

HACKS

BOARD FORUM | HACK YOUR PRACTICE: SAVE TIME AND MONEY

What tools have increased your efficiency and/or simplified the provision of services?

Daniel Friedmann, MD: Given how common it is for providers to have more than one assistant or to have assistants “bounce” between different providers at multiprovider practices, I cannot overstate how useful it is to have a standardized approach to setting up procedural trays. I have a representative photo of each tray with a description of each item, so that anyone who joins my team knows exactly what is needed for every type of procedure.

Ryan Greene, MD: One of the biggest changes I implemented to increase efficiency was to assign each medical assistant to their own exam room. This has ensured continuity of care from the time when the patient enters the office to when the treatment is completed. The MA is responsible for all patients in his/her room in addition to making sure that the room is stocked and cleaned. For better familiarity and consistency, each room has supplies in the same exact location. Our office flow is now more efficient, and it has led to improved communication between me and the staff members.

Adam Scheiner, MD: For patient consents, I created videos to explain the procedures and complications. This creates incredible efficiency in the office. Patients see me explaining the procedure to them in the video instead of having to dedicate office time to that task.

Dr. Friedmann: For sclerotherapy, I highly recommend the use of a U-shaped transilluminating device. It dramatically enhances visualization of feeding reticular veins, which positively affects results.

Sachin Shridharani, MD: The push towards being paperless has been a huge boon to the practice. Electronic medical records (EMR), electronic patient photo cataloging, and e-fax are simple concepts that have been around, but making a concerted effort to implement can be challenging. Once we made the commitment to do so, our practice has seen a tremendous increase in efficiency.

Have you implemented any tools or services that increased your efficiency and/or simplified practice management?

Dr. Greene: Through our EMR system, we decided to implement automated text messaging for appointment reminders. Reminders are sent four days and one day prior to

appointment so patients can conveniently confirm or cancel by text message.

Dr. Scheiner: We use computer software to help with billing, inventory, and scheduling. I use patient software called Solution Reach to help with reminding patients about appointments.

Dr. Shridharani: Our team has created several simple electronic templates with automatic triggers when inventory is low. This ensures that we are not in a situation where simple oversight leads to inability to care for patients. With most things available at the click of a button, there really is no reason for us to not have the supplies we need to take care of our patients.

Have you implemented any strategies to save money?

Dr. Shridharani: Working with GPOs definitely brings our price point down for surgical equipment. Setting up business accounts through various vendors also often leads to significant annual savings. In-house laundry for non-surgical or heavily soiled linens has also cut down our costs.

Dr. Greene: I recently decided to outsource our laundry service in order to make space for an additional office and workstation for my PA and medical assistants. This allowed us to hire an additional employee to assist our PA, thus increasing her ability to see more patients and generate more revenue. Outsourcing laundry is an additional monthly cost, but the ability for my PA to be more productive far outweighed these nominal costs.

Fill in the blank: One thing that irked me in practice for a long time was _____, until we discovered this simple fix: _____.

Dr. Friedmann: Organizing and cataloging photos. We started to create a physical binder or electronic Excel file, separated by procedure and further subdivided alphabetically. Whenever any photos are uploaded to a hard drive or EMR, we enter that patient’s relevant information (name, procedure date, and if photo consent was given). Whenever follow-up photos are obtained, we make note in the original listing.

Dr. Greene: No-shows. We discovered this simple fix: Charge a consultation fee. When prospective patients pay a consult fee, it implies that there is value in the doctor’s time; they are also held accountable for their appointment. A consult fee helps to select patients who are serious about undergoing treatment. Our no-show rate has reduced dramatically and office productivity has increased. ■