

BEST Practice

A PUBLICATION FOR PHYSICIANS' OFFICE ADMINISTRATORS AND STAFF

The OMA is Growing

The RWJBarnabas Health Office Managers Association (OMA), the largest in New Jersey, has reached a new milestone with the addition of new members. The OMA, which was created more than 10 years ago and has grown to more than 3,000 members, provides medical practices and its office management team with educational programming, seminars and networking opportunities.

"With the evolution of this group through the formation of RWJBarnabas Health, we have been able to expand our programs in multiple locations throughout the state which not only allows greater participation but enhances further networking opportunities amongst colleagues in the system," said Alyssa Ruby-Mako, Regional Director, Physician Relations, RWJBarnabas Health. "We are now holding events in the Northern, Southern and Central regions of the state which have enabled us to attract more attendees, share best practices and collectively provide patients throughout New Jersey the highest quality of care."

The OMA has also added new members to its management team who will help enhance the already expansive resources provided to its members. The current management team includes:

- **Barnabas Health Behavioral Network:**
Shari Beirne, Jessica Alpert
- **Clara Maass Medical Center:**
Fran Monteleone
- **Community Medical Center:**
Brian Case, Holly St. Clair
- **Jersey City Medical Center:**
Cheryl Cilento
- **Monmouth Medical Center/Monmouth Medical Center, Southern Campus:**
Alyssa Ruby-Mako, Ashley Esposito, Nicole Tassinaro

- **Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton:** Angela Klizos, Jennifer Sweeney
- **Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital:** Lina Davila, Elizabeth Rancan, Matthew Joseph, Sereena Singh
- **Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Rahway:** Christina Manata, Mary Beth Loverti
- **Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset:** Beth Akkaway, Robin Levin
- **Barnabas Health Ambulatory Care Center:** Jamie Caamano, Diane Sirna Miller
- **Saint Barnabas Medical Center:** Noelle Roller, Corin Andrade

A membership-based organization, the OMA participant benefits include quarterly education and training programs such as CPT Coding, OSHA Compliance Trainings and Active Shooter Preparation seminars; networking opportunities with its annual "Meet Your Insurance Reps" Fairs and Annual OMA Celebration Dinner; sharing of resources via its quarterly *Best Practices* newsletter and electronic form access and so much more. Membership is free and open to physician practice office managers and administrators, billing managers or other administrative personnel employed by a physician or physician group consisting of at least one physician with active medical/dental staff privileges at an RWJBarnabas Health facility.

"The professional growth and networking opportunities available through membership in the Office Managers Association is unsurpassed in the state allowing office management and its physician office staff the opportunity

to be at the forefront of this highly dynamic era in health care," added Tom Biga, President, Hospital Division, RWJBarnabas Health.

"I look forward to our local practices joining the OMA and it is my hope that we see the fostering of new relationships through participation and events. For example, the recent "Meet Your Insurance Reps" Fair was a unique opportunity for local practices to meet one-on-one with insurance providers," said Christina Manata, Director of Physician Relations, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Rahway. "We often hear that contacting insurance companies can be time-consuming or frustrating, especially for a busy practice. It was encouraging to see how well received the event was, by both providers and physician office personnel. Attendees had many questions answered during the Fair

Continued on page 2.



Access to industry experts is one of the benefits of OMA membership.



OMA members network at events and share best practices.

Ask the Practice Management Expert

“Ask The Experts” is a question-and-answer forum featuring leading practice management experts.

Q: *First impressions are so important especially in a medical office where one literally could be placing his/her life or that of a loved one in another's care. What does your office do to ensure that the first impression is favorable?*

A: Our office at Newport Liberty Medical Associates, LLC, takes great strides in making sure the first impression of any patient is favorable right from the minute they arrive. This involves having a professional dress code that is followed by all staff members as well as a friendly smile at the front desk. Although we are in the field of healthcare it is important to understand that patients come to any doctor's office at their time of need when they are sick and will only come back if they had a good experience at the front desk; hence, we like to operate with the motto that the “customer is always right!” Our physicians also make themselves visible at the front desk during their shifts so that they see who is in the waiting room waiting to be seen. When patients see the physician whom they have been seeing for the last 10+ years, they feel at ease knowing great care is just a few minutes away.

Q: *How does your reception area and front office staff contribute to the first impression?*

A: Our office operates at 100 percent transparency and honesty with patients. Our team takes great efforts to explain to patients what their insurance benefits are, whether they have a deductible and what that means to them as far as payments are concerned at the check-in process itself. The insurance system can be confusing, so we try to help our patients understand the financial implications before treatment. We feel that once patients no longer have to worry about finances in the healthcare setting, they can approach the physician with added ease and walk out knowing they won't get hit with unwanted surprise bills in the mail.

Q: *As advances in technology are helping to streamline operations with the addition of patient portals and EHRs, how do medical practices such as yours maintain the personal connection with your patients?*

A: We like to maintain the personal connection with our patients by calling patients to inform them that their bloodwork results are in, so that they can come in to go over it with the doctor. This follow-up call also enables us to book appointments and streamline the patient flow through the office. We feel this is an added way to connect with patients versus just uploading the results to an online portal.

Q: *What sort of training do you provide for both new hires and current staff to make sure the right tone is being set from the first interaction? How do you garner feedback from your patients on overall patient experience?*

A: Our physicians totally agree that education is key to the success of any practice, and as a result, they dedicate a significant portion of their time during their shifts to train Medical Assistant students in the appropriate way to triage patients and to assist with procedures while they are in their externship. This personal attention allows us to have a firmer gauge on whether the candidate is a good fit for our office who would share the same motivation, enthusiasm and passion for medicine as my staff and colleagues all have. We further check in with our patients at the conclusion of their visit ensuring that their needs were met and that future appointments are booked if needed.

Q: *One of the most common complaints of patients are extended wait times to see a practitioner. While emergencies are inevitable, what measures does your office have in place to ensure patients are seen in a timely fashion or apprised of last-minute changes to schedule?*

A: Our office staff is one of the most efficient teams I have had the pleasure of working with in a long time. Due to their highly motivated and enthusiastic attitude, they are trained in getting patients triaged into the physician's exam room within 10-15 minutes of the patients entering the office.

Q: *First impressions often begin before the patient ever steps into the office or initiates the first phone call to make an appointment. He/she may seek information about your practice online or through social media. What steps do you take to make sure your digital footprint is also making a positive first impression?*

A: Our digital footprint is something that we are currently working on, so stay tuned for some big changes here at Newport Liberty Medical Associates, LLC.

Our Expert

Swarna Mani
Practice Manager for
Newport Liberty Medical
Associates, LLC



Overseeing the business side of a medical practice consisting of nine physicians and more than six subspecialty departments is no easy task, but one that Swarna Mani has relished since joining Newport Liberty Medical Associates, LLC, just over a year ago. In addition to identifying the needs of the practice to best service its patients, Swarna also works in tandem with her staff on all financials including billing, payroll and supply management. Swarna also serves as the head of Human Resources as it pertains to hiring and training of administrative and assistant positions as well as interviewing subspecialists who want to become a part of Newport Medical. Swarna began her career in medical office management in January 2018 before advancing to her current position in April 2018. Swarna, who has been happily married for eleven years and has two children, completed both an M.P.H. degree from Hunter College and an M.D. degree from Ross University School of Medicine.

Meet Your Insurance Reps Fair Expanded to Central Region

The sixth annual “Meet Your Insurance Reps” Fair was recently held in three locations throughout the state – Northern Region, Central Region and Southern Region. More than 260 OMA members had the opportunity to meet with insurance representatives on a one-one-basis, leave behind materials for future conversations and schedule additional time to discuss specific cases, if needed. Most important, personal relationships were developed for future interactions – all to the benefit of the patients they collectively serve. In an effort to provide the greatest resources to all of its members, the OMA hosted its first “Meet Your Insurance Reps” Fair in the Central Region where over 50 members attended.

Elena Osorio, the head of pre-certification for Orthopaedic Physicians & Surgeons, P.C. in Union who attended her first “Meet Your Insurance Reps” event as part of the Central Region, found this type of event very beneficial. Osorio believes the event advantageous as she was able to speak with insurance representatives that she has worked with previously as well as create new relationships.

“In addition to meeting with the various insurance companies, I was able to network with staff from other medical practices and discuss common issues like differing EMR systems,” added Osorio. “The laid-back atmosphere of this event was very inviting and allowed participants to create new friendships with insurance representatives as well as peers.”

At all three events, representatives from AmeriHealth, Cigna, Evicore, Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield, Horizon NJ Health, Multiplan, Oxford Qualcare, UnitedHealthcare Community Plan and UnitedHealthcare were in attendance to answer questions.

“This has been our fifth year attending RWJBarnabas Health’s “Meet the Insurance Reps” event and we are always warmly received by those in attendance,” said Anna Erickson and S. Catherine Morales, Experience Managers for Cigna Healthcare. “These types of events allow us to humanize our interactions and let medical practitioners and their office staff know we are here to help. It is also nice to see first-hand some of the positive outcomes that have resulted over the years as a result of our collaborative efforts.”

The OMA also invited staff from RWJBarnabas Health, including representatives from surgical services, behavioral health, breast center, sleep lab, radiology, pathology and cardiology to participate in the event and offer information about departmental services.

Continued from Cover Story.

and issues needing further resolution now had a personal contact. Opportunities that allow us to network are invaluable for the practices in the Rahway market and I look forward to the next OMA event and all that the organization has to offer.”

As the OMA continues to grow both in size and the resources that it offers, members can refer to the organization’s website, rwjbh.org/oma for copies of previous issues of *Best Practices*, listing of events and links to pertinent sites in government, professional coding and certification education and consumer forums.

Members, let us know what you would like to see in upcoming issues of Best Practice by calling 1-888-724-7123.



OMA attendees gather around tables hosted by insurance representatives.



First time attendees from physician offices affiliated with Rahway took advantage of networking with their colleagues while meeting the insurance representatives.



Alyssa Ruby-Mako, Regional Director of Physician Relations and, Sereena Singh and Lina Davila, Physician Management at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital welcomes Anna Malik a new OMA member and attendee at the “Meet the Insurance Reps” Fair.



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13th Annual OMA Celebration

Wednesday, October 30, 2019

APA Hotel Woodbridge
120 Wood Avenue South
Iselin, New Jersey

4 to 5 pm

Cocktail/Networking Reception, including
RWJBarnabas Health Vendor Tables

5 to 7 pm

Dinner • Raffle • Prizes
Comedic Entertainment

*More details to follow!
We hope you can join us.*

SAVE THE DATE