THE DC'S GUIDE TO SAVING TIME IN YOUR PRACTICE



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chiropractic economics

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8 WAYS TO GET YOUR TIME BACK: A GUIDE TO RECLAIMING LOST TIME THROUGH PRACTICE EFFICIENCY



Time is the most valuable of all commodities, and for you as a DC, this is no exception. No one can make more of it, and every moment that passes can never be reclaimed. Therefore, it's imperative to do all one can to not waste it, and in this regard the chiropractic practice faces so many challenges. Some are obvious, but some stay hidden—eating away at profits and taking away the time of both staff and doctors that could be so much better spent elsewhere. The problem with hidden challenges is that they linger, unaddressed and with the ability to multiply—much like an unaddressed health issue.

The truth is that chiropractic as a profession can lead to a life of balance both inside and outside of the practice. Inside, where you spend more time on healing patients than he or she does dealing with documentation and regulatory compliance. Where lives are changed without drugs or surgery more often because time is properly focused on patient care rather than on practice processes. And outside, where you have more time to spend with friends and family, enjoying recreation and the pursuit of hobbies that bring

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fulfillment and balance to a life dedicated to serving others.

The other truth is that too many practices simply don't operate efficiently enough to help a chiropractor realize the inside/outside balance described above. And contributing to the problem is that chiropractors go to school to learn how to heal the human body



The first step in maximizing efficiencies is to know how to target processes within your practice that can be quickly and easily improved upon.

with their hands, not to also perfect practice management efficiencies.

The good news is that practice efficiency can lead to an incredibly profitable practice, one that brings such balance, and it doesn't need to be rocket science to get there. With the exact same building blocks, a provider can build a marginally successful practice through inefficient and unrefined processes, or build a wildly profitable practice that maximizes both time and life balance by maximizing every ounce of efficiency; from patient parking to checkout, and everywhere in between.

So what's the key difference between the two? Integration. An integrated practice leverages technology in a way that automates tasks in a way that modular, disparate processes simply cannot.

The first step in maximizing efficiencies (and saving as much time as possible) is to know how to target processes within your practice that can be quickly and easily improved upon. Inefficiencies often follow common threads when it comes to their notable symptoms.

Check your practice for the following symptoms:

- Documentation takes too long to complete and is cumbersome (Hint: if you're spending time in the evenings/weekends catching up on documentation, then you know it's a massive drain on practice efficiency. Not to mention on your time/quality of life).
- Data must be entered more than once (which leads to errors that cause even more inefficiencies).
- Still using paper notes and paper-based intake (and what kind of impression does that make on your patients who live in a tech-crazed society?).
- Patient compliance is low.
- Regardless of a healthy patient volume, revenue remains low.
- Doctors feel rushed and overbooked with no time to handle day-to-day tasks outside of treatments.
- There are many staff members with limited competency and little cross-training.
- Patient referrals are minimal.
- Credit cards must be manually processed.
- Inventory must be manually managed.

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- Missed appointments are an issue.
- Unpaid claims disrupt cash flow and cause staff to spend more time on paperwork—directly reducing profits.

IT'S TIME. YOUR TIME.

Efficiency and automation go hand-in-hand, and a truly efficient practice that achieves more in less time can only be achieved when manual processes are replaced. This reduces time spent performing menial tasks, lowers staffing requirements, and most importantly, reduces operational costs. Significant revenue growth does not always require higher patient volumes, more time in the office, or additional staff. When it comes to increasing revenue by maximizing current resources, technology is the chiropractor's best friend.

1. DOCUMENTATION

The right EHR can provide you with the ability to breeze through documentation, having access to all pertinent information and macros with which to leverage in order to ensure compliance. This means less time spent documenting while the documentation actually improves and protects the practice when faced with audits or lawsuits.

2. SCALABILITY

An EHR offers scalability and can easily handle new patients and a growing practice. And without the overhead costs and space required to purchase and house file cabinets, folders, and printers (not to mention staff time spent rummaging through paper files), your dollars are not stretched so thin, and patient volume becomes less critical to the bottom line.

3. ACCESS AND SPACE

Converting to a paperless practice allows staff to retrieve, store, and share documents electronically in an instant. Paperless files can be accessed anywhere within the practice, making retrieval immediate.

4. SCHEDULING

Scheduling can be a very time-consuming task. Checking in patients and collecting copays while simultaneously answering phone calls, searching for open appointments, and juggling an array of highlighters can bog down the day and preoccupy precious staffing resources. With an EHR software on board the scheduling

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5. PATIENT FLOW

The easier it is for patients to understand your practice and their place within it, the more efficiently the system will run. Proper signage, well-placed and available staff, patient self check-in stations, and speedy payment processing can all help clients get in and out faster, keeping your practice moving at optimal speed.

6. BILLING AND INVOICING

Billing is often the bane of a practice, requiring a great deal of time and attention. Accurate invoicing, reporting, claim filing, and status reports are a crucial aspect of a smooth-running office and a consistent revenue stream. An EHR system can quickly prepare invoices, check claims for errors, set up payment

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arrangements, and provide billing reports that allow you to keep a closer eye on your real-time financials.

7. AUTOMATED PATIENT REMINDERS

Reminder calls can eat up staff time, and leaving messages can be an unsuccessful means by which to remind patients of their upcoming appointments. This is where automation really shines. Revenue growth means not only building new business, but also mining your current client base for new opportunities. Often there is gold sitting in that bucket of monthly missed appointments. With the right practice management software, patient reminders can be automatically generated and sent out via email, text, or phone. This leaves your office staff free to focus on the patients currently in the office.



A well-equipped EHR system can automate compliance and walk you through required processes, leaving you free to focus on your clients while reducing additional paperwork.

8. COMPLIANCE

Compliance is a major player in healthcare these days, and maintaining compliance requirements set by seemingly constant new government mandates can become a frustrating and laborious process. A well-equipped EHR system can automate compliance and walk you through required processes, leaving you free to focus on your clients while reducing additional paperwork and minimizing the risk of a daunting audit.

Revenue growth doesn't always require increasing your number of staff or taking on a higher volume of clients. There are plenty of areas of the practice where efficiencies can bring down overhead and help release that tied up revenue. Many manual practice processes can be automated, and that extra time can be spent investing in the human element of your practice: yourself, your staff, and your patients.

Consider how your practice would be transformed if you and your staff:

- Entered data once
- Could create bullet-proof SOAP notes in mere seconds
- Improve collections and achieve a 98 percent approval rate on claims submissions
- Could automate patient alerts and appointment reminders
- Used a tablet for intake and to sign in patients
- Create custom billing solutions
- Automate inventory management
- Process credit cards that drop straight to the ledger
- Utilize internal instant messaging

If you're not taking advantage of the benefits both integration and automation can bring, then there is only one question to really ask yourself: *Isn't it about time?*

What DCs Can Learn from Business Efficiency Experts

You work in your practice every day. But just how often do you take the time to work on your practice? We all know that one of the primary keys to saving time is found in efficiency, yet how often do you, as the owner of a practice, stop to ask exactly what it means to be efficient?

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, efficiency is as follows:

The ability to do something or produce something without wasting materials, time, or energy.

Learning to improve your efficiency can be achieved by using a multi-tiered approach. First, turn your attention towards your technology experts. Technology is used across the industry and by chiropractors practicing all types of therapeutic approaches. One of the main benefits of keeping pace with chiropractic technology is this broad spectrum of affiliates, coaches, and industry leaders that have partnered with leading technology providers.

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These partnerships are focused on building a platform on which to provide educational webinars, tools, articles, and more to assist individuals in their efforts to increase their practice efficiency.

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GET CONNECTED

You don't know what you don't know, and that alone can decrease your efficiency. Staying connected to your practice means that you can address issues as they arise, make scheduling changes, and keep apprised of new information. IT mobility is increasing and reshaping business models worldwide. Mobile access to your practice can give you better business intelligence on-the-go and improve employee performance by remaining in contact with them, whether or not you (or they) are physically within the confines of the clinic. This seamless and constant collaboration can increase decision-making turnaround times and reduce the bottlenecks that are negatively impacting the efficiency of your practice.

TAKE THE TIME TO REVIEW

You may have been running your practice for years using processes you know by heart, but when was the last time you sat down and reviewed the way you organize the operations of your practice from a bird's eye view? Have you identified key performance indicators (KPIs) that tell you how your practice is running month over month and year over year? Have you ever revisited that workaround you implemented long ago that didn't seem to have a solution? There may be automation tools in the market today that can fill those gaps. The answer may be out there, just waiting patiently for the question of "Can I do this more efficiently today?" to resurface in your mind.

INCITE EFFICIENCY

The weighty responsibility of continually making your practice more efficient does not have to rest solely on your shoulders. Every individual in your office can be a beacon of invention and a purveyor of education.

Reward your employees for finding better solutions and creating efficiency, and promote an appropriate venue wherein they can do so. Create a monthly team challenge and encourage everyone to scour the profession and those like it for new, innovative ways to get more out of less within the workplace.

Mobile access to your practice can give you better business intelligence on-the-go and improve employee performance.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Every DC has a story to tell, and a tip that has helped them improve their own business over the years. Subscribe to industry blogs that are interesting, join Facebook and LinkedIn groups that revolve around running a small practice, read trade magazines and attend workshops and continuing education opportunities that can help spark new ideas.

Increasing your practice efficiency will increase your profits without requiring that you procure any additional resources. Keep pace with industry experts, get connected with your technology providers, and take advantage of webinars, blogs, articles, seminars, and continuing education courses wherever possible.

Make it a point to set you and your staff on a path to efficiency and make sure everyone on board rises to the challenge, bringing news from industry gurus and efficiency experts. Working in your practice is essential, but it should not come at the expense of working *on* your practice to bring new ideas to the table, revisit challenges that may have new technological solutions, and learning from seasoned professionals near and far. •



RUNNING A PRACTICE IN THE MOBILE ERA

There are two sides to the mobility coin: the effect mobility has on practice efficiency and time management, and the expectations patients have as they live in the mobile era. Speaking to the latter, and now that mobile adoption has offered patients access to the Internet from anywhere, user engagement is rapidly on the rise.

As smartphones, tablets, and other mobile devices are now ubiquitous, users are flocking to their portable screens to get information on pretty much everything - including where to find the best chiropractors in their area. And because patients are now keeping tabs on their providers right from the palms of their hands, mobile apps and push notifications are quickly becoming the golden eggs in every chiropractor's marketing (and compliance) basket.

And for those doctors who understand the power of mobility and how to leverage it, the efficiencies found in mobile-empowered practices are considerable. There's icing on that cake as well – how do you think a patient views a practice that leverages mobile technology versus one that is still bound to clipboards, paper, and appointment cards?

MOBILITY AND THE PATIENT

With ever-increasing technological sophistication, your opportunity to remain engaged with your patients after they leave the doors of your practice has blossomed. Currently, approximately 80 percent of Internet users are searching the web right from their smartphone. Even more impressive is the fact that they are interacting with their phones at least hourly.[2] What does this mean for you? It means that there's an opportunity to connect with your patients in a manner that was unthinkable even a few hours ago. Compare this with how many opportunities you have to interact with each patient in person, and you'll begin to see why smartphone apps are a critical component of your patient engagement strategy.

Access and implementation of patient engagement tools like ChiroTouch's CTInTouch can keep your

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practice top-of-mind with patients. These tools give you the ability to send out automatic appointment reminders, scheduling options, marketing campaigns, and other special offers. Automating these processes gives your patients the right impression of your practice – you are tech savvy, and you want to make their experience with you simple because you are reaching them on a platform they are comfortable with and use daily.

MOBILITY AND THE PRACTICE

Practices that embrace mobility understand that mobile technology is a game-changer for achieving levels of efficiency and time savings simply not possible without the mobile tools available to today's healthcare practitioner. And, as mentioned earlier, the practice utilizing mobile technology ensures that the first impression made on a new patient is one that meets with their expectations of living in the mobile era.

LEVERAGING MOBILITY IN THE PRACTICE ENVIRONMENT

OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

Tracks your patients' pain and disability through a sequence of questions. Collect assessment data either in the office on a tablet or online from the patient, build narratives, and create reports based on the acquired information. The entire process takes seconds, can be completed in the waiting room before treatment, and leaves you free to focus on patient care.

PATIENT INTAKE

Offer patients the ability to fill out their patient intake forms on an iPad, allowing them to complete new patient forms while seated in the waiting room.

PROVIDER TOOLS

Take notes, update chart records, share digitally annotated x-rays with patients, and more. Talk about making a great impression on patients!

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As a point of reference, ChiroTouch has offered its family of practices full mobile integration with its EHR software and continues to innovate when it comes to how practices and patients both can leverage mobile technology.

By offering patients the ability to schedule appointments, learn more about their conditions, access their prescribed exercises, see your latest practice news, interact with you via social media, check themselves into their appointments, and fill out their intake and other forms, you can keep your patients powerfully engaged with your practice while maximizing your own practice efficiencies.

Mobile engagement is at the leading edge of customer communication, and the right smartphone app and tablet usage can increase your appointments, gather more referrals, encourage greater patient participation, and set the tone for every patient that walks into your practice. •

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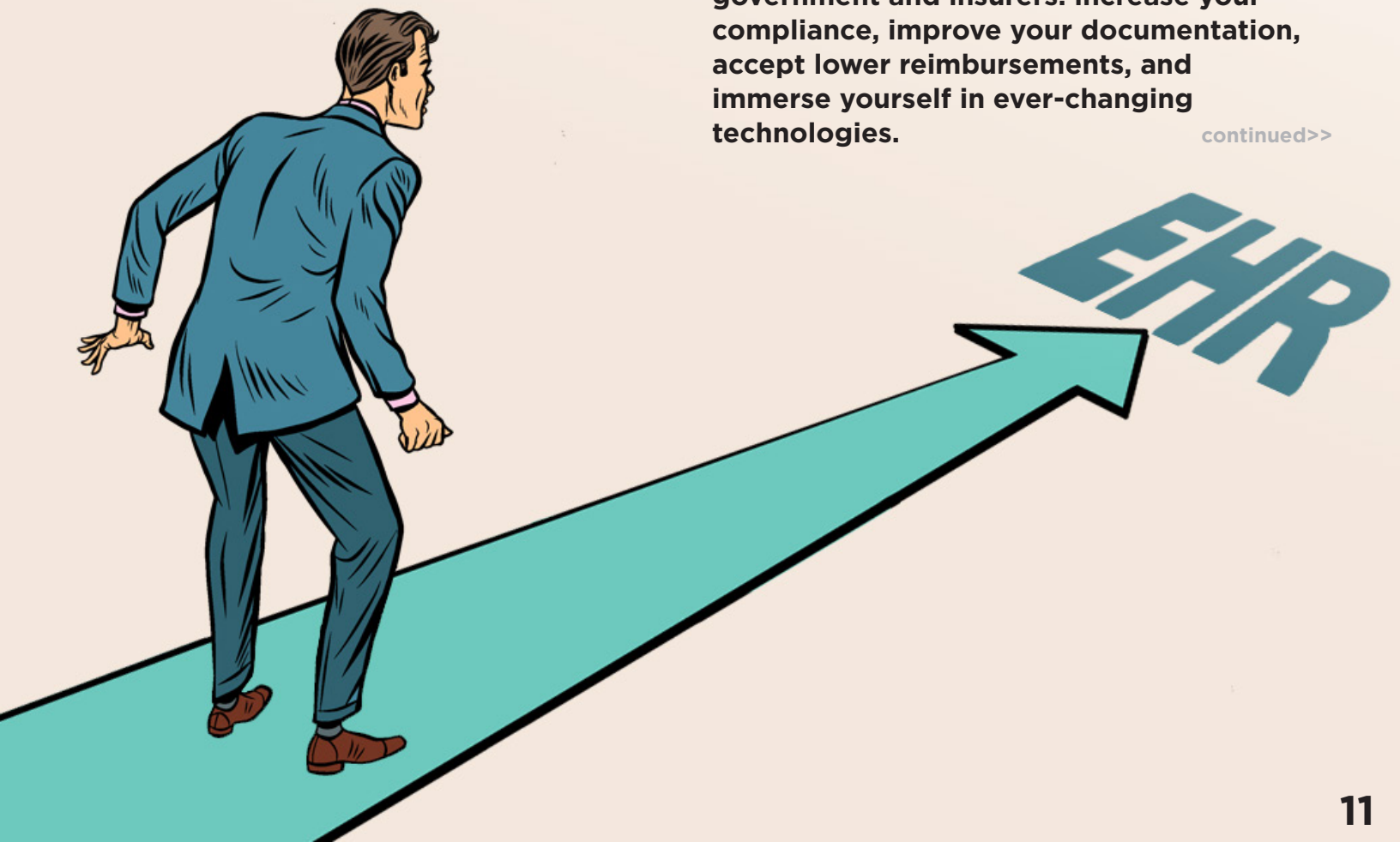
MASTERING THE TRANSITION TO EHR

It's not easy running a small practice these days. You struggle to maintain your patient base despite economic conditions. You work to keep administrative costs down, but they continue to rise. You count on payments from insurance companies and government, yet insurers keep squeezing you with lower reimbursements while compliance and documentation comes under even closer scrutiny.

In the ocean of swirling healthcare mandates, sometimes it can feel as if you are a small fish being towed around by a big current—often against your will. And unlike many larger entities, small practices come with the additional challenges of self-marketing and building a patient base, handling all administrative processes, and being in charge of the arduous billing responsibilities. You are constantly being pressed to treat your patients in a manner that adheres to the demands of the government and insurers: increase your compliance, improve your documentation, accept lower reimbursements, and immerse yourself in ever-changing technologies.

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The task of implementing an EHR can be a daunting one. After all, that means changing processes, training staff, making a significant monetary investment, and adjusting the way patients are treated. There are many fears shared by practitioners at large, and these fears have made the government's decision to push all healthcare providers to EHR systems a slow one.

Although many of these fears are well-founded on some level, they are both surmountable and complemented by the many time-saving, efficiency benefits that an EHR brings to the table. Let's break down some of these concerns and compare them to the impact implementing such a system has on a chiropractic practice and the overall healthcare of the nation.

CHANGING THE WAY YOU PRACTICE

As technology begins to replace the time-honored paper standards of yesterday, changing the way you practice is a necessary evil that brings a great amount of value to modern healthcare. Granted, usability is an enormous concern for DCs moving from paper-based or non-certified EHRs to certified EHRs. Fortunately, EHR software vendors have now had a few years under their belts with which to streamline practice processes and work out the best way to bring iPad apps, voice recognition software, new integrations, workflows, and handy in-app wizards to their practice management solutions.

In truth, the challenge of transitioning your practice to a certified EHR is easier than it appears. Rewiring your entire practice may seem overwhelming, but EHRs are designed to support practice procedures. Keep in mind that by now, EHR vendors have been transitioning providers from paper to paperless practices for quite some time, and the training and implementation required has been expertly honed. The experience can be as easy as following the training protocol and ensuring that your entire staff is on board and excited to take this next step forward with you.

As technology begins to replace the time-honored paper standards of yesterday, changing the way you practice is a necessary evil that brings a great amount of value to modern healthcare.

New requirements may be included, but only to the effect of reducing the overall cost of care and increasing patient safety. By offering a consistent platform of comprehensive data by which healthcare providers can base their diagnoses, test ordering, and care quality; interoperability can finally become a reality and turn what were once time-consuming phone calls and written communications between labs and other healthcare providers into seamless electronic exchanges.

THE COST/BENEFIT ANALYSIS

Sometimes the difference between ordinary care and extraordinary care is just that little bit of extra information. EHRs are intended to provide that information. Patient safety is an important keystone that starts with setting a unified standard of care, and a certified EHR has been diligently constructed to adhere to these standards. Although this may mean additional data must be collected, that data is not superfluous.

Additional data provides research support, which allows for outcomes-based, standard courses of care, and better payment for chiropractic treatment that will finally receive the solid, data-proven

recognition it deserves. Collected data also provides disease surveillance and can help protect the community at large.

It may be difficult to see the immediate benefits of upending all of your current processes to adopt an EHR, but they are there—and they have been proven throughout four years of system adoption under the EHR Stimulus Program. The time-saving, efficiency-inducing advantages are endless:

- Complete information about patients at the point of care
- Easy access to patient records in-office and between unrelated providers
- Secure and consistent data sharing between different providers and disciplines
- Improved diagnoses, reduced medical errors, and a higher standard of care
- Less paperwork—which means more patient-provider interaction
- More reliable prescribing and lab ordering along with quicker results and less duplicate testing
- More complete, compliant, and comprehensive documentation
- Better rate of reimbursement
- Lower office overhead

Quick data access and seamless intercommunications between providers of all disciplines leads to more accurate diagnoses and increased efficiencies throughout a patient's entire course of care. And although EHRs may appear to have a steep up-front cost, once implemented they help decrease costs and increase revenue. In addition, enhancements in coding, better documentation, and better record keeping help get you paid, and a more streamlined practice can decrease staffing requirements and generally improve overall accuracy:

- With macros that automate progress notes, there are no missing charts or unfiled paperwork.
- Integrated voice recognition means no transcription costs. More accurate coding means increased revenue and decreased time handling the tedious task of fixing billing mistakes.
- Multiple charts can be opened at once, and with the aid of tablets, your patient's chart is always no more than a touch a way.
- Legibility no longer becomes a problem, and duplicate entries are eliminated.
- And last but not least, with orderly and accessible information, auditing becomes a breeze.

This doesn't mean that every EHR is expertly tailored to help your practice run better. Careful consideration should go into such an important purchase, and your chosen software vendor should be well suited to work within the unique environment of your chiropractic practice. With an EHR system tailored to the chiropractic field, you'll be reaping the rewards of this new technological age of healthcare in the blink of an eye—or the touch of a button.•



STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

THE OTHER DOCUMENTATION

While chiropractors are rightfully focused on ensuring proper patient documentation procedures exist within the practice, there is another type of documentation that has a significant impact on the practice in terms of efficiency, time savings, and morale: *The Standard Operating Procedure.*

Having a staff that can perform their expected duties consistently and completely is an invaluable asset to your chiropractic practice. When your front desk staff, billing professionals, office managers, or other employees effectively complement each other in their respective roles, they increase your ability to serve more patients, reduce time implementing procedures, and grow a lucrative and attractive practice.

Creating a well-synced team can be achieved through building trust and tweaking work performance over time, but if your staff is the most valuable aspect in keeping your practice running tomorrow just as it is running today, you may want to look into fortifying your resources and processes.

Building out standard operating procedures (SOPs) and understanding how these protocols are typically applied to each individual department within your practice can help you prepare for today and succeed tomorrow. SOPs bring you (or a prospective buyer) an extra level of insurance in the event of unexpected changes.

Benefits of establishing SOP documentation include:

ENSURING CONTINUITY ACROSS STAFF: As turnover occurs, SOPs can serve as the bridge to keep your practice running smoothly.

REDUCED TRAINING TIME: Bringing on new staff can be costly - a cost significantly reduced by incorporating an SOP for each position.

CROSS-FUNCTIONALITY AND DELEGATION: A rock-solid SOP for each function enables freedom for

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the staff. Those taking vacations or sick time aren't stressed that the work can't get done, and those remaining are empowered to keep everything moving - allowing you as the chiropractor to keep your focus on patient care.

THE PATIENT EXPERIENCE: Last, but ultimately the most critical reason to incorporate the "other" documentation in your practice: improving the patient experience. SOPs ensure a consistent patient experience, which builds confidence and encourages referrals and positive word-of-mouth.

FRONT DESK

The people who staff your front desk offer a first impression to your clients. Their tasks not only lend this first impression, but they also play a key role in how well you attract and maintain your patient base.

SOPs for the front of your business can be some of the most important pieces of documentation within your practice. If you lose a front desk staff, the first part of your business affected is your client. And without a smooth flow of business in light of absences within the team, your entire practice appears disheveled and your customer service ultimately takes the brunt of the suffering. Front desk SOPs can help you get back on your feet after a long absence or loss of a staff member.

BILLING AND COLLECTION

Like the front desk staff, those individuals who work in your practice's billing department also deeply influence the success of your business. With SOPs to cover invoicing, insurance billing, and handling collection disputes and payment arrangements, this linchpin position within the company won't halt your revenue flow if it suddenly becomes vacant. Every day you entrust your billing department to handle the very financial details that determine whether or not you turn a profit. Do your practice a favor and entrust yourself with that information as well by making sure you have detailed SOPs to handle every aspect of your revenue flow. Whether to a new staff member or to a new owner, SOPs allow you to hand over the reins quickly and seamlessly.

It's important that you have explicit standards to follow so that your practice can maintain a steady, trustworthy level of patient care.

PROVIDERS

The additional providers you hire for your practice can make or break your business. In order to maintain status quo, resolve disputes, and create clear expectations, it's important that they too have explicit standards to follow so that your practice can maintain a steady, trustworthy level of patient care. If there are expectations of your providers for hours they keep, patients they book, procedures they follow, and customer conduct rules, laying these out can help you quickly point to earlier agreed upon expectations if your fellow providers begin to stray from the book.

The benefits of incorporating standard operating procedures into your practice are clear. New owners can find an enormous benefit in being able to take over a practice without having patient care or profits interrupted. You and your staff will find it easier to carry on as usual if one staff member is absent, and new staff members will find themselves supported with clear documentation during the initial learning curve. Whether you choose to keep your practice for many years to come or you're looking to achieve the best dollar for your practice, SOPs can help you build a strong foundation.●



Outsourcing Billing: Does Your Revenue Cycle Management Need Management?

The Healthcare Financial Management Association (HFMA) defines Revenue Cycle Management Management (RCM) as "all administrative and clinical functions that contribute to the capture, management, and collection of patient service revenue." As compliance requirements increase and payers intensify their scrutiny of claims, more providers are turning to revenue cycle management by third parties, and the benefits of such a symbiotic relationship are beginning to shine through.

RCM is the cornerstone of a practice's financial health and well-being, and unfortunately it is also, more often than not, absent within the core competencies of a practicing DC. As most chiropractors would rather be focused on their patients, outsourcing RCM management can not only be a valuable addition to the overall strategy of your business, but it can provide you with additional time to apply towards your patients.

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INVESTING IN A BETTER RETURN

In-house RCM can be costly, as internal inefficiencies, insufficiently

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knowledgeable staff members, denied claims, and costly processing take a bite out of a practice's bottom line. Outsourcing can provide much needed peace-of-mind by offering an option that secures the expertise and technology necessary to skillfully handle all aspects of revenue cycle management. This includes billing, collections, corrections, and accounts receivables. Outsourcing RCM also offers streamlined and efficient revenue management, and delivers key practice insights without requiring the provider to make large up-front technology and staffing investments.

IS YOUR PRACTICE A GOOD CANDIDATE FOR OUTSOURCING?

Simply because an option of outsourcing is available, does not always make it required or even necessary to adopt. But if any of the following are true, then it might be time to look at outsourcing the RCM duties of your business.

- Are you suspicious that your collections are lower than they should be?
- Do you have conflicts or issues with your biller or billing department?
- Are you struggling with repeated claim rejections?
- Do you have high staff turnover?
- Is your financial ability to update your billing technology limited?
- Is your in-office billing expertise limited?
- Do you feel unprepared to deal with software and technical issues?
- Are you a new provider with enough on your plate already aside from billing?
- Are you more interested in keeping a close eye on treating your patients than every miniscule detail of your business?
- Are new value-based payment models rendering your current legacy technology inadequate?

Outsourcing can provide much needed peace-of-mind by offering an option that secures the expertise and technology necessary to skillfully handle all aspects of revenue cycle management.

- Do you feel like you have a limited grasp on the true financial health of your practice?

A BETTER RETURN ON INVESTMENT

In general, outsourced revenue cycle management results in a 5-15% increase in the amount a chiropractor can collect. This can make a huge difference in the health of a practice, both for new, growing practices and long-enduring, sustainable ones. The benefits of outsourcing often overshadow those of keeping a single staff member or department under your own roof:

- Outsourcing your RCM can reduce expenses along with improving collections. Instead of training and retraining in-house billers, outsourcing removes the training requirement so that you can focus on running your practice.
- Outsourcing your RCM can provide vastly improved analytics. A medical billing provider should be able to offer highly detailed performance reports and statistics on your unique practice's billing operations. And this information is provided without the need for in-office technology, time spent scouring your billing history, or prodding your biller or billing department for much-needed insight.
- Outsourced companies also

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thrive by consistently providing good results. You should be able to count on a third party to hit consistent goals and improve on your collections, income, error reduction, and speed of payments. In addition, some of these companies are skilled in identifying denial trends and targeting these areas to help you prevent them in the future.

- Tired of trying to keep up with new industry changes? An expert 3rd party can help you seamlessly adjust to new mandates, ensuring compliance and minimizing disruption to your practice.
- Less time focused on billing frees you up for more time to focus on your patients, foster referral and retention programs, keep up with your continuing education, and streamline your practice flow. Less time spent on billing translates directly to more time focused on areas of the practice that help you connect with your patients and generate revenue.

Outsourcing places the healthcare medical billing expertise outside of your duties, and all of the concerns that go with it can be blissfully offhanded to a third party. On the other hand, if you have a longstanding, effective, and reliable in-house billing staffer, outsourcing your RCM may be an unnecessary step. Plus, not all RCM services are created equal. Know if they have procedures in play to follow up with third party carriers and patients or if they just send out the claims. Make sure they are incentivized to obtain a good collection rate for your practice.

How you manage your RCM is a personal decision, and it requires many factors be taken into consideration, including your in-house expertise, current legacy system, ability to upgrade and maintain your technology, your need for detailed analytics, and your current consistency and collection rates. But as the complexity of coding is set to hike in the wake of ICD-10, it may be time to take a look at your current RCM setup and consider transferring that weight to an expert 3rd party so that you can refocus your efforts on your patients, your practice, and your peace of mind.•

You should be able to count on a third party to hit consistent goals and improve on your collections, income, error reduction, and speed of payments.



NOTE-TAKING ADVANCES FOR CHIROPRACTIC CLINICS LEAD TO TIME SAVINGS



BY KAITLIN MORRISON

For many chiropractic clinics, note-taking is a significant burden and begins to steal time away from providing patient care. If you feel like writing SOAP notes is taking away too much of your energy, you may be interested in automating your notes.

Technology is empowering more chiropractors to quickly and accurately dictate their notes so they can spend more time on other aspects of their practices.

Voice dictation, creating SOAP notes on mobile devices, systems that automate customized notes and other automation features can help you efficiently record relevant notes directly into patient records.

With these tools, you can manage your time better than before and redirect your resources to bigger priorities.

AUTOMATING NOTES

With ICD-10, much of the note-taking process increased in complexity. Chiropractors must establish medical necessity in their notes for the treatments they provide patients in order to receive full reimbursement for their services. In contrast with prior systems, ICD-10 documentation demands more and providers are obligated to

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spend significant portions of their days writing documentation instead of caring for patients. [1,3]

Automated electronic health record (EHR) systems help you prepare documentation faster. Using macros, you can use keystrokes or touch the screen to auto-populate the documentation

You can use keystrokes or touch the screen to auto-populate the documentation with specific text you use frequently. The SALT feature also allows users to import previous text.

with specific text you use frequently. The SALT (Same As Last Time) feature also allows users to import previous text.

Another time-saving feature of some EHR systems is the ability to auto-populate SOAP notes with information gathered during patient check-in. For example, information your patients enter online before the appointment or on a tablet during check-in automatically connects to their patient profile in ChiroTouch's chiropractic software, allowing you to quickly insert any information from the patient into their records. This is useful for your notes and may also save administrative time at the front desk. [2]

However you choose to simplify your notes, you may be able to save substantial time and energy by reducing the amount of your time each day that you dedicate to note-taking and documentation. [3]

ROADMAP TO BETTER SOAP NOTES

In many cases, a good software system for SOAP notes can help you improve your documentation. Readable, accurate notes that thoroughly meet ICD-10 standards are not always easy to write alone.

SOAP is designed to help you remember the key segments inside great documentation. Each area, though, presents opportunities for providers to make documentation mistakes:

SUBJECTIVE: Automation software may help you import health history information more quickly and accurately.

OBJECTIVE: Your EHR, if it has SOAP automation features and can link to testing software (for instance, the software used by your X-ray machine), may be able to import test results or exam findings.

ASSESSMENT: Systems that offer templates can help you complete this section.

PLAN: Many providers forget to include updates on the patient's condition as treatments continue, so automated notes may help keep you on track with this.

AUTOMATION IS EFFICIENT

Ultimately, many clinics are looking for practical ways to speed up documentation without compromising on patient care. Automation can help you become more efficient while staying compliant. ●

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How Much are Missed Appointments Costing Your Practice?

BY KAITLIN MORRISON

Managing a busy chiropractic practice and boosting patient attendance at appointments can be very challenging, with some practices having fairly high rates of no-shows. The systems and processes clinics use to bring in patients can sometimes become too labor-intensive and clunky. Eventually, chiropractic practices find themselves with lots of missed appointments and administrative time wasted on keeping patients involved and knowledgeable about their care. Reminder software can help chiropractors reach their patients automatically without spending additional resources. Reminders are set to notify patients the way they want to be contacted, so you know you can effectively reach them.

Reminder software may help you manage your practice better and reduce no-show rates. By reducing administrative time, you may save valuable financial and time resources and offer better patient care.

COUNTING THE COSTS OF NO-SHOWS

No-shows are costly. Across the entire healthcare system, missed appointments are estimated to cost nearly $150 billion each year in the United States. Typical no-show rates differ for every clinic, but 15 to 50 percent no-show rates are common. Even if your practice's rate is significantly lower, each missed appointment represents a missed revenue opportunity. Over the course of the year, these missing appointments add up to significant loss. [2,3]

For example, a five percent no-show rate, based on 100 weekly patient appointments, means five missed appointments every week. If you typically bill $50 for that visit, you lose $250 every week to no-shows. Reducing this rate translates directly to substantial revenue savings.

TYPICAL FEATURES OF REMINDER SOFTWARE

Updating patients automatically is much easier with software, since you do not need someone to dedicate time to manually contacting each patient before their appointment. Software can notify patients through multiple methods, such as text, email or a phone call, depending entirely on options selected by your patients. Since patients have the freedom

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to choose how they are reminded, they may be more likely to respond to these reminders and attend their appointments. The software may also let you send emails to a list of patients within your practice all at once. If you want to let patients know about upcoming schedule availability, for instance, you could send an email

You need to encourage your patients to come to you with their health needs and questions, but you also need to help patients perceive your clinic as a valuable resource in their lives.

letting them know you only have a few appointments available in a particular week. You can notify them in case they are interested in booking now.

Newsletters are another popular feature. Your practice may be able to create newsletters for patients with practice news, health information and testimonials to keep your patients engaged and educated about the clinic. Your software may allow you to create these marketing and education materials and track open rates after you send them to a list of patients.

ADVANTAGES OF PATIENT REMINDER SOFTWARE

The relationship your chiropractic clinic has with your patients is what will bring them in again and keep them coming back. Patient reminders that are responsive to patient needs and help to build that relationship are key to the success of your clinic. You need to encourage your patients to come to you with their health needs and questions, but you also need to help patients perceive your clinic as a valuable resource in their lives. Software can help your practice consistently reach patients and remind them.[4] Your reminders may be more convenient and useful when patients are able to choose how they receive messages from you and are able to interact with your practice on their own terms. Personalizing your outreach and interaction with patients can help communicate to them that you value their health and understand their needs. [1,5]

BETTER PATIENT EXPERIENCE AND IMPROVED EFFICIENCY

By minimizing administrative waste, your chiropractic practice may conserve time and money while also improving the experiences your patients have at your practice. Software can help you provide the same personalized care to more patients while spending less time and effort preventing no-shows. [5] ●

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