



A Publication for **Saint Barnabas Health Care System** Physicians' Office Administrators and Staff

BEST Practice

A Medical Emergency Can Occur At Any Time.

Are You Prepared?

Talk with the physician/s to first determine what emergencies are likely to occur in your office setting. Review the supplies and equipment that would be necessary, then stock the practice appropriately. Keep the items in one location and check the expiration dates and batteries regularly.

Promote basic life-saving skills training for non-clinical staff members. They are often the ones who are the first to see a patient's distress. Notify the staff of the time and location of CPR courses and provide an incentive for completing the course.

Assign everyone a role in the emergency plan and run drills to determine its effectiveness. Medical emergency supplies are helpful only if the entire staff knows where they are and how to use them.

Administrators Make the Office Work

Practice administrators manage all the business affairs of the medical practice including integrating business systems, managing staff and coordinating billing. The most successful administrators balance their knowledge of the business with leadership and people skills that foster a team mindset.

An open exchange of ideas and an atmosphere of respect can improve communication and enhance everyone's experience at the office—physicians, staff and patients. These suggestions can improve your power to make decisions and encourage the staff's best.

- ❖ **Leave Your Door Open** – *Know what is happening around the office everyday; you need all the facts to make good decisions. Stay informed and involved, but be sure not to leave your staff with the impression that you don't trust them to do their job effectively.*
- ❖ **Be Responsive** – *When the doctor has a question, respond promptly. Even if you don't know the answer yet, let him/her know you are working on it. Give your staff the same consideration when responding to their questions or suggestions.*
- ❖ **Speak Your Mind** – *Express your opinion, even if it is contrary to the physician's. You will earn respect by bringing your expertise and experience to the discussion. If you think a proposal is flawed, suggest allowing time for further research and discussion.*
- ❖ **Hire the Best** – *Never rush the hiring process. Do not let the pressure to fill a position push you into a decision you will regret. Always check references and hire the best person for the job.*

Set the Tone for Kindness and Respect

When visiting a doctor's office, patients and their family members are often feeling nervous and vulnerable. A little kindness and compassion on behalf of the office staff goes a long way in making their visit more comfortable.

We all learned The Golden Rule in kindergarten – treat others as you would like to be treated. In a physician's office it is important to be more than merely polite. Listen carefully, make eye contact and address patients as Mr. or Ms., sir or ma'am. Explaining any delays and wait times will demonstrate respect. The doctor's patients are your customers, so be sincere when you thank them for coming.

In the News

Legislators May Eliminate Medicare Reductions

On August 1, the US House of Representatives voted to approve the Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act (CHAMP). This legislation also includes provisions that eliminate the scheduled 9.9 percent Medicare physicians payment reduction for 2008 and the 5 percent reduction for 2009. A similar bill in the Senate does not include eliminating Medicare physicians payment reductions. The House and Senate must reconcile differences in the two bills and vote to approve a conference agreement before it goes to the White House for signature.

Do You Have Questions About NPI?

By now, most NJ physicians have applied for and received their 10-digit National Provider Identifier (NPI). The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) are using the NPI to simplify electronic transmission of HIPAA standard communications and efficiently coordinate health benefits transactions.

For the most-up-to-date details about NPI and compliance requirements, visit the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Web site at www.cms.hhs.gov/NationalProidentStand.

Dropping a Managed Care Contract

These simple steps can help office administrators and patients when a contract with a managed care company is terminated.

- ❖ *Identify patients who will be affected by the change and mail notification in advance that the medical practice will be terminating the managed care contract.*
- ❖ *Assure patients that the office will continue to provide medical care to them on an out-of-network basis.*
- ❖ *As a courtesy to patients the office can continue to submit claims to the insurance company for out-of-network benefits.*

The Link 1-888-SBHS-123

The Saint Barnabas Health Care Link puts information about our programs, services, physicians and facilities at your fingertips. Patients can use the Link to find a physician and even make an appointment. Physicians can contact a Director of Physician Services or 1.888.726.2362 to update their professional profiles at any time.

Directors of Physician Services

The Saint Barnabas Health Care System provides physicians and their office staff with a direct link to our Saint Barnabas System hospitals through the Directors of Physician Services. These physician liaisons can help you become familiar with our variety of services and assist you in accessing them. They are committed to ensuring that doctors, as well as their office staff and patients, have a flawless experience at all of the Saint Barnabas Health Care System facilities.

For more information about the Saint Barnabas Health Care System or assistance with any of our services, please contact:

- ❖ **Shari Beirne** 732.914.3805
Saint Barnabas Behavioral Health
- ❖ **Lauren Burke** 973.926.2632
Cardiovascular Services
- ❖ **Carrie Cristello** 973.322.7345
Saint Barnabas Ambulatory Care Center
- ❖ **Jean Flaherty** 732.557.2296
Community Medical Center
- ❖ **Fran Monteleone** 973.450.2997
Clara Maass Medical Center
- ❖ **K. Crystal Pate** 973.624.2331
Saint Barnabas Nursing and Rehabilitation Centers
- ❖ **Jessi Rosenbaum** 973.926.3636
Newark Beth Israel Medical Center
- ❖ **Alyssa Ruby-Mako** 732.557.7168
Kimball Medical Center
- ❖ **Lydia Spingler** 973.322.2827
Saint Barnabas Medical Center
- ❖ **Eileen VandeBunte** 732.923.7535
Monmouth Medical Center

Improving the Health of Your Practice –

There are common challenges to running an efficient, yet pleasant, physician office practice. While many problems cannot be eliminated altogether, these creative solutions can help you clear the biggest hurdles.

Part II: Purchasing the Appropriate Technology

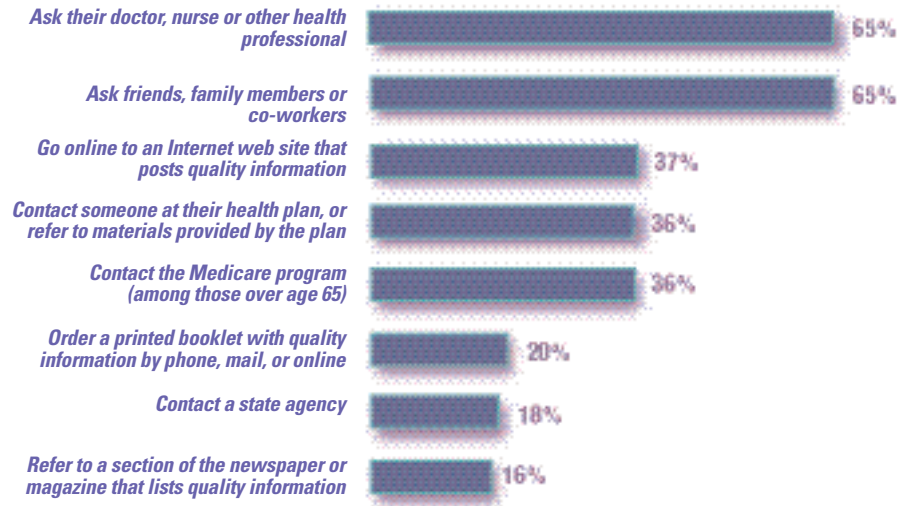
When considering the real-world needs of today's health care offices, physicians and office administrators are demanding more from practice management software than ever before. Practice management software can increase efficiency and reduce costs while managing the day-to-day operations. It can capture patient demographics, schedule appointments, maintain lists of insurance payers, perform billing tasks, and generate reports.

There are many practice management software options on the market from which to choose. The key to finding the best system for your office is having a firm handle on what the office needs. Let the unique needs of your office drive conversations with vendors. This strategy will help you focus on the important features and prevent distractions by fancy bells and whistles that may be interesting, but are irrelevant to your office.

For Part I of the series, see Summer 2007, Vo1 • Issue 1

What Influences a Patient's Decisions About Health Care?

The percentage of people who say they would be very likely to do each to try to find health care quality information:



Source: Kaiser Family Foundation/Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality/Harvard School of Public Health *National Survey on Consumers' Experiences with Patient Safety and Quality Information*, November 2004 (Conducted July 7 – September 5, 2004).

Robotic Surgery: The Future is Now

Robotic surgery is one of the fastest growing innovations in the field of medicine. State-of-the-art robotic technology provides surgeons with superior visualization, enhanced dexterity, and greater precision, making it possible to perform minimally invasive procedures that involve complex dissection or reconstruction. Patients benefit from the small incisions, less bleeding, significantly less pain and shorter recovery.

The Saint Barnabas Health Care System offers more robotic surgery systems than any other health care delivery system in the nation. Newark Beth Israel Medical Center is the only Robotic Training Center on the East Coast and one of only three in the nation. Surgeons at Community Medical Center, Monmouth Medical Center, Newark Beth Israel Medical Center and Saint Barnabas Medical Center are applying robotic technology in a variety of specialties including adult cardiac, adult urology, pediatric urology, general surgery, gynecology, gynecology oncology, and urogynecology.

The applications for robotic surgery are increasing with each passing month as more surgeons within the Saint Barnabas Health Care System are trained on these surgical systems.

New Jersey's Largest Office Managers Association

Nearly 400 physician office administrators and staff registered for the Saint Barnabas Health Care System Office Managers Association. Members of the new organization represent single and multiple physician office practices in a variety of medical and surgical specialties from across the state. The most frequently suggested topics of interest for educational seminars and lectures were billing, coding, collections, Medicare (changes/updates/rules), Human Resources issues, and strategies for dealing with difficult patients.

The first Office Managers Association meeting will be on November 1 at the Woodbridge Hilton, Iselin, NJ. Invitations will be mailed to members in the coming weeks.

There is still time to join the Saint Barnabas Health Care System Office Managers Association. Please complete this card and return it to Saint Barnabas Health Care System, 368 Lakehurst Road, Suite 304A, Toms River, NJ 08755.

Name: _____

Name of Practice: _____

Physician(s): _____

Office Address: _____

Office Phone: _____

Office Fax: _____

Hospital(s) of Affiliation: _____

Home Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Topics of Interest for educational seminars and lectures:

