Patient-Centric Revenue Sources: Ultrasound for your Medical Practice

How physicians across many specialties utilize ultrasound and portable ultrasound machines in their clinics.

Source: Physicians Practice

Ultrasound has been around for some time now. And as machines get smaller, more portable, and less expensive, physicians across many specialties utilize ultrasound and portable ultrasound machines in their clinics to diagnose patients quickly and receive a return on their investment.

Interestingly, I was the first baby captured in utero on ultrasound (which back then was not so portable) in the rural hospital I was born in. Now ultrasound is used in many fascinating ways and your patients will be thankful that a trip to the hospital is not required.

A few of the basic scans that primary-care physicians most often perform in office include: abdominal aorta, gallstone checks, thyroid scanning, and deep vein thrombosis. Some physicians elect to perform ultrasound-guided procedures such as venous ablation, joint injections, or carotid screenings. On the low end these scans and procedures reimburse around $100. On the high end of primary-care offices, you can see reimbursements as high as $250 or so (as always, reimbursement can depend on geography and specific contracts). Ultrasound can in many states be performed by techs and mid-levels, and then the “reading” component be performed by the physician which means you can easily assign these procedures to be operating simultaneously as you are seeing routine patients.

Ultrasound is a relatively easy modality to learn. Training for general abdominal and primary-care ultrasound is as simple as ordering study materials and setting off to learn the information. There are many companies out there that offer very in-depth instructional DVD series and online learning platforms. These programs average about a $900 investment and can be studied and reviewed at the physician’s convenience.

As you may have guessed, there will be some capital investment for a portable ultrasound machine, but the good news is that there are plenty of options available: cash purchase, financing, leasing, and even renting. When you are looking for a company to purchase your equipment from, you can certainly purchase directly from a manufacturer, but I would recommend purchasing from an ultrasound company that is a multi-vendor ultrasound dealer. This way you have some assurance of unbiased information and experts to help guide you to the ultrasound equipment that is the best for your needs. This also gives you the option of choosing from new or pre-owned/refurbished units that can save you big bucks in the long run.

Adding ultrasound to your clinic will require an investment of time and capital but the benefits are huge. You are offering making care more convenient for your patients by offering on-the-spot diagnosis and expanded procedures. Your staff and providers have easy access to training. Add to that the reimbursement potential and portable ultrasound becomes a must-look-at option for expanding the services your office offers and increasing revenue for your practice.

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