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Bargmann translates bills into big business

By **SHANNON MORTLAND**

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As companies shift more health care costs to their employees, Bargmann Management LLC is reaping the benefits.

The Akron agency, which collects money from patients on behalf of home care equipment providers, has more than tripled its office space and plans to hire 35 employees this year to add to its staff of 45, said David Bargmann, the company's chief operating officer.

Bargmann Management now is located in 9,000 square feet of an Akron office building and has the option to occupy up to 15,000 square feet. Mr. Bargmann said the company plans to add five employees in each of the next seven months.

The firm has been growing significantly since it was launched four years ago. Bargmann Management is on track to post revenues of \$2.5 million this year, which would be up 78% from \$1.4 million in revenue last year, he said.

Mr. Bargmann attributes the company's growth to a couple key factors.

For one, people are forced to pay a larger portion of their health care costs out of pocket, but Mr. Bargmann said they often don't understand what they owe and why, so they just don't pay the bill. As a result, he said, home care equipment providers are calling on his company to contact patients soon after they receive their bills to explain the charges and urge the patients to pay.

He said he believes many home health care equipment providers also are turning to his firm because typical collection agencies often don't have the medical background to explain billing statements to patients, so they might not be as effective in collecting the money.

"You need a lot of knowledge of the industry to really work with the patient," Mr. Bargmann said.

By contrast, his wife, Lisa Bargmann, who is president and CEO of Bargmann Management, spent 18 years in the home medical equipment field before launching the company in 2003.

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