What's holding you back?; Getting patients to pay; Dr. G-Man

September 02, 2012 | Work/Life Balance [1], Healthcare Reform [2], Patients [3], Physician Productivity [4], Scheduling [5], Technology [6], Accounts Receivable [7]
Noteworthy items from Physicians Practice

Health Reform Reaction

"The ruling by the Supreme Court upholding the vast majority of Obamacare represents a victory for the large hospitals, pharmaceutical companies, large insurance companies, and those wanting more computers used in healthcare, the cronies for whom this bill was crafted."
Keith Smith, MD
Source: PhysiciansPractice.com

"This is great news for our patients and for our entire healthcare system. The ACA contains many features that will protect current and future patients from the inequities in our healthcare system. Many of the benefits are yet to be realized but hold great promise for all of us and the next generation of Americans."
Gary Lyman, MD
Source: ABC News

Stat
18.7 The percentage of adults younger than 65 with unmet medical needs in 2010.
Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

What's Holding You Back?
Consultant Carol Stryker recently outlined six tips to improve physician productivity on Practice Notes, Physicians Practice's blog. Her advice got us wondering: What most hinders physician productivity at medical practices? We asked readers to weigh in. Here's what they told us:
• Tasks placed on me that do not require a physician's attention and that other staff members could handle – 28%
• Fatigue and stress – 24%
• Staff members who do not fulfill their own responsibilities – 22%
• Poor appointment scheduling by staff – 20%
• Disorganization of supplies and lack of standardization in exam rooms – 6%

Getting Patients to Pay
What do you do when patients can't pay for services? In a recent Practice Notes blog, consultant George Conomikes suggested setting up a patient payment plan. Provide the patient with a copy of the plan and enter his promise to pay into your accounts receivable system, Conomikes advised. That way you'll receive reminders to process the credit card or follow up with the patient. Not sure how to draft such a plan? Conomikes shared this handy template: http://bit.ly/patientpayplan.

'Priceline' for Healthcare
Healthcare is one industry that has resisted normal market forces that tend to drive prices down. A new Priceline.com-like website aims to change that, though some worry about the implications of a tool that encourages patients to choose healthcare providers based on cost. BidOnHealth.com enables patients with prescriptions for routine lab or radiology tests to purchase the tests for at least 60 percent off the average price. Patients can even bid on the tests to see if they can purchase them at even deeper discounts. The site is controversial for some, who fear it pushes patients to choose healthcare services based on cost, not quality. But site founder Scott Hastings, a family physician in Arizona, told Physicians Practice that all of the sites offering the discounted tests are licensed and accredited. "I'd much rather have [patients use BidOnHealth.com] than not know anything at all," he said.

Physicians Borrow FBI techniques
A new web-based interactive game may help primary-care physicians identify prescription abuse. The game is designed and based on research by family physician Michael F. Fleming, a professor at the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. It draws on technology used by the FBI to train agents in interrogation tactics, according to the New York Times. The game includes dialogue techniques and teaches doctors to look for signs of nervousness, like breaking eye contact and finger-tapping. The game will soon be available to medical schools and health systems for a fee,
What's holding you back?; Getting patients to pay; Dr. G-Man
Published on Physicians Practice (http://www.physicianspractice.com)

according to the Times.

Up Close and Personal
An anatomy professor at Indiana University Northwest in Gary, Ind., is asking his medical students to get personal with their cadavers. When working with cadavers, he asks students to refer to them by name, and in some cases, exchange letters with surviving family members to learn more about the deceased's hobbies, interests, and medical history. The professor says the approach helps students view their cadavers — and later their patients — as real people with feelings, according to Time Healthland.

Bad Doc!
The number of disciplinary actions taken against physicians has steadily increased in the last 20 years. That's according to the Federation of State Medical Boards Summary of 2011 Board Actions, an annual report based on disciplinary actions initiated by medical and osteopathic boards. The report found that total disciplinary actions taken against physicians increased 29 percent between 2001 and 2011, and 92 percent between 1991 and 2011.

This article originally appeared in the September 2012 issue of Physicians Practice.

Source URL:

Links: