

## KATRINA PARRISH

### —Detail-Oriented Billing Support Specialist is a Lifesaver

By Jeannie Counce



Katrina Parrish

Not every office is fortunate enough to have one. But, if you are privileged to have that special someone who keeps things moving, does not let anything fall through the cracks, stays on top of deadlines, and is keenly aware of the status of so many projects that it boggles the mind, your business will be that much more successful. Everyone would agree that this irreplaceable team member is “a real lifesaver.” At University of Iowa Community HomeCare that “lifesaver” is **Katrina Parrish**.

As Billing Support Specialist for UI Community HomeCare, a provider of infusion therapy, DME, and mastectomy support, it is Parrish’s job to troubleshoot written physician orders before they are submitted for signatures. When new patients come on service, Parrish quickly reviews the orders, double-checks important details, and maps out all of the authorizations and documentation required to support the claim. Parrish has mastered the art of building systems that keep information and paperwork flowing, prevent mistakes, and issue alerts about what is needed to file a clean claim. She’s so good at her job that minimal issues develop at

the time of claim filing and the provider has very few preventable denials.

“She has improved our patient onboarding process in such a way that everything flows extremely well,” observes UI Community HomeCare Executive Director Danette Frauenholtz, RN, BSN, MBA. “Her system keeps things smooth on the front end and allows for clean claims.” UI Community HomeCare’s policy is to create and distribute orders within four days of a patient initiating service. Meeting that tight turnaround time is not a problem thanks to the diligence Parrish puts into billing support. Her attention to detail pays off in faster payments as well. “Our DSO (days sales outstanding) is in the high 20s, which I think is pretty good for this industry,” says Frauenholtz. “If DSO goes to 30 or more, something is wrong.”

#### DEVIL IN THE DETAILS

With degrees in Literature and Criminal Justice, Parrish is self-taught in the art of health care billing. She has a knack for sifting through details and identifying trends that serves her well in her role. After four years on the job, she has the uncanny ability to know what the organization needs to get paid, according to her colleagues. “Katrina is a huge resource,” says Lisa Schmidt, LBSW, Durable Medical Equipment Client Care Coordinator. “Her courage to question is invaluable. She’s not afraid to review things with a fine-toothed comb to ensure the paperwork is complete and correct.”

That means double-checking essentials, such as the spelling of patients’ names, dates of service, insurance

**Editor’s Note:** Alternate-site infusion providers are on a continuous journey towards achieving excellence. A path of quality care, paved with many examples of leadership and commitment—some highly visible, some not as readily apparent (but, nonetheless, deeply rooted and vitally important). Beyond the unmistakable center stage roles played by home infusion pharmacists and nurses within our field, perhaps the most unexpected treasures for us all to discover and explore can be found in the stories of the skilled employees that work behind the scenes to make a home infusion company successful—the devoted “faces behind-the-scenes.”

Could your business thrive without the knowledge, skills and experience demonstrated by the personnel in the warehouse, the technicians, intake staff, dietitians, drivers and other critical individuals who display the passion and caring for the patient through the work they do every day? In Faces Behind the Scenes, INFUSION recognizes and examines these indispensable faces behind-the-scenes!

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authorization numbers, delivery receipts, and ensuring that physician signature requirements are met. Automated claims processing systems can kick out a submission if any of these data points are off, resulting in the need for the provider to rework and resubmit a claim, which wastes time.

“That’s one of my pet peeves: wasting time,” asserts Parrish. “I like paying attention to detail,” she adds. “I love problem solving and streamlining processes to make operations flow more efficiently. It makes less work for everyone,” she reasons.

Parrish is also responsible for obtaining physician signatures on orders. “She understands the clinical implications of the service instructions, the regulatory and insurance requirements, and knows what the physician needs to sign the order,” explains Frauenholtz. “She acts like a compliance officer, making sure all the orders match up and that renewals are current,” she continues. Keeping renewals current is especially important for long-term therapies where the prescription changes.

“Katrina makes sure all the paperwork is in order so we don’t have to ask the physician to re-sign documents to correct mistakes or get into an audit situation,” adds Schmidt. Making it easy for the physician’s office is part of her success, according to Parrish. “I find out which days they do their paperwork and have it ready for them then. I also point out what needs to be filled in, where to sign, and so on,” she says.

Parrish also detects when more than a simple signature is needed. “She looks at the referral through the eyes of an auditor,” says Frauenholtz. “She’s thinking, ‘would the payer approve that? What type of documentation is needed?’” Enteral therapy is a good example. “A physician might order a pump because it would make nighttime feeding easier for the patient, but that doesn’t mean that a payer will cover it. Katrina can work with the two intake coordinators on a case like that to

document medical necessity,” explains Frauenholtz.

“Katrina catches discrepancies others might miss and passes them along to the appropriate staff for follow-up,” observes Schmidt. “She often sees red flags and alerts the client care coordinators. Not everyone notices red flags,” she adds. “That takes skill and experience.”

The fact that Parrish is incredibly organized doesn’t hurt either. “Katrina has an excellent tracking system so she knows where each patient’s orders are at all times and can see where the hold ups are in obtaining proper documentation,” continues Frauenholtz.

### TRUST HER SYSTEM

Parrish, who did some medical billing for an optometrist’s office before coming to UI Community HomeCare, says that the payer requirements make sense to her. She can see when snags develop and adjust the process. “If she sees a consistent issue or problem, she’ll start looking for a way to do things differently,” says Frauenholtz.

“Modifying the process has been the norm over the past several years with all the new regulations and requirements that have affected the industry as a result of the Affordable Care Act,” adds Schmidt.

Parrish has taken extra steps to ensure that UI Community HomeCare complies with some of the more onerous government requirements, such as new Medicare rules for renewing oxygen therapy orders. “The beneficiary must see a physician ‘face-to-face’ six months before their annual order expires in order to remain on therapy,” explains Parrish. “So I calculate the six-month window for all our Medicare patients on service, and set up a system that sends a letter every month reminding them that they need to see their doctor by X date,” she says. “If I don’t have the paperwork two months before the deadline, I start calling them.”

The whole system helps UI Community HomeCare maintain current pa-

tient records that are easier to track. “We’re not chasing documentation after-the-fact,” observes Schmidt.

Parrish notes that some patients “fall off the grid” and just can’t be reached. To her, that’s a signal. “At that point, I go back to the care coordinator so he or she can start the process of locating the patient. Losing track of patients can be a red flag that we may need to get the equipment back,” she says, noting how important it is to track expensive assets, such as infusion pumps and oxygen concentrators.

“Katrina has really developed her role and standardized our processes,” explains Frauenholtz. “We even changed the way we divide our intake functions based on her recommendations,” she adds. “Her ability to organize, manage, and track multiple detailed projects is unrivaled,” adds Schmidt. “We all trust her system.”

### GETTING IT DONE

Above all else, Parrish is resolute. “She has the ability and willingness to do what needs to be done,” says Schmidt. “I don’t think any other single person could do all that she does.”

According to Frauenholtz, Parrish has the right balance of skill and personality traits that make her efficient. She is detail-oriented and determined, without being overbearing. “Much of Katrina’s success is due to her incredible ability to effectively communicate with all parties,” observes Schmidt, who notes that Parrish is always respectful, polite, and persistent, building a positive rapport with everyone. “She has solid and efficient relationships with patients, coworkers, and physicians,” she says.

“I can’t imagine how we did it before Katrina,” concludes Frauenholtz. “Having Katrina in such a vital role has definitely been a ‘lifesaver’ to our business, and well worth the investment of having a billing specialist on board.” ■