

# THE STATE OF COLLECTION



A State Collection Service, Inc. Newsletter  
Volume 21, Number 3 • Third Quarter 2015

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**WI HFMA Fall Conference**, Madison, WI, Sept 16-18

**Tri State Fall Institute**, Cincinnati, OH, Sept 23-25

**Fall Revenue Cycle Co-op**, Green Bay, WI, Oct 8-9

**ACA International Fall Forum**, Chicago, IL, Nov 4-6

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## LOCATIONS

8 0 0 . 4 7 7 . 7 4 7 4

Madison, WI

Beloit, WI

Milwaukee, WI

Chicago, IL

## KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE BALL

—Tom Haag, Chairman and CEO



"Keep your eye on the ball!" is one of the first instructions you receive when you are learning to play golf, or baseball, or pretty much any sport. Those who do, tend to be more successful at their sport of choice.

It's no coincidence that this phrase has been translated into many realms outside of sports and can be applied to pretty much anything we want to do better. The difference of course is that our objective becomes "the ball". No surprise that in those few times when I did as instructed with a golf club I was able to hit the golf ball with uncanny accuracy.

In business, we have little choice but to "keep our eye on the ball". With today's changing technology and regulations, one needs to be alerted to those changes as they are happening. Accordingly, this quarter's newsletter has been dedicated to that familiar phrase.

Throughout this issue we'll discuss several examples of how, for your benefit as well as our own, we do "Keep our eye on the ball". Now if only I could just remember that when I swing my golf club. 🏌️

## STATE COLLECTION SERVICE NAMED TO THE 34TH ANNUAL INC. 5000 LIST

State Collection Service is pleased to announce its naming to the 34th annual Inc. 5000 list of America's fastest-growing companies. The list represents the most comprehensive look at the most important segment of the economy – America's independent entrepreneurs. The 2015 Inc. 5000 is ranked according to percentage revenue growth when comparing 2011 to 2014.

"It truly is an honor to be named to the Inc. 5000 list this year," said Tom Haag, State Collection Service Chairman/CEO and son of the company's founder, Hilding Haag. "To be considered one of the country's fastest-growing businesses is an amazing accomplishment. But for a family-owned organization, in its 67th year of business, to make the list – I think that is pretty exciting."

In addition to being recognized on the Inc. 5000 list this year, State Collection Service was named a Wisconsin Family Business of the Year winner in 2014. The company was also presented with SpeechTech Magazine's Implementation Award in 2014 for impressive deployment of speech analytics technology. Additionally, State Collection Service continues to maintain its Peer Reviewed by HFMA designation from the country's largest association of healthcare finance professionals.





# KEEPING YOUR EYE ON THE BALL

—Terry Armstrong, President



For me, “keeping your eye on the ball” really means *utilizing the right resources, at the right time, in the right way*. You should expect that as your partner, we at State Collection Service will keep a watchful eye, day after day, for the future of your revenue cycle. And we do! We keep our eye on the most-current legislation, technology, process improvements, and the latest methodologies to improve the patient experience. In this newsletter, we highlight some specific examples.

In her article, Tina Hanson responds to the new guidelines issued recently by the FCC for the Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA). The consent to call a cell phone with an auto dialer has never been more important, since over 50% of the population today does not have a landline. We have been consistently encouraging our clients to add language to their registration forms to provide the necessary approval to call the patient’s cell phone with an auto dialer. Many of you have already done so, but with the new guidelines, getting this consent is more important than ever. If you have not yet updated your forms and would like some suggested verbiage, please contact your Client Service Executive or me.

What has our industry most concerned about the recent guidelines, is that the consumer (patient) can revoke the consent he/she gave you at the time of service. How all of us keep track of this consent (and its potential revocation) will be critical in the future. One interesting fact – any call other than that made by a rotary dial phone may constitute an auto dialer, which puts virtually everyone at risk. Read Tina’s article for more information.

While the FCC is trying to limit our ability to contact consumers, our clients and their patients want us to communicate in the most convenient way possible, whether that is via email, text, or consumer portals. Phil Rohs of Apex Revenue Technologies and Steve Beard discuss these options in greater detail. Again, while we believe that these modes of communication are the future for patients, it is still critical that we obtain the necessary approval to actually communicate with them in any of these ways.

Another way in which we continue to be thorough and improve our patient experience is through the advanced use of our speech analytics tool, CallMiner. Tracy Dudek spells out the latest in that area and how CallMiner continues to improve our ability to provide the best patient experience. We believe that we are well positioned to monitor all aspects of a call – whether that is from the legislation aspect or the knowledge of our representatives, and even to monitoring the patient’s emotions or sentiments during a call. It is pretty impressive technology that really makes a difference in call resolution.

Technology is nothing without our outstanding staff and their knowledge of our clients and the healthcare industry. We continue to promote and train our employees using HFMA’s Certified Revenue Cycle Representative (CRCR) program to ensure our staff is highly knowledgeable of the revenue cycle. This intensive training program covers all areas of the revenue cycle; Patricia Nelson outlines that in her article. We are proud that so many of our colleagues have completed this tough program because their dedication to providing an excellent patient experience is necessary if you are going to keep your on the ball.

And finally, in his article, Tim, State Collection Service’s third generation Haag, shares what it means to him to work for the family business. Following in the footsteps of company founder, Hilding, Tim and his father, Tom, ensure that the company “keeps its eye on the ball” every day in order to do the very best we can for our clients.

With all of the changes happening around us every day, it’s more important than ever to remember that, at our foundation, we are a family business with core values that have existed for over 66 years. Without a doubt, these fundamental values reflect our commitment to always staying ahead of changes that affect our business and our clients, making sure we never take our eye off the ball. ✎



## BACK TO SCHOOL BACKPACK FUNDRAISER

This past month, some of our offices took part in the "Pack the Backpack" campaign to give [school supply] filled backpacks to homeless children in the community.

35 total backpacks were donated, filled and sent to area children who desperately need them. We were also able to donate numerous additional school supplies.

Thanks to all for helping to keep our local kids' education a priority!



## Congratulations Tim! Vice President of Support Services



It is with great excitement that we announce the promotion of Tim Haag to Vice President of Support Services! Tim now oversees all of the support departments within the organization in this new role. While the Client Services team continues to report up to Tim, the following additional areas will also report to him -

Marketing • Human Resources • Quality Process • Project Management • Data Processing

Tim has been with the company for over 6 years and has been instrumental in State Collection Service's growth during that time. He represents the third generation of the Haag family and we know he looks forward to watching the company continue to succeed into the future. Tim is a Board member of the Wisconsin Collectors Association and is also very involved with ACA International. In addition, he was recognized as one of Madison's 40 outstanding professionals under 40 by InBusiness Magazine earlier this year.

Join us in congratulating Tim on a well deserved promotion!

## OUR FUTURE: THREE GENERATIONS AND BEYOND

—Tim Haag, Vice President of Support Services

As many of you already know, State Collection Service is family-owned. In 1949, my grandfather, Hilding Haag, a Swedish immigrant who came to America with nothing more than a dream for a better life, started State Collection Service. Over 50 years ago, my father, Tom, joined the business. He and his father worked closely together until Hilding turned the family business over; Tom remains the Chairman and CEO today.

Over the past 66 years, the company has grown from a small collection agency serving local creditors to the nationally-recognized accounts receivable management firm it is today. In fact, during our 65th year in business, State Collection Service was honored with the Wisconsin Family Business of the Year Award, a major accomplishment. Knowing that only 30% of family businesses make it to the second generation, and only 12% of those survive to the third generation makes this award even more meaningful. It truly is a testament to the hard work that my grandfather and father put in to making this such a successful business. It excites me to think of having the opportunity to lead State Collection Service as a third-generation organization in the years to come.

I've always been very proud to work for the family business and still remember calling my dad after my first day at State Collection Service and telling him, "I love it here". He responded by saying, "It's your first day and they probably fed you a free lunch. What's not to like about it (laughing)?" I can say with all honesty that, nearly seven years later, my words from that day haven't changed. I love this company and the people who have made it successful. Most importantly, though, I love that we continue following in the footsteps of my grandfather and father by maintaining the foundation the company was built on – customer service.

But at the end of it all, it's not just about the Haags; it's about all of the staff that truly makes this a family business. In a recent survey, over 85% of our employees strongly agreed that the company has a family feel – in fact, many went so far as to say that is the best part of working at State Collection Service. I believe that my grandfather would be proud that the culture and traditions he established almost seven decades ago are still an important part of today's State Collection Service.

Thinking about the future of this industry sometimes keeps me up at night, with all of the changing laws and regulations – TCPA, 501r, and the CFPB, just to name a few – making it more difficult to do our jobs. But in spite of all of this, I can't think of anything else I'd rather be doing or anywhere else I'd rather be doing it! ✨





# THE LATEST ON THE TCPA: WHAT THE FCC'S "CLARIFICATIONS" MEAN FOR YOU

—Tina Hanson, Executive Vice-President



Sometimes you get what you ask for! When 21 declarations were filed to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for clarification of an administrative rule, the result the FCC commissioners provided us made certain aspects muddier while others opened up companies for additional potential litigation that did not exist before.

Let's start at the beginning. The Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA) was enacted in 1991. It amended the Communications Act of 1934. The TCPA restricts telephone solicitations (i.e., telemarketing) and the use of automated telephone equipment. The TCPA limits the use of automatic dialing systems, artificial or prerecorded voice messages, SMS text messages, and fax machines. It also specifies several technical requirements for fax machines, autodialers, and voice messaging systems. That was in 1991. Just think of the additional communication tools we use today that were not in place in 1991, which is where the root of the problem lies.

In July of 2015, the FCC released their rulings. Here are some of the highlights – or lowlights – as they may be interpreted.

The areas of the TCPA that were clarified are as follow:

1. AutoDialers – Capacity: Capacity of an autodialer is not limited to its current configuration, but also includes its potential functionalities, i.e. its future ability to be modified to have the requisite capacity.
2. AutoDialers – Predictive Dialers: All predictive dialers are categorically an ATDS (automated telephone dialing system), regardless of whether they possess the statutory elements at the time a call is made. Result? The industry needs to go back to the rotary dialing phone; this was an example the FCC used.
3. Reassigned Numbers: Companies have a one call safe harbor, meaning one attempt to make a call as a safe harbor to a cell that has been reassigned to the incorrect party. This single call covers the company and any affiliates.
4. Consent – Revocation: The ability to revoke consent is a new feature of the TCPA. The consumer has the right to revoke prior consent to receive “robocalls” in any reasonable way at any time. Reasonableness is not clearly defined, this includes the right for oral revocation.
5. Consent – Porting to a wireless number: When a consumer ports a phone number to a wireless device, consent does not follow unless it is wireless to wireless and prior consent was given.
6. Other – Reaffirmations: There is no distinction between telemarketing calls and information calls. Text messages are considered calls.
7. Other – Exemptions: There are some exceptions for certain financial service calls. Examples provided include fraud, identify theft, and data breaches as well as certain healthcare-related calls such as prescription refill reminders and appointment notifications. These calls must provide for a means to opt out.
8. Other – Call blocking technology: Carriers can offer “robocall-blocking” technologies to consumers. The FCC gives the go-ahead for carriers to implement market-based solutions that consumers can use to stop unwanted “robocalls”.

The biggest concern as it relates to the industry working closely with the providers is the need to ensure that consent and revocation of consent to call a cell phone are shared between the parties at the point of account placement and immediately as consent/revocation occur to protect each other from unnecessary litigation.

ACA International and several other companies and associations have filed lawsuits against the FCC. The courts will decide the future of this law and how far-reaching it will be down the road.

Keeping an eye on this ball may mean a black eye in the near-term. Regardless of how the courts rule, it will be important to get involved with your legislator to educate them on the impact this has on your patients and consumers. 🚩

*\*Listen to Tina's recent webinar on this topic by clicking [here](#).*



# CONTINUED STAFF DEVELOPMENT THROUGH HFMA'S CRCR

—Patricia Nelson, Training Manager

As State Collection Service continues to experience progress and growth, so too does the expertise and developmental momentum of our staff within the healthcare industry. As a company, we have established a high standard of customer service excellence that naturally propels us forward in continued training and development of our employees. Representatives and supervisors within our Extended Business Office (EBO) division are provided with valuable insight into the entire revenue cycle and how it affects the financial outcomes of the healthcare organization overall through our commitment to HFMA's Certified Revenue Cycle Representative (CRCR) training and certification program. This broad-based revenue cycle training equips our staff with the understanding of the bigger picture within the healthcare industry, empowering them to effectively and efficiently manage the multitude of complex questions and concerns that patients present on a daily basis.



The CRCR program is a rigorous online course that we have coupled with a week-long comprehensive instructor led classroom study. The program includes topics consisting of:

- Compliance
- Claims processing
- Cash
- Support departments
- Patient access
- Account resolution
- Financial management

The wealth of knowledge this training program provides not only affords the opportunity to obtain a prestigious industry recognized professional certification, but also builds tremendous confidence in our ability to meet the needs of patients, our clients, and the ever-changing healthcare landscape. Through the CRCR training program, representatives take a deeper look into claims processing and patient access procedures that take place behind the scenes prior to and concurrent with placement in our office. With the insight into such processes, our staff is then trained to keep their eyes on the unique details and circumstances of each and every call in order to successfully achieve our goal of first call resolution.

Investing valuable time and resources in developing our employees gives us the advantage of improving financial performance through increased staff awareness, yielding decreased liability due to errors and oversights and increased staff confidence and work satisfaction, all while exceeding performance metrics and goals. We fully intend on maximizing the professional potential of our staff members with programs such as CRCR to meet the needs of our growing client base.

Please join me in congratulating the following individuals who have worked diligently to achieve HFMA's CRCR certification:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Michele Henze, EBO Supervisor (Beloit)               | Heidi Martinez, EBO Representative (Milwaukee)               |
| Paula Wallace, EBO Representative (Beloit)           | Brittany Fitzpatrick, EBO Representative (Milwaukee)         |
| Stephanie Larson, EBO Representative (Beloit)        | Martha Henes, Insurance Discovery Supervisor (Milwaukee)     |
| Jodi Gibson, EBO Representative (Beloit)             | Natalee Halstead, Insurance Discovery Specialist (Milwaukee) |
| Gina Rachel, EBO Representative (Beloit)             | Selena Binns, Insurance Discovery Specialist (Milwaukee)     |
| Jennifer Bertone, EBO Representative (Beloit)        | Dawn Williams, Insurance Discovery Specialist (Milwaukee)    |
| Ronda Johnson, EBO Representative (Beloit)           | Brittany Palmer, Insurance Discovery Specialist (Milwaukee)  |
| Lisa Hartley, EBO Representative (Beloit)            | Melissa Garcia, Insurance Discovery Specialist (Milwaukee)   |
| Jody Eterno, Client Services Representative (Beloit) | Kathy Lukens, EBO Representative (Madison)                   |
| Seneca Zachery, Training Specialist (Beloit)         | Diane Schmidt, EBO Representative (Madison)                  |
| Michael Schwab, Collection Specialist (Chicago)      | Jennifer Donalson, EBO Representative (Madison)              |
| Annette Wallace, EBO Site Manager (Milwaukee)        | Janice Belin, EBO Representative (Madison)                   |
| Allison Leibengood, EBO Representative (Milwaukee)   | Kelly Gransee, Client Services Executive (Madison)           |
| Brian Buckner, EBO Representative (Milwaukee)        | Denise Phelps, Client Services Representative (Madison)      |

Staff development is fundamental to our continued success in client and patient satisfaction. As we look towards the second half of 2015, we are enthusiastic and proud to have many more individuals added to the elite CRCR family at State Collection Service! 🎉



# IMPROVING PATIENT PAYMENT PERFORMANCE WITH MORE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

— Philip Rohs, Senior Consultant, Apex Revenue Technologies and Steve Beard, Chief Business Development Officer

No two patients are the same. Each has a very personal healthcare experience and each has distinct financial needs and preferences that have an impact on how, when and if they will choose to pay their healthcare bill. It's no longer effective to apply static billing techniques to solve the complex challenge of collecting balances from patients. The need to tailor written financial conversations and payment options to individual needs and preferences is critical. This article provides six recommendations that will not only help you improve payment performance through a more tailored approach, but will also improve patient satisfaction.



## 1. **Tailor Statement Messaging** to be Specific to the Patient Demographic

Patients are very different from one another and so are their preferences and capabilities. Each patient has a different lifestyle, financial situation, and even a different level of technical ability. Some examples of tailored messaging include:

- Advertising payment plans on high balance statements
- Clearly identify easy online and mobile payment options on small balance statements
- Promote your patient portal to those with families or those who have an active visit history
- If you offer a prompt pay discount, advertise it – especially to those patients who have a substantial amount due. Promote the program on the front of the statement where it is sure to be seen, not on the back of the statement where some patients never look.

## 2. **Use Alternate Channels** to Notify Patients of Payment Due Dates

Patient financial messaging should be a cohesive effort that starts at the point of service and carries through after-care billing. Use different avenues of communication with your patients and see a higher response rate.

- Information at the point of service
- Email notifications
- Paper statement messaging
- Messaging through the patient portal

## 3. Make it Easy for Patients to Opt-Out of Paper / **Opt-In for E-Statements**

Reduce paper costs, speed up delivery time, and improve patient satisfaction with eStatements.

- Make sure the enrollment process is fast and easy with limited steps and questions for the patient to fill out
- Use pre-populated payment screens where possible
- Integrate with your patient portal

## 4. **Provide Convenient Options for Patients to Pay Online** Without Logging In

Many patients don't want to create another username and password just to make an online payment for their medical visit. Especially patients who don't have an active medical condition that requires frequent visits. In fact, up to 75% of patients who pay online choose to make a one-time payment without ever logging in. If you don't provide this option to patients, you are potentially discouraging a large number of patients from paying their bill online.

Studies have shown that patients who pay online tend to pay significantly faster. It is very important that providers make it as convenient as possible for patients to pay online to maximize the number of online payments collected, and ultimately improve the overall speed of collecting.

*continued on page 7*



### 5. Provide **Access to Statements** from Your Patient Portal

Patients enroll in patient portals to more easily and conveniently manage their health records, appointments, and to communicate with their providers. To further enhance their experience and satisfaction, exact copies of patient statements should also be accessible from the portal. This provides access to all the information a patient needs if questions surrounding their statement arise. Patients can compare statements to their visit history, EOBs they receive in the mail, and insurance claims from one central location. Not only does this improve patient satisfaction, it boosts patient portal adoption and reduces inbound support calls.

### 6. Collect Payments at the **Point of Service**

- Start the financial conversation at the point of service. Give the patient an estimate of charges and promote financial services available to them as well as any prompt pay discounts or payment plan options
- Develop internal procedures to encourage an upfront payment before the patient leaves the facility or when they check-in at their next scheduled visit
- Proactive patient financial engagement provides a more positive billing experience and reduces billing questions after a statement is generated

The bottom line is, keeping your eye on the details will undoubtedly generate results. Evaluate your current statement and patient communication methods to determine areas of improvement. Regularly analyze your patient statement design, patient communication, statement messaging and statement advertising. Set up benchmarks to measure your progress. With each change to the statement – measure the number of patient payments collected and the volume of inbound support calls to determine its success. Continue to make adjustments to your communication strategies in order to **maximize results!** 🚀

## SENTIMENT ANALYSIS FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

—Tracy Dudek, Vice President of Operations

Speech analytics tools, such as CallMiner’s MyEureka, allow our organization to easily measure the level of emotion on consumer calls. Measuring sentiments requires combining the acoustic characteristics of a speaker’s voice and the context of the conversation into a single score, which can then be used to measure relative sentiment across various cross-sections of calls, agent groups, and time frames. Semantic building blocks within the software allow for the quick identification of word patterns or phrases as building blocks that can be reused in future scorecards or call reviews.



According to CallMiner’s website, “The acoustic characteristics measured during Sentiment Analysis include: the amount of physical stress in the voice, the changes in the stress, and the rate of speech. CallMiner Eureka seamlessly meshes these acoustic measures with the overall context of the conversation to determine true meaning behind the spoken words. For example, when the word “amazon” means the rainforest and when its referring to the retailer.” When combined with TopicMiner – a feature that allows for the true discovery of frequent terms, phrases, and concepts for any set of conversations – State Collection Service has the ability to swiftly identify and take action on the root cause of an issue.

The reason State Collection Service measures sentiment and emotion on calls is to further develop our training programs for telephone representatives. By learning trigger phrases that generate negative emotions, we are able to specifically train on the use of alternate phrases and empowerment language. Examples of empowerment language that our representatives utilize today include the following:

- I’d be happy to assist you today.
- I can help answer that question for you.
- It’s important to me that your question is answered, I can help you.
- I commit to following up with you by \_\_\_\_\_.
- Thank you for asking, I can get that answer for you.

The future of measuring sentiments is the use of real-time alerting, a means of letting a representative know exactly, in that moment, when negative sentiments occur so they can perform a service recovery while the call is happening, leaving the caller with a positive feeling by the end of the call. By including risk language as a negative on an agent’s scorecard and rewarding empowerment language and account resolution, we know our representatives will leave the patient with an overall positive experience, reflecting well on the company and our employees. 🚀

# SOMETHING'S ABOUT TO BREAK...

## Another Company Goal #bestyearever

State Collection Service has had a **TREMENDOUS** first nine months of the year! Company-wide we have hit our monthly goals consecutively **EVERY MONTH** since January. With that, our employees have enjoyed celebration breakfasts and lunches along with the extra excitement and camaraderie that such a momentous feat brings! We have no plans of stopping at just nine months in-a-row though, so stay tuned for the sound of more goals breaking!



Milwaukee



Madison



Chicago



Beloit

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In August, the Haag family joined Cars Curing Kids by taking to the streets sporting just a few of Tom's "sweet rides" from his priceless, antique car collection.

Each driver was accompanied by an American Family Children's Hospital patient or graduate for a scenic ride around town. Cars Curing Kids Supports Pediatric Surgical Research at American Family Children's Hospital in Madison.



PARTNERSHIPS FOR A LIFETIME