

## Medicine or Business?

An image of a doctor with a travel bag, visiting homes of his patients disappeared a long time ago. With progress of technology, medicine, and science in general, doctors had to change the way they practice as well. They still complete medical school and take The Oath, but their careers often lead them to various medical business concepts, not quite introduced in medical schools.

Only very recently, students of medical school have started receiving some introduction to medical coding, documentation, computerized records, and similar topics outside of the scope of medicine itself. Many medical students do not even like those classes as they rush to graduate and start their overloaded schedules at residencies. That is a big mistake: they should not only participate in business-related classes but learn and research beyond the curriculum. Real life and work after residencies is revealing a lot of challenges of practicing medicine in today's world.

Medical business is one of the most compliance and business controlled industry. There are requirement of federal level, state level, accrediting agencies, and standard of care. Doctors cannot bill patient for the fees outside of their contractual agreements with the insurance industry. They also must document their work with patients, often to every detail of event during the visit or procedure.

The staff of medical office must remember numerous insurance plans accepted or not by the clinic and verify the level of benefits of patients who, most often, do not know their policy benefits.

Clinics with additional focus on research must be up-to-date with the regulation of FDA, individual pharmaceutical sponsors, and more and more, with the global regulations of sponsors conducting international trials. Maintaining compliance readiness is the key to being successful and desired by sponsors.

All of the above factors make it crucial for doctors to identify and hire reliable staff for all areas of medical clinic business. Yes, clinics



became businesses and they have to be run in a very efficient and compliant way in order to face health care system challenges. Only well-educated staff can assist physicians in fostering a good atmosphere allowing doctors for doing their job of being doctors. Staff retention, good benefits, flexibility of tasks and hours, home-work balance, all of those factors are critical in creating happiness of the medical clinic staff. Happy employees provide the patients with better care. They focus on the quality of their work and deliver what patients expect: attention, compassion, understanding, and advice. Doctors practicing in such a supportive environment can trust their staff and, as a result, direct their total attention to patients rather than to business of running the office.

Dr. Michael Bukhalo and the staff at Arlington Dermatology are an example of such a relationship. We welcome our new and established patients as partners and family rather than insurance id numbers. We welcome them, offering quality care in a family-oriented environment, making every visit a healthy social experience. Each employee of the clinic, including the providers, love what they do and truly care about each other. By doing just that, we can give our patient the best quality care they deserve.

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