Learning communities for private practice with Michael Tutty, PhD, MHA

AMA’s Moving Medicine video series amplifies physician voices and highlights developments and achievements throughout medicine.

Featured topic and speakers

In today’s episode of Moving Medicine, hear about a new learning collaborative for private practice physicians and how to get involved from Michael Tutty, PhD, MHA, group vice president, Professional Satisfaction and Practice Sustainability at the American Medical Association, in conversation with AMA Chief Experience Officer Todd Unger. The first session, E/M Documentation Burden Reduction, is currently underway. Forthcoming webinar topics include team documentation and recruiting newly graduated residents into private practice.

Speaker

- Michael Tutty, PhD, MHA, group vice president, Professional Satisfaction and Practice Sustainability

Transcript

Unger: Hello, this is the American Medical Association's Moving Medicine video and podcast. Today we're talking about a new learning collaborative for physicians in private practice. I'm joined by Michael Tutty, the AMA's group vice president of professional satisfaction and practice sustainability in Chicago. I'm Todd Unger, AMA's chief experience officer, also in Chicago. Michael, thanks so much for joining us today.

Tutty: Happy to be here.

Unger: As you know, the AMA recently introduced a recovery plan for America’s physicians. And the work that your team does is instrumental to that plan. Today we're going to talk specifically about
some solutions that your team has developed to help those in private practice address administrative burdens and to free up time to spend with patients.

So Michael, let's just start by talking a little bit about the last two years and some of the particular problems the pandemic has wrought on physicians in private practice. Why is now the right time to pivot to this idea of recovery?

**Tutty:** Well, as you know, the COVID pandemic has really sort of emphasized all the issues that physicians, particularly private practice physicians, were facing before the pandemic, but amplify those. And our recovery plan that we’re putting together is targeting many of those issues that make it harder for private practice physicians to be successful in caring for their patients. Whether that be the administrative burdens of things like prior authorization to the rising inflation we’ve had that practices are facing that increase costs, the difficulty of recruiting staff, yet payments, like our Medicare payment, have not kept up with inflation. And we need to work to make sure that physicians are appropriately reimbursed for the services that they offer. These are the types of topics that we’re covering in the recovery plan that specifically benefit private practice physicians.

**Unger:** Your team is leading the charge on developing resources to help practices increase efficiencies. That's an interesting word I want to dig into, what does that translate to on a daily basis? What's meaningful about that increasing efficiency as an element of recovery?

**Tutty:** Well, we know from our research, it's just intuitive that what makes physicians passionate about their work is caring for patients. What is burdensome are all those administrative burdens that the health care system layers on the practice of medicine that makes it harder to provide care. And so, we provide solutions that physicians can embark on to remove some of those administrative burdens, some of that time on the electronic health record, reduce the number of inbox messages, do team-based documentation so they're spending less time in the electronic health record.

So, while we work on some of those health system issues that are outside, like the prior authorization burden, there are resources and things that physicians can engage in to remove some of the administrative burdens within their own practice.

**Unger:** Well, speaking of those solutions, your team has recently introduced a new resource called the AMA Private Practice Simple Solutions. What's the thinking behind this resource? Tell us a little bit more about what’s in it, and what can it do to help.

**Tutty:** I'm really excited about this new resource, Todd. I don't know if this has ever happened to you. You’ve gone to a webinar or you've been to a conference and you get this great idea. But then when you get back to work, get started moving, you forget about it. And then a few days later, you start engaging that idea. But you're like, gee, I wish I had the opportunity to ask that question now that I'm in my office and go back and talk with that speaker.
So we're taking that the traditional sort of webinar video series, and we're adding an 8-week post period where that participants can engage in an online discussion forum and ask questions of the speaker that they hear about on this webinar that is prerecorded that the individuals can watch on their own time.

During that 8-week period post, they can ask questions of other participants, can hear case examples, and get those answers to the questions that they're facing as they're implementing the concepts into their practice. And then 6 weeks after we kick it off, we'll have another follow-up webinar where the speaker will answer the questions that were most common on the chat board, some of the struggles that people had in implementing the idea.

It will also highlight a couple of cases of people who implemented the ideas featured in the first webinar in their practice as case examples of how they did it. So, we're really trying to create these small communities. In each of these eight week learning cycles, we'll delve into a different topic, small nuggets of things that practices can embark on. And that if you keep stacking up these wins over the course of the year, you can really transition your practice to remove some of those administrative burdens and create a more successful and fulfilling private practice for yourself.

**Unger:** I love the model that you just kind of laid out. Will you take us through an example of how one of these learning cycles works. What does it actually look like if you're going to participate in one of these?

**Tutty:** Sure. Well, you can sign up on our AMA website. If you just go to our search and type simple solutions, you'll get right to the page that you can sign up and get access to the webinar. We're going to be starting with a topic around E/M coding documentation how to simplify that. But we'll have each of the 8-week cycles will have new topics.

And there is an opportunity for physicians to submit topics that they'd like us to tackle to improve their practice. So, we'll start with that E/M documentation. And on July 7, we'll be releasing that first webinar. And then there'll be an online discussion forum, for those who register, they'll be able to access and chat with the speaker and other people who are implementing that idea, that concept that they've heard in that first webinar.

And then 6 weeks out, we'll do a follow-up webinar where we'll answer all the most common questions as well as provide a couple of case examples of people who've been working on it who want to feature and highlight what they've done to remove some of the administrative burden.

We're really excited by this. We're going to be tackling topics like team documentation or how to recruit in a private practice. Now while many of these ideas could help all physicians, regardless of their practice setting, we're tailoring each of these webinars specifically to those in private practice.
Unger: I love how you get the benefit of the webinar and the expertise. But the interactive component that you laid out on top of that is a really neat idea. Exactly how does that piece work? And how do others learn from the questions that are laid out by those who attended as well?

Tutty: Well the great thing is we’re creating this learning community, and we’ll create one around each topic. So there is an online discussion forum, you’ll be able to see the questions posted by others and the responses, because you may realize that you have the same question as other people participating.

And then we’re also going to be looking for volunteers of people who’ve implemented the concepts for that 6-week webinar, where we can highlight those, what they challenge, what they were successful at. So we can really understand as we work in the community how we can tackle these different problems.

So it's not just go to a webinar, go back to your practice, and a few days later you're working, you're seeing patients, and you're like, what was that? What was that concept? I have some questions now that I'm in my practice that I want to be able to do to implement that idea. And that's why we created this online community. And so we're going to be cycling through various topics.

As I mentioned, the E/M documentation burden reduction is our first one. We'll be rolling one out on team documentation, and then we'll be working on recruiting for the private practice. So those are some of our first three. But we'll also be looking to get insights during that discussion forum, or those who want to submit additional topics that they'd like us to tackle.

Unger: Well, that sounds like a terrific agenda coming up. If there are physicians out there who are interested in participating in the collaborative that's underway now or in future ones, where do they go to find out more information?

Tutty: Well, it's just easy, go to the AMAs website at ama-assn.org, go to the search engine, type in simple solutions, and it'll be the first hit. And you can click on there, and it'll allow you to learn more information about this series as well as register to participate.

Unger: Michael, thank you to you and your team for all your work you're doing to support physicians in all practice settings, and for this work specifically aimed at those in private practice. That wraps up today's episode. We'll be back with another Moving Medicine video and podcast soon. In the meantime, you can check out all our videos and podcasts at ama-assn.org/podcasts. Thanks for joining us today. And please take care.

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