

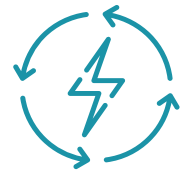
Tips on Optimizing Practice Efficiency

Efficiency is defined as the ability to achieve an end goal with little to no waste or effort.

Guiding Principle: In a medical practice, the physician is the costliest human resource. Achieving efficiency means saving the physician's time.

Relentlessly Seeking Efficiency

Make sure processes and tasks value the physician's time



1. For each task in your practice workflow ask yourself:
 - Does it need to be done?
 - Can it be automated?
 - Is it suitable for patient self-serve?
 - Can it be delegated to staff?
2. To maximize efficiency, physicians should only perform tasks that:
 - Require a licensed physician
 - Lower the cost to the practice
 - They like to do, despite the time cost



Human Resources

Invest in your staff team to save your time and lower costs

1. Hire and train with purpose:
 - Create clear and thorough job descriptions
 - Hire and train well
 - Avoid specialization – train everyone to perform every task and to work with each physician
2. Minimize turnover by investing in your team:
 - Set pay scale to be in the top 25% for similar jobs
 - Provide all the tools to make the work easy
 - Foster an exemplary work environment (e.g., high performing, friendly and empathic)
3. Manage underperformance through rehabilitation and decisive action:
 - First ensure that the job itself is not the problem
 - Try to rehabilitate – much less costly than turnover
 - If termination is necessary, move quickly with input from your lawyer

Improving Scheduling

Simplify your schedule, manage for trends and do today's work today



1. Avoid common scheduling errors:
 - Avoid overmanaging normal variability in length of patient visits
 - Avoid undermanaging predictable trends
 - Address all of the patient's current problems in one visit
 - Avoid low-value encounters/interventions (Consult Choosing Wisely, substitute emails or phone calls for low-value visits)
 - Delegate tasks
2. Do today's work today:
 - Offer same-day appointments
 - Only two types of appointments should exist at the start of any day
 - Follow-ups from previous encounters
 - New problems deferred by patient
 - Create a schedule that can handle any surge
 - Empty your inbox each day
3. Manage Virtual Care:
 - Optimize triage to determine whether a new problem can be managed by virtual or must be seen in-person
 - Avoid restricting a day to a certain type of visit, efficiency will be higher if mixing virtual and in-person in the same half-day
 - Resist the temptation to manage video and audio visits differently

Managing Paperwork

Protect time for paperwork and seek shortcuts to complete it

1

Build schedules with protected time that help limit interruption

2

Record data in the most efficient way for each situation (using templates, stamps, dictation, etc.)

3

Complete each encounter note before moving on to the next patient

4

Simplify referrals:

- Use standard templates that extract relevant chart information
- Avoid using forms specific to one point of care

5

Simplify prescribing:

- Limit prescribing to when you are in a patient encounter
- Pre-empt pharmacy clarification inquiries by anticipating questions
- Do not accept an out-of-stock notice that does not tell you what the pharmacy DOES have on hand to treat the problem

6

Manage third-party forms:

- Set aside sufficient time to complete the entire form at one sitting
- Read the entire form before beginning completion
- Set an appointment to go through the form with the patient if you need more data
- Stay paperless and use software for standard answers

