

Want to save time in your practice? There's a playbook for that

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With 44% of physicians reporting signs of feeling burned out, chances are physicians in your private practice likely spend way too much time on nonpatient-facing tasks, ones that contribute to emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and other signs of professional burnout.

The “AMA STEPS Forward™ Saving Time Playbook” can help your private practice—and doctors working in other settings— reduce burnout by being more efficient and working smarter, not harder. In turn, physicians will have more time to take care of patients and themselves.

There are highlights from nine AMA STEPS Forward™ open-access toolkits within the playbook. It is part of the AMA STEPS Forward program that offers innovative strategies that allow physicians and their staff to thrive in the new health care environment. These courses can help you prevent physician burnout, create the organizational foundation for joy in medicine and improve practice efficiency.

The “Saving Time Playbook” highlights key messages and provides links to free online toolkits, videos, podcasts and practical tools you can use to initiate change in your practice today. It offers a high-level overview of an area and allows you to choose to dive deeper into at your own pace.

“Anyone interested in process improvement, time saving workflows, efficiency of practice and physician well-being can benefit from the content outlined and linked to within this playbook,” says the playbook’s introduction. Internists Marie Brown, MD, the AMA’s director of practice redesign and Christine Sinsky, MD, AMA vice president of professional satisfaction, are among the playbook’s authors.

End the unnecessary work

Physicians are all too familiar with the additional tasks piled on them resulting from widespread adoption of EHR systems. It’s just one example of unnecessary tasks that have become part of

physicians' and other clinicians' workloads in the past decade.

The playbook can help your private practice save time by learning to:

- | Eliminate unnecessary tasks and duplicative work. Discover how you can go about “getting rid of the stupid stuff,” including a de-implementation checklist to help get you started.
- | Streamline prescribing and management of prescriptions for chronic illnesses. Learn how you can renew and synchronize all prescription renewals at the same visit once annually—saving you up to five hours a week.
- | Optimize functional aspects of the EHR for physicians and care teams. Learn to manage your in-basket to save an hour or two of work daily and how to optimize your patient portal.

Standardize, streamline fundamentals

By standardizing and streamlining practice fundamentals or core workflows, physicians can save time during and between patient visits. This involves processes such as pre-visit planning, pre-visit laboratory testing, expanding rooming and discharge protocols, as well as team documentation. It can help a clinic run more smoothly and more easily handle unanticipated issues when they arise.

Save time by learning to:

- | Use the current visit to prepare for the next. Discover how pre-visit planning and pre-visit laboratory testing can help.
- | Work as a team to increase efficiency of rooming and discharge. Learn how nurses, medical assistants and other clinical support staff can use their skills to create smooth, efficient patient visits.
- | Document the visit as a team. The new guidelines allow your team to help with the documentation burden.

Getting your practice partners on board will help implement strategies to save time. Among other things, the playbook helps you use simple calculators to make your business case for implementation.

It takes astute clinical judgement, effective collaboration with colleagues, and innovative approaches to problem-solving to succeed in an independent setting that is often fluid, and the AMA offers the resources and support physicians need to both start and sustain success in private practice. Find out more about the AMA Private Practice Physicians Section, which seeks to preserve the freedom, independence and integrity of private practice.

STEPS Forward is part of the AMA Ed Hub™, an online learning platform that brings together high-quality CME, maintenance of certification, and educational content from trusted sources, all in one



place—with activities relevant to you, automated credit tracking and reporting for some states and specialty boards. Learn more about AMA CME accreditation.