

NERVES E-List

One of the greatest benefits offered to NERVES' members is inclusion in the E-list. Lively discussions and information sharing take place almost every day via this forum. From time to time it is important to reiterate the mission of the platform, and guidelines for appropriate postings.

The NERVES E-list was established with the purpose of allowing members in good standing a medium with which to solicit the advice of peers, benefit from others' experiences, and participate in ongoing conversations pertinent to the neurosurgery practice administration community.

What NOT to Discuss on the NERVES E-list:

- Collusion* in regards to rate setting is the #1 thing to avoid (e.g., do not discuss your rates with insurance companies)
 - Medicare rates CAN be discussed as they are public information
- Messages encouraging or facilitating members to arrive at any agreement that expressly or impliedly leads to price fixing**
- Call Pay and Attorney Fees are a gray area
 - If you have competitors in the same geographic area, avoid the discussion, this could result in collusion
 - Most Hospital agreements contain confidentiality clauses
- Staff compensation can also be a gray area
 - Again, if you have competitors in the same geographic area, avoid the discussion, this could result in collusion
- Discuss MD compensation at your own risk
 - It might be legal, but it could also be your last discussion
 - New recruits' (MDs) compensation should be safe
 - Be aware of geographic regions for discussions as this remains an issue for collusion

*Collusion can take many forms. For example, in Idaho, Orthopedists were found to be colluding by agreeing in mass to not see BCBS patients in an attempt to negotiate better prices. ([Click here](#) for a link to the full article).

**"Price fixing is an agreement among competitors to raise, fix, or otherwise maintain the price at which their goods or services are sold. It is not necessary that the competitors agree to charge exactly the same price, or that every competitor in a given industry join the conspiracy. Price fixing can take many forms, and any agreement that restricts price competition violates the law. Other examples of price-fixing agreements include those to:

- Establish or adhere to price discounts
- Hold prices firm
- Eliminate or reduce discounts

- Adopt a standard formula for computing prices
- Maintain certain price differentials between different types, sizes, or quantities of products
- Adhere to a minimum fee or price schedule
- Fix credit terms
- Not advertise prices”

These guidelines were presented by the Department of Justice via [PRICE FIXING, BID RIGGING, AND MARKET ALLOCATION SCHEMES: WHAT THEY ARE AND WHAT TO LOOK FOR, *An Antitrust Primer*](#).

So how can you best use the NERVES E-list?

- Use caution when discussing products and pricing. Information posted on the lists is available for all to see, and comments are subject to libel, slander and anti-trust laws.
- Remember that NERVES and other e-mail list participants have the right to reproduce postings that appear on the Listserv.
- Job postings are not permitted on the E-list; NERVES has a protocol in place for job postings for membership (email info@nervesadmin.com for details). Occasionally, endorsement of a valued colleague or connection is permitted. Endorsements should be brief and the member initiating the email should request that anyone interested obtaining a resume should send a direct message off of the E-list to continue the conversation.
- Members should abide by the following etiquette:
 - Include a signature tag on all messages that includes name, affiliation, location and email address
 - Use the subject line to clearly and concisely state the topic of the comment/query to help members prioritize postings
 - Only send messages to the entire list when it contains information that benefits everyone

These guidelines were developed to provide the best possible experience for all members and to preserve a climate that encourages both civil and fruitful dialogue.