

## SA-VIT COLLECTION AGENCY TIPS OF THE MONTH ARCHIVES



October 2006

### WHAT TO DO WHEN A PATIENT IN COLLECTION CONTACTS YOU.

You billed the patient according to your protocol. Getting no response, you sent a second bill that included a PAST DUE notice. Again, not getting a satisfactory response, you sent a third bill, and included a FINAL NOTICE, indicating that the account will be placed for collection if not resolved within ten days. You may even have called the patient during this time. The ten days passed with no response, so you sent the account to collection.

In spite of your doing everything right, the patient calls your office in disbelief! He gives you what he thinks is a good reason why his account has not been paid. He may even ask that the account be removed from collection. **What do you do? Tell the patient to call the agency!** And that this is office policy. You have already wasted time and money on this account, and you simply cannot afford to spend more time on it. Let your agency do their thing. Save your valuable time to work with cooperative patients. One suggested reply to a patient: "I'm sorry, I wish I could help you, but you must contact the collection agency for assistance in this matter. They will contact us if they have to."

Once an account is sent to collection, it is always best to let the agency handle all communications with the patient. The agency will get back to you if the situation warrants it. Collection agencies are specialists in dealing with the small percentage of your patients who have delinquent attitudes toward paying their bills (usually not only yours). Be sure to keep the agency informed when a patient contacts you, especially if the patient gives you new information to help collect the account. Help your agency help you by forwarding all debtor correspondence, phone calls, payments, etc. to them.