



A Publication for

BEST *Practice*

Physicians' Office Administrators and Staff

GO GREEN

Easy Ways to Reduce Your Plastic Waste

According to the Plastic Pollution Coalition, every day in the United States, we throw out 88,000 tons of plastic. Equally alarming is that plastic pieces on the ocean surface now outnumber sea life six-to-one. Although recycling can help reduce the amount of garbage that ends up in landfills, waterways and ecosystems, only a few types of plastics can be recycled by most municipal governments. But in our modern lives, plastic surrounds us and cutting it out can seem daunting. To help reduce plastic in your life, below are some easy ways to get started.

1. Bring your own shopping bag - The usefulness of thin and easily ripped plastic bags is extremely limited. These bags have a high environmental cost and are one of the most ubiquitous forms of garbage.

2. Stop buying bottled water - Instead of plastic water bottles, keep a refillable bottle handy.

3. Use your own thermos or coffee mug - Disposable coffee cups might look like paper but they're usually lined with polyethylene, a type of plastic resin. In theory these materials can be recycled, but most places lack the infrastructure to do so. Then there are lids and stirrers, which can be avoided with your own mug.

4. Choose cardboard over plastic - Generally speaking, it's easier to recycle

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RWJBarnabas HEALTH

Barnabas Health, Robert Wood Johnson Health System Complete Merger

We are proud to announce the completion of the merger of Barnabas Health and Robert Wood Johnson Health System to form the most comprehensive health care system in the state of New Jersey — RWJBarnabas Health.

As one health system, RWJBarnabas Health will:

- ▶ Improve the overall health of our populations;
- ▶ Continuously advance the quality of care we provide;
- ▶ Collaborate with physicians for a closely coordinated continuum of care;
- ▶ Contribute to local, regional and state economies by remaining a major employer in our communities;
- ▶ Focus on the well-being of the diverse communities we serve with a commitment to high quality, culturally competent care; and
- ▶ Foster and support a mission of academic excellence, including a commitment to research and medical education.

Barnabas Health President and Chief Executive Officer Barry H. Ostrowsky is now RWJBarnabas Health's President and Chief Executive Officer, with former Robert Wood Johnson Health System and Robert Wood Johnson University

Hospital President and Chief Executive Officer Stephen K. Jones serving as Chief Academic Officer in the Office of the President.

"Barnabas Health and Robert Wood Johnson Health System share many attributes – depth of quality clinical services, skilled and dedicated clinicians, a legacy of teaching, a commitment to partnering with the diverse communities we serve, a responsibility as major contributors to our economy and so much more," said Mr. Ostrowsky. "By joining together, we have created the most comprehensive health system in the state, which will enable us to affect the kind of change in the health of our communities that our

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(left) Barry H. Ostrowsky, President and Chief Executive Officer for RWJBarnabas Health, sits with Stephen K. Jones, Chief Academic Officer for RWJBarnabas Health, after announcing the launch of the new partnership.

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two separate systems could not do alone. Our partnership also means a greater level of diversity in every respect — diversity in thought, clinical care delivery and workforce — a true reflection of New Jersey and of the people we serve.”

The new system will train more than 1,000 residents and interns annually and embrace the mission of academic medicine, which includes quality clinical care, joined with groundbreaking research and a commitment to medical education. Through coordination of existing academic and teaching medical centers and numerous community hospitals, RWJBarnabas Health will continue to attract and retain the finest health care professionals and physicians, and be better prepared to strengthen the health of our state’s diverse populations.

“Both Barnabas Health and Robert Wood Johnson Health System have a shared commitment to advancing medical education in our state,” said Mr. Jones. “As evidenced by Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital’s 40-year partnership with Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, and the proven teaching programs sponsored by

Barnabas Health medical centers, our respective health systems have served as the training ground for thousands of medical professionals. As RWJBarnabas Health, our commitment to education and research will be strengthened.”

RWJBarnabas Health is now New Jersey’s second largest private employer — with more than 32,000 employees, 9,000 physicians, and 1,000 residents and interns. The health systems contributed a combined total of over \$550 million in community benefit services annually. These investments support charity care, food pantries, community gardens, patient education, outreach and engagement programs and programs with schools and religious groups to keep people healthy and promote wellness. Together, RWJBarnabas Health will be able to accomplish even more for the communities it serves.

“By working together, we know we can combat disease and promote wellness in our region — truly making our communities healthier,” said Mr. Ostrowsky. “We will be working every day — with your help — to ensure that our vision becomes New Jersey’s reality.”

For more information, visit www.rwjbhinfo.org.

10 Ways To Engage Staff

What does it mean to be a great organization or physician’s practice? Engagement. When employees and physicians are engaged and aligned with the mission, patients thrive. This truth can be seen in the metrics we use to grade organizational performance: clinical outcomes, HCAHPS results, safety results and so forth. There’s plenty of evidence showing that when engagement improves, performance follows.

The good news is there’s plenty your office can do to engage employees. Here are a few examples:

- Make sure the "fit" is right from the beginning.
- Hardwire leader rounding for outcomes.
- Respect people enough to tell them the truth.
- Stop letting low performance slide.
- Don't underestimate the power of a front-line supervisor.
- Don't be "all business."
- Broach the subject of growth and personal development.
- Encourage mentorship.
- Ask for input.
- Say thank you.

Being a great health care practice doesn’t happen by accident. Neither does engagement. An engaged culture happens by design — the result of an organization that recognizes its advantages and makes a commitment to taking the steps to make it happen. It’s the greatest gift you can give your employees, physicians and the patients they serve.

For the full version of this article, visit [barnabashealthofficemanagersassociaton.org](http://www.barnabashealthofficemanagersassociaton.org).

Source: Quint Studer, founder of Studer Group. To learn more, visit www.studergroup.com.

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cardboard than plastic, plus paper products tend to biodegrade more easily. So, when you have the choice, pick pasta in the box instead of pasta in a bag, or detergent in the box instead of the bottle.

5. Say no to straws - Whether for home use or when you’re ordering a drink at a bar or restaurant, plastic straws are often a single-use item that are just not necessary.

6. Re-think your food storage - Instead of sandwich baggies and Saran wrap, pack your lunch in reusable containers and bags and use glass containers or jars for fridge storage.

7. Refuse plasticware – Don’t use plasticware at home and request restaurants do not pack them in your take-out box.

8. Shop in bulk - One of the best ways to reduce the plastic packaging waste madness is to bring your own bags and containers and stock up on bulk foods.

Sources: Green Education Foundation <http://www.greeneducationfoundation.org/nationalgreenweeksub/waste-reduction-tips/tips-to-use-less-plastic.html>

Treehugger <http://www.treehugger.com/green-home/11-easy-ways-reduce-your-plastic-waste-today.html>

Ask the Practice Management Expert

"Ask the Experts" is a question-and-answer forum featuring leading practice management experts.

Q: As office manager of Freeman Orthopedic and Sports Medicine, what is an important trait to employ when dealing with the pain management population?

A: As an interventional pain management practice, we employ various non-surgical and regenerative treatments to relieve a person's pain and restore function. Caring for the patient with prolonged pain is complicated because the pain may impact every aspect of a patient's life. The first step to treating these patients is to ensure they feel that they are being heard. This should start with front desk personnel and carry through to medical staff and the doctor.

Q: Because you treat some patients with chronic pain, your office faces unique challenges, particularly related to opioid medication management. How are you handling these challenges?

A: We, like all medical practices, are aware of the sensitive issues related to prescribing opioids. We all want to do the right thing, but balancing legitimate patient needs against detecting aberrant behaviors and other factors, while under the regulatory scrutiny of the Center for Disease Control, is a challenge.

Every practice must do their due diligence. This includes performing pill counts at office visits, communicating with pharmacies, maintaining controlled substance agreements with patients and utilizing the NJ Prescription Monitoring Program (NJMPMP).

Q: Are there other steps you take in trying to understand the legitimacy of the patient requesting pain medications?

A: Yes, unfortunately, some patients may wish to be deceptive in feigning the need for medications, whether due to addiction or reasons of diversion. We have implemented a multilevel approach to minimize risks, which includes steps that are applicable to nearly all medical practices.

Prior to accepting a new patient, we try to ensure the patient is a good fit for our practice and identify any problems by screening patients on the phone. Then, we go a step further by continuing to screen at the first office visit and beyond. By obtaining a detailed patient history initially, Dr. Freeman is able to identify inconsistencies upon his examination.

We also look for red flags when someone first calls to make an appointment. A patient who is self-paying can be an indicator that he or she is trying to stay under the radar when obtaining medications. Other signs of a potential problem include asking for medications immediately, an unfamiliar referral source and a patient travelling an unusually far distance to see us specifically for medications.

We rely on the NJMPMP before issuing any controlled substances. It is an invaluable tool that all office managers must ensure their practices are utilizing if they are prescribing controlled substances.

Q: Medications can be misused and abused, accidentally or intentionally. Opioids are often also diverted and sold. What do you do when you suspect someone may have a problem with their medication?

A: Regardless of the medication and treatment program, a practice should look for willingness of the patient to be part of a treatment program and not just focus on obtaining pain medications. If the practice experiences multiple unreasonable excuses or non-compliance with care, these red flags should be noted.

There are those who won't use prescribed medications due to fears of addiction, neglecting the opportunity for pain relief. It is important for patients to understand the difference between psychological addiction and physical dependence regarding pain medications.

Sometimes there are patients in the grey zone. A patient may have a significant history of injury or disease and an apparent need for medications but also demonstrate questionable behaviors. In these scenarios, a consultation by a pain psychologist can provide substantial insight.

These populations are very challenging, but there is a great need for patients in this difficult situation. Sometimes patients will come to our office visibly agitated. When this happens, our first step is always to try to assess and diffuse the situation. If a patient is upset because he or she is in pain, our staff makes a point to validate the individual's condition, giving them peace of mind and helping to calm the situation.

However, if a situation appears to be escalating, an office should have an appropriate plan in place to call 911. Protection of the staff, patients and office environment is of the utmost importance.

For more information on New Jersey's Prescription Monitoring Program, visit <http://www.nj.gov/lps/ca2/pmp/>.

For more information on treatment programs and services to the Barnabas Behavioral Health Network call 800 300 0628.

Our Expert

Gina Spagnole,
Office

Manager, Freeman Orthopedic
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Gina Spagnole serves as office manager at Freeman Orthopedic and Sports Medicine, where she has worked with Ted Freeman, D.O., for the past 14 years. Gina is responsible for all administrative aspects of the practice, including managing and hiring staff, credentialing, marketing and billing/coding and regularly serves as a liaison with patients and referring physicians.

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

In honor of the 10th Anniversary of the
Barnabas Health Office Managers Association
mark your calendars for
Wednesday, October 26, 2016.

Highlighting the evening's celebration will be

Oz Pearlman,

one of the busiest performing mentalists in the country!

This is a momentous achievement for our Association
and members.

We hope everyone will be able to join in the celebration!

Visit www.BarnabasHealthOfficeManagers.org for more
exciting details as they become available.

Have a practice management question?
Ask an expert!
Call us at 1.888.724.7123.



BEST Practice

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"You can get a discount on company health insurance
if you let your coworkers diagnose you with
information they find on the Internet."