship at the University of Virginia. She also completed her Anatomic and Clinical Pathology Residency at the Medical College of Virginia. She received her Medical Doctorate from Louisiana State University, where she also graduated Phi Beta Kappa with a Bachelor of Science degree in Microbiology.

As with all of our pathologists, Dr. Kligora and Dr. Thibault are happy to answer any questions concerning a case or diagnosis or to consult with any of our clients.

⁽¹⁾ www.skincancer.org/skin-cancer-facts/

Billing Professional Component for Clinical Pathology

SouthEastern Pathology has recently begun billing for the professional component of clinical pathology services provided to patients at both Floyd Medical Center and Redmond Regional Medical Center. Each hospital bills for the technical component of clinical tests. The bill from SouthEastern Pathology is for the pathologists charge, referred to as the professional component of clinical pathology. The pathologist's professional component covers services performed in the clinical laboratory such as quality assurance, evaluation, implementation, interpretation, and clinical relevance of laboratory tests, as required by federal and state law. The only compensation that the pathologist receives for these activities with respect to laboratory testing is from the pathologist's professional component charge.

Professional component billing for clinical pathology is an established practice. Several certification and accreditation organizations support the ethics of the charge, including the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) and the College of American Pathologists (CAP). The American Medical Association (AMA) has endorsed the practice since 1993 when it publicly announced its approval of pathologists billing for the professional components of clinical pathology services.

Please refer any patients who have questions about a bill they receive from SouthEastern Pathology to our billing department. If you would like additional information about professional component billing, please contact Becky Junkins.

Why SouthEastern Pathology Requests Your Patient's Social Security Number

Because of the increased concern regarding identity theft, it is becoming uncommon to see printed social security numbers on any documents. Just as with credit card numbers on receipts, printed information generally will only provide a few digits from each social security number. However, SEP asks all of our clients to provide full social security numbers for patients. Just as you need to have this information on file, we also need the information for record keeping to assure quality patient care as well as successful billing. It is the one unique identifier that helps us track a patient forever, regardless of name changes or small differences in the way their "Name" is presented on forms.

This has become an increasing problem as many EMR's print requisitions that do not include the full SSN. We ask each you to work with your software vendor to be sure the full number is printed, or to provide the number manually or by attaching a separate document. It will decrease the number of times we have to call your office with questions, and increase our ability to track the patient. Of course, SouthEastern Pathology cannot demand specific information and we will not decline service to an individual that refuses to supply us with this information.

Be assured that SouthEastern Pathology follows all guidelines set forth by governing bodies, such as the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA), and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), as well as internal measures established to protect the sensitive personal health information (PHI) of each individual.

SouthEastern Pathology is open from 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Our patient area is closed from 12:30 to 1:30 daily. After hours, you can reach the pathologist on call using the beeper, 706-295-8456.