

Change some key workflows to save time, cut doctor burnout

AUG 5, 2022

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Interested in saving time by learning how to use the current visit to prepare for the next? What about working as a team to make rooming and discharge more efficient? Or documenting a visit as a team?

Standardizing and streamlining these practice fundamentals and core workflows can help physicians and team members feel less frustrated and help clinics or health systems run more smoothly, while providing more opportunities to handle unanticipated issues that come up during the day.

The “AMA STEPS Forward[®] Saving Time Playbook” can help physicians and health systems 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. Learn more by reading, “Want to save time in your practice? There’s a playbook for that.”

Reducing physician burnout is a critical component of the AMA Recovery Plan for America’s Physicians. You took care of the nation. It’s time for the nation to take care of you. It’s time to rebuild. And the AMA is ready.

Far too many American physicians experience burnout. That’s why the AMA develops resources that prioritize well-being and highlight workflow changes so physicians can focus on what matters—patient care.

In part two of the playbook, physicians and health systems can learn how to incorporate practice fundamentals to save time.

Use pre-visit planning, lab tests

When the patient is in the exam room, it’s a good time to start preparing for his or her next visit because it makes for a more efficient and transparent process for the patient and physician.

Pre-visit planning includes scheduling future visits and arranging for pre-visit labs. It can:

- Empower care team members to close potential care gaps before the physician sees the patient.
- Allow patients and staff to schedule several future planned care appointments at once.
- Help ensure the appropriate time intervals are followed for appointments and associated labs in a reminder system when a visit planner or open-access scheduling system is used.

For example, a practice with 1,000 patients who need regular laboratory testing because of medical conditions or medications can save more than 200 hours of physician and staff time when they incorporate pre-visit laboratory testing. This time and cost savings calculator can help determine how much a practice or health system will save by incorporating pre-visit laboratory testing.

The AMA STEPS Forward “Pre-Visit Planning” and “Pre-Visit Laboratory Testing” toolkits can help you dig deeper into how to incorporate these time saving workflows.

Follow rooming and discharge protocols

Expanding rooming and discharge protocols by allowing other team members to take on additional responsibility gives physicians the opportunity to spend more time directly interacting with patients and their care partners. It also helps ensure that patients understand and remember their discharge instructions.

For example, nurses or medical assistants can print and review an updated medication list and visit summary during discharge. During rooming, they can be the ones to identify the reason for a visit and help the patient set a visit agenda.

The AMA STEPS Forward “Expanded Rooming and Discharge” toolkit can help your practice or health system make the changes.

Team documentation

When another team member helps a physician document visit notes—a process commonly referred to as scribing—it helps the patient-physician relationship. This is because the physician can focus on their patient rather than being distracted with the electronic health record.

Practices also report that they have experienced cost savings overall because physicians can see more patients when they’re spending less time on documentation. Explore the AMA STEPS Forward “

Team Documentation” toolkit to learn more about how the process works and how your practice can transition to regularly using a scribe.

The “Saving Time Playbook” includes 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 resources can help you prevent physician burnout, create the organizational foundation for joy in medicine and improve?practice efficiency.?