

Findings



Strengthen Your Practice

In This Issue

Successful Leadership Methods for
Group Medical Practices

The Value of Transparency in
Managing Your Medical Practice

5 Critical HR Tasks That
Strengthen Your Practice

Successful Leadership Methods for Group Medical Practices



Strong leadership skills are needed to run a medical practice. The best way to be a successful leader is to act as mentor giving your employees' the opportunity to be leaders themselves. A plan of action for your staff will help increase job satisfaction as well as personal satisfaction.

Findings

Findings is published quarterly by SpineSearch LLC, one of the nation's premier recruitment and training companies.

Publisher: Nicola Hawkinson, DNP, RN, RNFA
Managing Editor: Maxine Bruschi, B.Comm
Chief Content Development: Briana Stanton, BSC

Creative Direction: Golmage Media Services Inc.

Article Submissions are welcomed. Please contact us at our editorial office

SpineSearch LLC
55 Cherry Lane
Suite 101
Carle Place, New York 11514
Phone: 516-333-5050

Employee Retention

Staff members develop loyalty to a practice because they feel you care about them as individuals. They benefit from personal and professional growth and do not feel their careers are going nowhere. If you are unwilling to compensate or reward employees for a job well-done, you could lose them. You might also lose employees because they are not the right fit for your office culture.

Staff Morale

High-quality healthcare depends upon the presence of well-trained, dedicated healthcare professionals. Hiring high-quality providers will only enhance the service the physicians are providing as well as keeping patients happy with their care.

Practice Efficiency

Onboarding and cross training are essential for a practice to run smoothly. Stability and low turnover contribute to efficiency. Having a well-trained and experienced team is perhaps the most important indirect driver of revenue at your practice.

Doctors are not data entry specialists and increased burnout could lead to problems down the road if they are losing productivity during the work day.

Scribes relieve documentation overload allowing physicians to increase patient volume efficiently. Determining the cost effectiveness of a scribe depends on the level of experience and familiarity with EMR. Typically a scribe makes between \$10-\$25/hour. When used efficiently these employees will more than cover their salary (and benefits) cost through increased patient visits. Please note: The doctor still needs to sign-off on the data collected at the end of the day, but this takes far less time as compared to performing these functions independently.

Billers and coders who are credentialed and certified from reputable professional associations know how to code for the highest revenue and understand best practices about billing that can help you avoid an audit, but also are better informed about important industry trends that can impact your revenue and operations. Moreover, credentialed professionals can apply advanced principles that are likely to make a true difference in your cash flow, including benchmarking practices, analyzing remittance data to find variances from your payer contracts, and proactively uncovering or reverse-engineering payer rules.



Job Competency

Employees who have received job-specific training are more productive and confident. Both clinical and administrative staff need ongoing education to stay current regarding the constantly changing aspects of



the practice. Front office tasks like verifying insurance or collecting co-pay, documentation of the visit using appropriate diagnosis and procedure codes. Just one small kink in the chain can throw off your entire practice and wreak havoc. Having cohesive front and back office billing functions improves time efficiencies, aids communication, and allows for appropriate oversight of coding and other billing processes.

Patient Satisfaction

Staff education affects your patients who benefit from your employees' skills, positive attitude, and efficiency. Employees who feel they make a difference in the mission do better work. Patients are more likely to come back to your practice if they have a positive experience. Feeling like your health care is important to the physicians, nurses, and office staff is invaluable for patients.

Specialist Training for Spine Providers

From Front Desk to the OR, we provide cost-effective training solutions for your staff.



SpineSearch[®]
www.Spine-Search.com

Tel: (516) 333-5050



The Value of **Transparency** in Managing Your Medical Practice



There is value in transparency for patients but it will take a lot of work from your medical team. To create value, providers need to educate patients about price and quality transparency, and realize that price data without quality information can lead to misconceptions that price always correlates with quality. Understanding what it takes to be transparent and potential barriers are good goals to tackle in 2016.

Payment

Almost all major third-party payers provide tools that allow their members to compare costs ahead of time. A lot of them also offer tools to help care providers estimate a patient's financial responsibility. Providing cost estimators allows practices to more accurately collect payments, deductibles or coinsurance before services are performed.

Payers are also beginning to narrow their networks and use data to identify participants based on price, quality or utilization. Knowing where your group stands in relation to those three areas is going to help you determine if you are at risk of being dropped from network, which could be detrimental to practice income be prepared to justify your rates.

Marketing

When assessing quality and your organization's efforts to be transparent, it is important to know your practice goals. If your practice performs well in the quality spectrum, which is usually created by practice leaders, payers and industry organizations you can use that information in your marketing materials. Patients, employers and payers want to know that they are working with a high-quality practice. Exceptional physicians and facilities can be recognized and rewarded for the quality and cost-conscious care they provide. Transparency allows you to position your organization where you want it.

Patients

If patients don't know the providers to whom they have been referred, they might be less likely to schedule their appointments. However, if they are aware of the costs and quality of the providers, offices and treatments that have been recommended, they are more likely to comply and stay engaged with the treatment plan rather than quit because of the unknown.

Potential Barriers

Your revenue cycle workflow includes the activities within your practice related to billing. Front office tasks like verifying insurance or collecting co-pay, documentation of the visit using appropriate diagnosis and procedure codes, and activities related to submitting the claim and then managing the collections process are all linked together like a chain. Just one small kink in the chain can throw off your revenue cycle and generally result in lost income.

Your reimbursements on claims filed and the money paid out of pocket by patients are the basis of your revenue cycle. The extent to which you effectively manage your payment processes and have a handle on collecting payments that are past due is an indicator of your practice's financial health. While this makes sense intuitively, actual execution of effective revenue cycle management is a challenge to every practice owner.



The U.S. health care payment system is both complex and labor intensive. Time, expertise and infrastructure are crucial to obtain maximum reimbursement for services rendered. Having appropriate technology, adequate workflow and experienced billing personnel are important steps on the path toward a prosperous and efficient practice.

The more that you can eliminate barriers, the stronger influence you can have over financial outcomes.

Events



June 9th -12th
**American Association of
Orthopedic Executives**
Hilton San Francisco
Austin TX



Visit Us
Booth #610



June 9th - 11th
Beckers 14th Annual
Orthopedic and Pain Management
Driven Conference
Swissotel
Chicago, IL



Visit Us
Booth #34



October 26th - 29th
NASS
Boston Convention & Exhibit Center
Boston, MA



Visit Us
Booth #1404



SpineSearch CEO Nicola Hawkinson
appointed as Coalition Team Leader
Communications Team
10x25 Initiative



**Connect
with Us**

To arrange a meeting with the SpineSearch team at
any of the above events. Call Us:

(516) 333-5050

SpineSearch



Critical HR Tasks

Strengthen Your Medical Practice

A lot of factors have to come together for a practice to thrive. You need a great team, great patient relationships, the right infrastructure of policies, procedures, and management to make everything run smoothly and if you're like many independent physicians you spend your days juggling all of those works-in-progress. But when you think about your top priorities for your practice are any of your goals HR-related? If not, they should be!

Staying Power

When you think about your practice as you want it to be five years from now, do you see your current employees being there with you? Would you hire each of your employees again? If the answer isn't a "yes!" for everyone, identify what's going wrong. You don't want to hire an employee that you don't think will stay with you long term. The job has to be appealing enough for employees to stay, and there needs to be an opportunity for growth.

More training, resets, and all kinds of other options are available to today's owner or manager. In the end, not all employees may be right for your practice — but before taking any adverse actions, make sure you have documentation in place supporting your management decisions.

Review and update employee job descriptions.

Keeping employee job descriptions up-to-date tends to fall off doctors' and managers' radar, because they can be time consuming. This task is worth the time. When properly written and kept current, job descriptions are a critical tool for managing employees more effectively and decreasing your overall liability.

Knowing what to include in a job description is the first step towards making a good one. A lot of employers are unsure about what to include or exclude. Very long job descriptions are not only intimidating to the candidate but can also be incredibly time consuming to the employer. If candidate is reading a three page job description chances are they will talk themselves out of applying to the job because if you include every little detail the candidate will assume they aren't qualified.

enough and pass. You need to include the most important and succinct information that will get the word out to experienced candidates without discouraging them. Include the job title, experience and education that are needed.

Why are they so powerful? Job descriptions are written summaries of the duties and requirements for each position in your office. They help you reach out to the right candidates when hiring, and assist your employees in understanding their roles and responsibilities. But because a well-written job description should include a comprehensive list of the physical and mental requirements and essential functions of each position, it can also act as a written record if something just isn't working out. Don't underestimate the power of defining roles. The better the job description is written, the more useful it will be.



Motivation and Engagement

Great HR starts with the employer. To better educate employees and create strong working environment supply physicians, PA's, NP's and nurses with opportunities for continuing medical education (CME), whether you are supplying seminars in house or paying for them to attend seminars off-site. If you show your employees that you value their education they will be more likely to perform at their highest level. Properly engaging your

medical staff starts with communicating effectively and scheduling regular team meetings are simple ways to make the office run more efficiently giving every member of your staff the opportunity to be successful.

Self-audit

Independent physician practices aren't always experienced with the intricacies of employment laws. Evaluate your practice and employees once every six months. Figure out what is working and what is not. Make the effort to fix problems that arise and employees will appreciate it. Regular check-ins will be crucial for having a thriving practice.

Update your employee policies.

Inconsistent policies will be confusing for your employees and lead to frustration. Having policies that only apply to a few employees will create hostility and the practice will suffer.

Understand that employees might be out of the office for different reasons and it could be at the same time. Instead of being bombarded when you are understaffed, it might be a good idea to use temps to fill the gaps.

The needs of your department and organization to maintain adequate coverage of its operations can override an employee's request to take off. Multiple employees requesting the same time off can interfere with the function of the practice. In other words, vacation can be denied but depends on who you "report to." For employees it may be the administrator but for MD's it could be the partners or the board.

Since state and federal employment laws are always evolving, your employee handbook can be your best friend or your worst enemy. It must be kept continually up-to-date by experts.

If it hasn't been updated in the last year then it needs to be thoroughly checked. Areas where your policies likely need updates in a variety of areas.

The changing infrastructure and governance of the healthcare sector will cause concern amongst patients and physicians. During this time of change more emphasis on existing HR tasks to strengthen the internal network of your practice needs to be a priority.



UPDATE



- Compensation
- Confidentiality
- Pregnancy & Maternity Leave
- Drug Policies
- Healthcare Benefits
- PTO & Sick Leave
- Social Media Usage
- Security / Technology
- Vacation Time
- On-call Schedules

SpineSearch Sightings



Education / Recruitment

SpineSearch LLC
55 Cherry Lane - Suite 101
Carle Place, NY 11514
Tel: (516) 333-5050

10000 North Central Expressway
Suite 400
Dallas, Texas 75231
Tel: (214) 890-4045

www.spinesearch.com

On the Web!



[Website](http://www.spinesearch.com)

On LinkedIn

