

## Ten Customer Service Habits for your Medical Practice

[From PhysiciansPractice.com by Audrey McLaughlin, RN and Logan Lutton]

**Make sure Every One of your Employees is Capable of Making a Good First Impression:** This is even more important for the “front of house” employees responsible for greeting patients over the phone or on their arrival in the waiting room. (Tip: Hire people with a history of helping people.)

**Keep your Promises:** If you or your staff says “I will get back with you today” do it. Even if you don’t have the answer, a quick ring to let them know you are still working on it is always best. Keep your commitments, no matter how small.

**Show Appreciation and Gratitude to your Patients:** Thank customers in a meaningful and thoughtful manner on every interaction. Say “thank you” and smile.

**Provide Solid Training:** Great customer service isn’t all common sense, or there would be more of it. Provide your staff with industry specific customer service training and follow-up renewal training.

**Listen and Act when your Patients Complain:** Deal with every complaint, as complaints can be opportunities to build a lifetime of loyalty from a patient. Make sure that you listen to the complaint, check the validity, take action to resolve it, and then let the patient know how it was resolved. Always assume the patient is telling the truth.

**Go Above and Beyond what your Patients Expect:** It is always better to over-deliver on expectations. Make sure you are meeting your patient’s needs, then make an effort to exceed them by paying close attention to every detail in the delivery of your services.

**Make it Easy on Your Patients:** Make the experience in your office as easy as possible with minimal wait times, maximum comfort, and amenities such as coffee/tea/water when possible. Also take into account the patient’s flow through the clinic to ensure it is easy to navigate.

**Admit Mistakes and Apologize:** Forget to call a patient back? Overbook the clinic? Running a little late? Be honest, apologize sincerely, and offer options to repair the issue.

**Be a Little Obsessed with your Patients:** Would you have a clinic without them? You should know who your patients are, why they come and see you, and be obsessive about making sure they receive the best experience and follow up possible. Have your front-office staff make an effort to remember names of your frequent patients; that goes a long way in making a patient feel welcome.

**Treat your Employees (and each other) like Customers:** It is a little like leading by example, if you treat your employees with great service, they will be more equipped to model that for your patients.

The bottom line is that you and your staff should do these things every day to make the patients that visit your clinic feel that they have made the right choice, and set yourself apart from most any other medical practice. This makes your patients feel like you are all on the same team, are more apt to send referrals, and more willing to make sure you are paid for the time and effort you have spent on their care.

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# What Burned Out Workers Really Want from Employers

[From PhysiciansPractice.com by Missy Plohr-Memming]

*As healthcare worker burnout is on the rise and job satisfaction falls at twice the rate of other sectors, it's clear healthcare employers may be underestimating the level of support needed across the industry.*

Make no mistake: Although life may be returning to normal for some, healthcare workers are still struggling on the frontlines of what feels like a never-ending pandemic – and they're tired and burned out. So tired and burned out, in fact, that many have considered leaving their jobs. According to MetLife's annual U.S. Employee Benefit Trends Study 2022, job satisfaction in healthcare has fallen at twice the rate of other sectors, with 45% of healthcare workers considering quitting in the past year alone. And with healthcare employees 30% more likely to have experienced burnout over the last 12 months, it's clear that healthcare employers may be underestimating the breadth of support needed for these individuals during what continues to be a stressful and uncertain time. Particularly as new COVID-19 variants arise, healthcare workers are only going to continue putting their lives (and their livelihoods) on the line in order to ensure the safety of their patients and the larger community. Therefore, as the industry faces a growing labor shortage, thinking of solutions that can help thwart this growing burnout epidemic and prioritize healthcare workers' holistic wellbeing has never been more critical. Here are three insights that can help arm healthcare employers with the tools to support their employees both now and in the future.

## **Don't Overlook Mental and Financial Health Offerings**

Today, healthcare remains the most "stressed-out" sector of the workforce, with four in 10 healthcare workers (42%) reporting feeling stressed. It's a fact no doubt exacerbated by the realities of the pandemic, with healthcare employees' mental health hovering 10% lower than it was before the spread of COVID-19. With increased workloads and difficulty managing work-life balance contributing to poor mental health, it's important that employers consider leveraging the right mix of wellness offerings, like employee assistance programs (EAPs) and more flexible working hours, that can reduce stress and promote overall wellbeing. And with 30% of healthcare workers stating their poor mental health is a result of financial stress, integrating financial wellness benefits – like flexible spending accounts (FSAs) and student debt assistance, or tools that help them manage their finances, like Upwise™ – can pay dividends in supporting them as they navigate increasingly difficult and demanding work.

## **Supportive Managers are Key**

Across industries, supportive managers can be incredibly useful resources for employees – not only for professional growth, but also for emotional support. This is especially true in healthcare. In fact, healthcare employees who have a supportive manager are more than three times as likely to feel holistically healthy as those who don't. Additionally, of respondents who intended to stay with their organization for at least 12 months, 83% stated that their manager has a high level of empathy. What this tells us is that when faced with prolonged and often uncertain working conditions, having a supportive manager can make all the difference. Granted, as with many work environments, having a supportive manager can often be easier said than done. Accordingly, implementing new management programs – including top-down leadership training and organization-wide appreciation efforts – can be incredibly effective in helping staff feel heard and valued. By building a management infrastructure atop a foundation of empathy and compassion, employers can not only help their employees today, but they can also ensure they're prepared for whatever lies around the corner tomorrow.

## **Final Thoughts**

Over the past two years, healthcare employees have fought diligently on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic. They've acted selflessly for the benefit of society and are now depending on us to return the favor. Thankfully, by following the steps outlined above, healthcare employers can quickly implement a number of impactful initiatives purposed to attend to their employees at this critical time. Equipped with newfound workplace flexibility, wellness offerings and supportive management structures, healthcare employees can continue saving lives with the knowledge that they're being supported every step of the way.



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October 20<sup>th</sup> 10:00 am - 1:00 pm

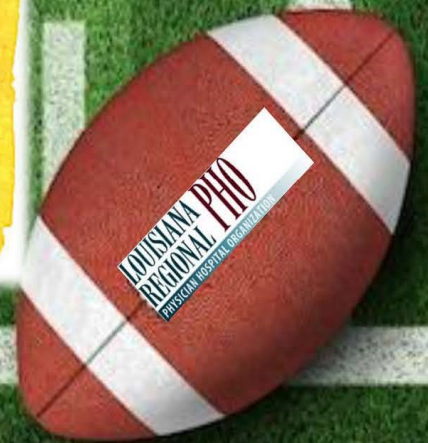
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### CREDENTIALING REMINDER:

Please make sure to inform our office of any "Point of Contact"  
CHANGES that take place in your office. We ALWAYS need the  
NAME of the Point of Contact for your clinic, as well as the  
CONTACT EMAIL ADDRESS that you want all information sent to.

This information is crucial in helping us keep our records up to date and  
continuing to provide your practice with our best service. Thank You!



# How Your Payment Process Impacts the Patient Experience

[From PhysiciansPractice.com by d'Artagnan Osborne]

More and more providers have experienced diminished returns as patient payments languish due to outdated, ineffective communication methods which do not meet today's patient expectations. Healthcare has gone through a dramatic evolution in recent years, from comprehensive medical reporting systems to interactive patient care. Yet one area in particular remains mired in the past: medical payment processes.

More and more providers have experienced diminished returns as patient payments languish due to outdated, ineffective communication methods which do not meet today's patient expectations. Such antiquated payment systems miss the mark when it comes to evolution of patient-centric care and ultimately propagate patient dissatisfaction to the detriment of medical providers everywhere.

Just how important is patient experience to patient retention and revenue? The data is clear: two-thirds of consumers would switch providers for a better payment experience. Healthcare providers must consider the payment process within their patient-centric focus to build trusting relationships and to remain competitive in the market with reliable revenue collection.

## Time-of-Service Payment Collection

Payment processes must be active during the time-of-service. The billing process should be addressed when patients are in the office and available to pay in person. Two missed \$50 copays per day could equal an annual loss of \$25,000, no small amount when it comes to running a clinic. While office staff may not enjoy the conversation around the payment process, there are ways to simplify it for them and the patient.

A unified patient billing system combined with a payment terminal can process time-of-service collection in a connected way to improve efficiency and ease of use. These terminals support immediate collection resolution and accept debit or credit cards, Apple Pay, Google Pay, Microsoft Pay and contactless pay. Some can even retain card on file and electronic card authorization to make future payments faster and more convenient. Integrated technology simplifies the patient experience and drives more revenue while increasing trust in the provider/patient relationship by providing one click in-office secure payments and payment authorization within seconds.

## Post-Service Payment Collection

Digital forms of communication have become the norm in our society, including how people consistently manage their bills. Recent research from U.S. Bank shows a distinct trend in preferences to pay bills using digital options via portal, mobile applications, contactless debit or credit card or other apps such as PayPal, Zelle or Venmo. Those preferences translate to healthcare billing as well. Eighty-five percent of consumers would prefer to pay healthcare bills using a mobile payment system. But healthcare providers continue to lag in their response.

***The new reality is clear: Patients want the freedom and flexibility to pay their bills where and how they find it most convenient, including from the device in their pocket. They expect a mobile and simplified transaction experience, similar to the consumer world. Multiple payment options make it easier than ever for patients to pay in whichever method works for them. Providers who switch to an integrated collections platform typically see an immediate increase in payments and happier patients. It's time to step into the next evolution of payment processes and place the patient front and center in the experience.***