

Top Challenges Facing Medical Practices



Are you a doctor feeling stressed? Overburdened by administrative requirements? Or simply wishing you had more time to spend with your patients?

You're not alone.

Today's physicians are juggling a number of obstacles and challenges, despite their devotion to the practice of medicine and the health of their patients. Here's an overview of some of the top challenges facing physicians & medical practices in today's healthcare climate:

Physician Challenges

1. Less time with patients

Electronic documentation and other administrative burdens continue to cut in on the time physicians actually spend with patients.

According to a 2016 study in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, physicians spent just 27 percent of an average day or shift with patients, while nearly 50 percent of their day was spent on electronic health records and other “desk work”. This imbalance can wear on physicians and other practitioners who desire to spend more time in direct patient care.

Creative solutions may involve streamlining work processes, sharing some responsibilities with mid-level providers and other staff, changing your work environment, or finding ways to make every minute with patients count.

2. Regulatory requirements

Physicians have to deal with a mountain of administrative burdens and paperwork on a regular basis. They have to report a steady stream of data and information to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for reimbursement. The data reporting duties required by Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act, or MACRA, may never be very far from their minds.

3. Collecting from self-pay

When collecting from self-pay, high-deductible health plan, and/or health savings account patients it’s called training, monitoring, and accountability. Train the front desk on how to successfully collect, monitor daily collection success, and make front desk personnel accountable for their efforts and management for the lack thereof.

For example, physician practices are required to use certain kinds of technology, such as the electronic health record, but they have to come up with the money to fund it. These types of challenges are driving more physicians to consider employment options vs. running their own practice.

4. [Invoicing and Payment Processing](#)

Collecting payment has become more challenging as patients are becoming responsible for a larger portion of their medical bills. If you want to increase the speed and amount of your collections, you shouldn’t make your patients jump through hoops.

To meet patient expectations and improve the user experience, make sure your billing statements are patient-friendly. You should offer paperless statements and a variety of payment options (e.g., eCheck, credit card, etc.) via an online patient portal and utilize the latest payment technologies, such as mobile and text-to-pay.

5. Recruiting physicians

This is a big issue. You need new physicians to grow a practice, and you need new physicians to transition out older physicians. Every practice needs a viable recruitment strategy for the future.

6. Physician burnout

Job burnout continues to be one of the biggest challenges facing doctors today, with more than half of the physicians in a 2018 Medscape survey exhibiting some signs of burnout.

The most recent NEJM Catalyst survey on physician burnout and resilience found that 83 percent of clinicians and healthcare leaders believe physician burnout is a “serious” or “moderate” problem in their organizations. The repercussions can be dire—from doctors leaving the profession to entering a downward spiral in their physical and mental health.

Physicians today are up against many obstacles. The key to enjoying your practice again is leveraging the numerous resources that are available to help you succeed in independent medical practice. Many obstacles can be overcome by carefully choosing management services companies and outsourcing some of the administrative aspects of your practice. An open mind can lead to a thriving practice!

