

## Understanding the Charges for Our Medical Services

There is a new trend in medical practice toward transparency of medical fees and charges. This is probably due to more insurance plans that require higher out-of-pocket costs to patients. This document is an attempt to explain the complexities of the billing process in our practice, so that you are better able to understand and interpret your bill.

All medical practices in the U.S. that submit claims to private insurers and/or Medicaid and Medicare are required to use a billing nomenclature called Current Procedural Terminology (CPT). CPT codes are updated and published yearly in a very thick book by the American Medical Association. There are tens of thousands of codes for all the different medical services provided by physicians in the U.S. As physicians we are required by law to document and bill for each and every service we provide for your child. In the old days, prior to CPT rules you, would take your child to the pediatrician and see a bill stating

Johnny's 8 year-old check-up \$xxx

But now, because of CPT rules you will see

99393 \$xx

99152 \$yy

99173 \$zz

36416 \$aa

85018 \$bb

90716 \$cc

90471 \$dd

We are not practicing much differently. However previously everything was lumped together in one charge and now it is all unbundled into separate codes and separate charges.

Another frequent question we hear is "I brought both of my children in for sick visits. Why is one child's charge more than the other child's". There are specific CPT rules for coding and billing sick visits that we must follow also. If the complexity of one child's illness is higher (child is younger, has been sick longer, is being sent for diagnostic testing, is being prescribed medication, etc) there will be a different CPT code assigned that has a higher financial rating and therefore generates a higher charge.

We realize that this coding and billing system is very complex (even we have to go "back to the book" to check on fine details at times). This is a brief attempt to explain some of the major concepts. If you have ANY questions about your child's bill or our financial policies please contact Rose or Georgine in our billing office.

Sincerely,

Chestnut Ridge Pediatric Associates