





PHYSICIANS – ADVICE FOR DOCTORS

## The Best Way to Approach Medical Practice Staffing



Emily Paulsen  February 3, 2020  4 min read

**Getting medical practice staffing right can make or break a medical practice. The key is figuring out the right staffing mix for your situation.**

The way medical practice staffing is approached can make or break a medical practice. It's usually the biggest item in the overall practice budget, and with operation costs on the rise, that chunk of change can make a tempting target for budget cuts.

But skimping on staffing might not be the wisest route. A survey by [Medical Group Management Association](#) (MGMA) found that practices that spend more on staffing often end up with higher revenue, even after expenses. The key is figuring out the right medical practice staffing mix for your situation.

In other words, you need to determine whom you need, when you need them, where to find them and then, once you've hired your staff, whether the structure is working.

While there are certain key roles in almost any medical practice — front desk/receptionist, scheduler, back office/billing manager, coder, practice supervisor, provider, medical assistant — the best staffing structure for a particular practice will depend on a variety of factors, including the practice size, specialty, payer mix and the population being served.

Shifts in the healthcare landscape, from technological developments to team-based care and quality reporting, have also caused shifts in medical practice staffing needs, generally from the front office towards clinical areas. New roles in medical practices include previsit planning, follow-up care and care coordination. As [Health Services Research](#) reports, some doctors are finding that expanding the role of medical assistants, including having them assist with documentation and follow-up, helps improve the healthcare experience. Others may find that having staffers with a variety of backgrounds, including RNs, LPNs and MAs, helps them serve a greater range of patients and needs, especially for delivering value-based care.

While smaller practices may not need a dedicated IT/data manager, most will at least need a point person to field questions about EHRs and generating quality reports.

## Look for Scheduling Trends and Solutions

It may seem like no two days are the same in your medical practice, but certain trends do affect staffing. Mondays are busiest, winter means flu and staff vacations can mean shuffling roles and maybe hiring locum tenens.

To identify the trends in your office, think about your day. Are you or your staff regularly putting in overtime hours? What are the things that trip you up, take more time than you thought or contribute to burnout? Do you see more people for physicals at a certain time of year?

The answers to these questions may point to the need for creative scheduling solutions. Cross-training staff to take on more responsibility and more varied tasks

can improve productivity and job satisfaction, a win-win. Other solutions might include outsourcing, part-time positions, remote work and job sharing.

schedules. You also need the right people. With operating costs on the rise, according to [Medical Economics](#), it's more important than ever to make wise hiring decisions. It makes more sense to pay someone a higher wage and keep them on board than it does to churn through dissatisfied or unqualified employees.

The [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) projects increased demand for MAs in the coming years. With that demand, new programs are cropping up, and not all are created equal. Researching the candidate's experience as well as the program they attended is necessary in this environment, and it can lead to better hiring decisions.

## Listen to Your Staff and Patients

A March 2019 poll by [MGMA](#) showed that 84% of healthcare managers depend on benchmarking data to improve practice operations. Looking at a variety of data — overtime costs, panel size, patient census, patient satisfaction scores, employee satisfaction scores — can often reveal problem areas.

But don't just look at the numbers. Check in with the people, too. Nobody knows your office, its challenges and its successes, better than your current staff and your patients. Getting their input can lead to a-ha moments and help identify problem areas you never even thought about. And in our digital age, don't overlook the value of online reviews. While you may not always consider them fair or accurate, they can provide an invaluable candid perspective on your practice and staff.

Addressing the problem areas you uncover can in turn increase patient and employee satisfaction ratings, along with the likelihood that they will refer their friends and family to your practice. And referrals from staff and patients are the surest sign that you're getting medical practice staffing right.

Practice Management



### Emily Paulsen

Emily Paulsen writes about health and healthcare topics for consumers as well as healthcare professionals and administrators.

improving the healthcare experience for patients and professionals alike. She has experience developing articles, fact sheets, toolkits, case studies, reports, research summaries, and continuing medical education materials. Her clients include trade publications, health organizations, non-profits, and government agencies.

[VIEW ALL POSTS](#)

< [Professional Networking for Doctors: The New Rules](#)

[4 Ways to Give Back as a Physician Volunteer](#) >

## Add comment

Comment

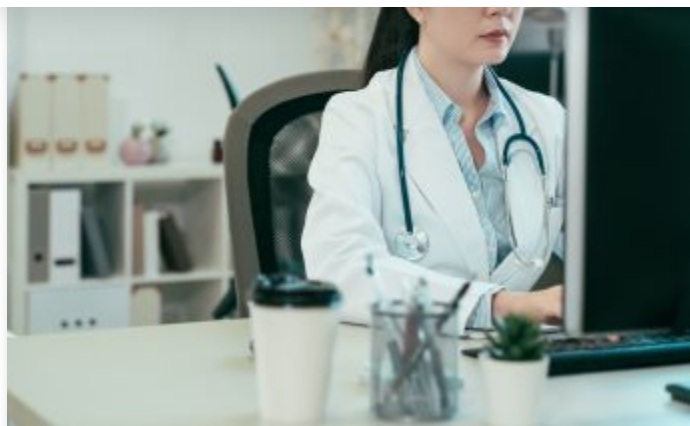
Name \*

Email \*

Website

[SUBMIT COMMENT](#)

## You may also like



## Communication Improve Your Medical Practice?

Online patient communication comes with its share of benefits and challenges. Read



Brian Wu, MD, PhD 📅 August 12, 2020 ⌚ 4 min read



PHYSICIANS – ADVICE FOR DOCTORS

## Unblinding Trauma Outcomes Reporting: How Should We Proceed?

Learn the potential pitfalls of unblinding



Megan D. Williams 📅 August 13, 2020 ⌚ 4 min read

### Sign up for our Newsletter

\*  ▼

\*

Submit

### Related Articles



**Unblinding Trauma Outcomes Reporting: How Should We Proceed?**



## **Patient Communication**

**Improve Your Medical  
Practice?**



**5 Takes on How  
Telemedicine Is  
Changing Healthcare**

# After Rounds<sup>®</sup>

*Tips and Tricks for Medical Students, Residents and Physicians*



# After Rounds<sup>®</sup>

*Tips and Tricks for Medical Students, Residents and Physicians*





## Site Navigation


[Home](#)

[Students](#)

[Residents](#)

[Physicians](#)

[About Us](#)

\*  

\*

**Submit**



[Privacy Policy](#)

© Copyright 2020 Wolters Kluwer N.V. and/or its subsidiaries. All rights reserved.