How Do I Protect My Doc's Chair Time?

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Objectives

- Knowing Your Provider(s)
- Leadership
- Knowing your staff
- Understanding the schedule
- Understanding appointment types
- Preparation
- Team building
- Monitoring
- Provider's Feedback

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Are There Any Provider's In The Room?

Income – Expenses = profit (taxed)

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What are ways you protect chair time?

$$\text{Chair Time} = \frac{Net\ sales - Doctor\ comp - COGS}{\#\ of\ Comprehensive\ exams}$$

Income – Expenses = profit (<u>taxed</u>)

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How much to charge?

Professional fees—Deciding how much to charge for your professional services is a sensitive issue, and no one formula for determining professional fees suits every practice. Remember, too, that fees charged to patients covered by medical insurance must be the same as those charged to patients without insurance.

Figuring chair cost—Chair cost is solid, baseline information about the actual cost of running the business side of a practice and is essential to determining whether to sign up with a vision or managed care plan. Then determine whether the plan will result in additional income or loss per patient. Chair cost establishes how many patients you must see per hour in order for the plan to be profitable.

Methods of figuring chair cost—To do a rough approximation, total your annual costs and divide that figure by the number of complete vision analyses and consultations you expect to do each year. Calculate the total hours you expect to spend in your office annually, then determine the average cost per hour of running your office by dividing your total annual costs, including your salary, by the hours you work per year.

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Fee Presentation

Presenting your fees to patients—Successful practitioners know that the secret to effective fee presentation is open communication. Health-care-management consultants recommend that you present your patient with an itemized superbill that lists each professional service rendered. You also should explain which of your fees are

Raising your fees—Management consultants recommend that you review your costs and fees at least once a year to see if a fee increase or decrease is necessary—though you may realize some overhead expenses can be cut.

Professional courtesy—Draft your professional courtesy discount policies regarding your family, your employees, your employees' families, other doctors and their families, clergy, health professionals and others.

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Schedule Management

- Approaches include the stream method (appointments are spaced equally throughout the day), the wave method (scheduling patients in groups to account for late arrival) and the
- **Appointment types:** accuracy is important for schedule management
- **No-shows**—Arrange your schedule with this contingency in mind so you won't waste valuable chair-time during no-show gaps.
- **Office hours**—Doctors can increase patient volume by offering evening, early-morning and weekend office hours.
- Change is not easy for the staff, so talk about it!

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Per Patient Revenue
Average profit per patient visit
How much did it cost to process these patients?

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Patient Portal

Patient Portals – keeps the patient informed

- A patient portal is an online interface for patients to easily access their medical records, empowering patients with the option to take a more active role in understanding their health. The most common use for patient portals is accessing lab and test results.
  - Patient demographic information
  - Recent provider visits
  - Results
  - Medications/refills
  - Allergies

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Get Your Money At The Visit!

$	**Billing**—Good billing systems have clear communication of information. Every bill should include the patient's balance prior to the current visit, a record of services currently provided to the patient, a record of the fees incurred for those services, and date and time of the patient's next visit.
	Superbills—These are pre-printed forms you can use to itemize services provided during the patient's visit.
	Payment at the time of visit—This policy eliminates the expense and inefficiencies associated with billing and rebilling patients by mail. And collecting in the office increases the chance of receiving prompt payment from high-risk patients
	Accepting credit cards—A credit card arrangement will cost you a small fee, but that fee may be quickly offset by your savings on postage, stationery and hours spent by your staff on the mechanics of billing.

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Factors You Use To Calculate Chair Time?

- Staff training
- Revenue generating appointment
  - Comprehensive exams
  - Contact lens fittings
  - Myopia control
  - Dry Eye treatments
- Per Patient Revenue
- FTE of Technician
- FTE Scribe
- FTE Optician
- Staff FTE*
- Cost of goods/overhead
- Occupancy
- If you accept a vision plan that pays less than $55 per exam, you're losing money on that visit.

xdemvy
(lotilaner ophthalmic solution) 0.25%

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Office Managers

LEADERS
If you don't know where you are going....how you gonna get there?

North (N) NW NE
West (W) (E) East
SW SE
South (S)

I need to cast the Vision to my team, help them see it, help them catch it, help them achieve it!!

- Play a critical role in protecting chair-time
- Have their finger on the pulse of clinic operations
- Resource management – putting the right people/right place
- Protects the provider from un-necessary interruptions
- Ensure the staff is properly trained! Protects the practice

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Know Your Provider

Every provider matters, not just the owner(s)

- How many patients can your provider see in one day
- What overwhelms your provider
- What permissions do you have
- What makes your provider happy
- Know what your provider wants you to do
- Get as much training as possible
- Be professional at all times!
- Use the proper address for them

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Know Your Patients

- Read the chart!
- Book in the best slots!
- Connect with the patient
- Understand what their needs are
- Is this something the provider needs to know right now?
- If it is a true emergency, you must know the protocols
- Communicate with the FD
- How long is check in/out time?

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Provider Communications

- When do you interrupt your provider?
- What is the policy?
- Does your provider trust you?
  - Protect your relationship with the provider
- Are you being clear on the issue? (write it down)
- Attempt to anticipate your provider needs
- Better trained staff members communicate better
- **Close The Loop!**

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Learning To Listen To Complaints

- Is the patient's chart open?
  - Phone
  - In-person
- Are you sure that you understand the patient's complaint?
- Have you asked the correct questions?
- Did you repeat the question back to the patient?
- Resolve all you can*

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The Value of Preparation

- Optometrist, Andy Britton, of Specsavers Haverfordwest, also utilizes the skills of the whole practice team in order to make efficient use of consultation time.

  "**The best thing you can have to maximize chair time is a well-trained and educated multidisciplinary team**, fully conversant with the science and rationale behind the need to offer myopia management," Britton emphasized.

  "This allows an optometrist to have the full conversation with a patient and parents when time allows, but for this to be delegated to dispensing opticians as required," he said.

- Looking ahead on the schedule
- Procedure manual for every Key Program/Tasks
  - Great training for new employees
  - Creating checklist for clarity

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Keeping Your Provider On Schedule

- This is going to be tough
- Never disrespect your provider or patient
- Always practice honesty
- **Providers need to show up to work on time to start on time!**
- Work with the front desk
- Look ahead at the schedule (1-2 days prior)
- Print/write on the schedule
- Deconflict the schedule as much as possible

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Team Training

- What is our mission and goals?
- What builds the team?
- What makes us strong?
- Onboarding
- Creating the desired culture
- Uncertainty avoidance
- Enhanced communications
- Fewer interruptions all-around when the staff is better trained

True leaders **protect** their team, even **beyond** their own limits.

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Program management – specialized training

- Contact Lense fitting
- Dry eye training/procedures
- IPL procedures
- In-office procedure set-up
- Laser procedure protocols
- Optical
  - Blue light protection
  - Moisture eyeglasses

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Use of AI

- Demographic information
- Insurance information
- Workflow management
- Treatment options
- Drug delivery
- Spectacle and contacts processing and tracking
- Compliance update and tracking

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Connecting With Your Teammates

- Always have professional communications
- Never talk trash about your provider, staff, or patients
- Be a leader even if you are not in a leadership role*
- Always come with suggestive improvements
- DO NOT PARTICIPATE IN DRAMA!

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The Answer From Providers

Question: Name a way that staff can protect your chair time?

Answers (these are quotes):

- Help get me out of the room when a patient is talking too much (or when I am talking too much)
- Troubleshooting simple to moderate glasses and contacts issues
- The staff can start by scheduling and confirming patients. The next step would be to do pretesting in an efficient manner to keep the patient and doctors on time.
- The importance comes in the cost of chair time. Staff and doctor cost has to be included in total cost of each patient chair time more these days with increase in vision plans and decreased fees.
- Making sure the reason for the visit is clear

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Dr. Ann Hoscheit

- Strategic scheduling (that little old lady who always sets me behind…schedule her before lunch or at the end of the day)
- Collect demographic/insurance information/authorizations per SOP's so as not to have delays getting patient to the exam room
- Learn how to be friendly without getting overly engaged in personal conversations during pre-test ("keep 'er moving")
- Make sure the patient's eyewear is clean and adjusted prior to measuring acuity! Nothing is more of a "time sucker" other than wrapping up a refraction, finding no change and having to figure out whey the patient's entering acuity was 20/30! And it was because of filthy glasses.
- Set up the room appropriately for procedures (i.e. foreign body removal, irrigations, etc.)
- Regularly monitor room inventory (i.e. dilating drops, Lissimine strips, tissues, etc.)
- Be eager to learn! It's wonderful when I can grab a patient instruction sheet and check a few boxes or highlight some things and then hand the patient to my clinical staff to provide more detailed patient education

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Technology Integration

- Makes the visit more efficient
- Better accountability
- Better disease tracking
- Better EMR integration
- More impressive to the patient
- Metrics are easier to confirm

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Reoccurring Vendor Training (Not just Lunch!)

- Spectacles/frames
- Contact lenses
- Dry Eye
  - Products
  - Procedures
  - Cosmetics/Esthetics
- Myopia Management
- Lasers
- In-office procedures

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"Effective Recruiting" Optometry Review

"Effectively recruiting and retaining staff is a crucial component of the success of any optometric practice. Building a team of dedicated professionals is essential for the delivery of high-quality patient experiences and care.

Attracting and keeping quality team members depends not only on competitive compensation and benefits but also on a positive workplace culture where staff members feel appreciated and have the opportunity to grow and take ownership of their contributions.

Navigating the complexities of personnel management is not one-size-fits-all and requires a dedicated leader that recognizes the power of a strong staff and is willing to do their part to help every member succeed—both as an individual and as a team."

By Catlin Nalley, Contributing Editor for Optometry Review

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Wrapping things up

- The patient experience
- Schedule management
- Resource management
- Staff training
- Staff consistency
- Process clarity
- Team communication
- DRAMA Avoidance!

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Resources

Optimizing Chair Time at your Eye Care Practice – Tangible Science

Day-to-Day Operations | AOA

Building a Top-Flight Staff

Your Patient Portal: What It Is and Why You Should Use It | Brown University Health

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Thank you!

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