

# The Key to Running a Successful Healthcare Practice

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A visit to the doctor's office can go two ways – it can go good, or it can go bad. How a patient experiences your office can be the difference between a successful healthcare practice and one that is most likely going to receive only one time patients. For this reason alone, you need a savvy medical office staff.

The medical office staff is responsible for various aspects of running a healthcare practice. Their primary role however, pertains to ensuring positive patient interactions. They need to be qualified and trained on telephone etiquette, on how to greet patients and direct them, as well as keeping a track of procedures and scheduling. The medical staff at a healthcare practice needs to run like a well oiled machine – follow office standards and protocols to ensure that any error factor is greatly decreased while patient satisfaction is increased.

## First Impressions Count – Where Does Your Medical Office Staff Stand?

The medical office staff is usually the first point of contact for your patients. So yes, first impressions can make or break the deal for a patient. When a patient comes to your clinic, he expects the highest quality of care. Big or small, he wants the assurance that your office will be able to help him tide over his medical crisis/issue. This is where your medical office staff comes in – in addition to possessing professional skills and strengths, your medical staff needs to understand that a patient's well being depends on the quality of their work.

### *Top 4 Responsibilities of Medical Office Staff:*

- Maintaining excellent patient service.
- Ensuring patient experience satisfaction at all points of contact.
- Ensuring patient safety.
- Adhering to and complying with patient rights.

The medical office staff comprises of both clinical and non-clinical job responsibilities. In addition to administrative roles such as front desk, billers and coders among others, your medical staff can include medical assistants and nurses who take care of the clinical aspects of running a healthcare practice. Together they are responsible for delivering quality care and maintaining excellent patient service. Since patients connect with your staff first, the impressions your staff makes is crucial in the patient satisfaction journey.

The capabilities of your medical office staff with respect to communicating and interacting with your practice patients can go a long way in improving and maintaining a successful healthcare practice.

# STAFFING FOR YOUR HEALTHCARE PRACTICE

## HIRING THE RIGHT PERSON FOR THE JOB

Staffing your healthcare practice with the right people is crucial to the success of your practice. These are the people who will ensure your office runs smoothly so that you can focus on what you are good at – which is healing your patients.



### A MEDICAL OFFICE CAN INCLUDE BOTH CLINICAL AND NON-CLINICAL STAFF;



The Practice Manager



Medical Assistant, LPN or RN



Receptionist / Front Desk Staff



Medical Records Clerk



Medical Billers and Coders



Lead Nurse, Charge Nurse, or Nurse Supervisor



Referral Clerk

### OPTIONAL STAFF CAN INCLUDE;



Medical Interpreters - employed with practices where a significant amount of patients don't speak English.

### TOP 5 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MEDICAL OFFICE STAFF;



Scheduling of appointments



Communicating with patients



Handling insurance coding and billing



Management of medical records



Managing day-to-day office operations

### HIRING THE RIGHT PEOPLE FOR THE JOB;

- Your medical office staff will be required to interact with the public. This is why you need to hire staff who are positive and people-friendly.
- Ensure your medical office staff understands that at the end of the day, your patients are your practice customers and excellent customer service is what will win your patients for life.
- Hire professionals who understand the value of courteous service, are respectful and mindful of patient privacy, and are committed to improving your practice reputation.
- Hire people who understand and respect each staff member's role and responsibilities within your healthcare practice.
- Clearly specify job expectations in advance and carry out a reference and background check before you make final hiring decisions.

### THE PRACTICE MANAGER

He or she is the person leading your medical office staff. The practice manager is responsible for ensuring that your healthcare office runs smoothly and efficiently.

### TOP 7 QUALITIES OF A PRACTICE MANAGER

- Excellent communication skills
- Displays leadership qualities and excels at motivating people
- Is highly organized, flexible, and resourceful
- Can juggle figures and is comfortable using business and patient management



## Is Your Medical Office Staff Delivering Stellar Patient Service?

Regardless of how you look at it, at the end of day, your patients are your customers. They want to feel special and cared for; a little more personal time spent on each patient can help smoothen out chinks in the patient experience cycle. Keep in mind, the patient experience journey starts from the moment they get in touch with your practice. Your practice front desk quite literally is the first point of contact. It won't be a stretch to say that these are the people who play a crucial role in winning a patient.

*Make your Patients feel Special – A few things to keep in mind;*

- Patients want to feel genuinely cared for – make sure your staff is trained to give your patients a warm welcome when they enter your office.
- Make sure someone is there to greet them as soon as they enter your office – if a verbal greeting is not possible, even making eye contact can assure them that your office staff is aware of their presence.
- If scheduling or any other issues pertaining to a patient's visit arise, ensure your staff is on hand to quickly rectify the situation.
- Ensure your staff is trained to answer all (non-medical) questions and queries of patients.
- Work with your staff to streamline and optimize the scheduling and waiting process to ensure that patients don't have to wait long hours or suffer from bad scheduling.

## A Motivated Medical Staff Can Boost Your Healthcare Practice Success – Here's What You Can Do:

A motivated employee is someone who aligns his objectives with the organization goals and takes pride in his job responsibilities. The key to a highly motivated staff is two-fold:

- Recognizing the employee's capabilities
- Respecting and appreciating the value the employee brings to the organization.

Although monetary benefits and incentives can go a long way in driving personal responsibility, you need to reinforce this with delegating appropriate job responsibilities. This is the key to maximizing your staff performance.

*Here are a few more things to keep in mind:*

- Clearly define job responsibilities for each role – carry out periodical analysis and assessment for each job role and responsibility.
- Strapping a staffer with too many tasks or very few tasks can affect job satisfaction levels – be mindful of the tasks you are delegating at all times.
- Plan and implement a training process – this will allow you to nurture your staff members for future job roles or responsibilities within the practice.
- Keep your staff up-to-date on latest developments – if training for new software or job is required, make sure your staff has access to appropriate resources.

- Carefully decide monetary packages – the kind of monetary compensation as well as other non-financial benefits you offer your staff needs to be carefully planned and implemented if you want to keep your staff happy.

## The Practice Manager

The practice manager is the person who will be responsible for ensuring the smooth running of all clinical, administrative, and management operations in your office. This is the person who has to wear many hats and thus you need someone who has business acumen and displays exemplary people skills.

### ***Key Responsibilities of the Practice Manager;***

- Health Information Management
- Revenue Cycle Management
- Accounts Receivable Management
- Human Resource Management
- Process Improvement
- Patient Satisfaction

The practice manager has the ultimate responsibility for making sure the success factor of the entire staff is high at all times. In addition to delegating work loads, the practice manager is the person responsible for motivating and supervising the medical office staff and is also responsible for the financial performance of the medical office.

Although the practice manager does not actually treat patients, he indirectly helps patients receive quality care by making sure the healthcare office runs at optimal level.

### ***An Efficient Practice Manager possesses the following Skills;***

- Highly Organized – they are someone who can multi-task and plan ahead for all contingencies.
- Detail-Oriented – they are aware of the smallest details and tasks that go into ensuring the smooth running of the healthcare practice.
- Excellent Communication Skills – they need to be able to communicate clearly and effectively not only with you, but also with the staff and external specialists, and patients that come to the office.
- Capable of resolving conflicts – quick resolutions of conflicts is one of the most important skills of a good practice manager. Timely intervention can often help resolve issues that otherwise might get blown out of proportion.

## Conclusion

The healthcare office is a hub of human interactions. Patients come to your office with specific expectations and meeting those expectations is the most effective route to a successful healthcare practice. The medical office staff

plays a crucial role in providing your healthcare practice with administrative and business building support. The kind of work culture you offer your staff can influence their performance and levels of motivation – two metrics that have a direct impact on the success of your healthcare practice. This is why it is extremely important to first, hire the right people for the job and second, work towards building a work culture that is positive and supportive for your medical office staff.

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