Team and Individual Training

It is the responsibility of each team member to become proficient at his/her job. When employees are properly trained for their positions, they deliver the most effective job performance for the practice and its patients. Unfortunately, regular training for individuals and teams often takes a backseat to busy practice life. What you may not realize is that training is the foundation for a successful practice. Here’s why:

In chiropractic, turnover is high and job satisfaction is often low. According to a report published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in September 2012, the median number of years that wage and salary workers have been with their current employers is 4.6 years. However, in the healthcare support services sector, this number drops to 3.3 years and in the Chiropractic profession it is lower still. The reasons cited are often low pay and no opportunities for learning and growth.

In a separate report published by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) in October 2012, “opportunities to use skills and abilities” outranked “job security” for the first time since 2004. One of the most significant recommendations that came out of that report was that there is a critical need to continuously develop existing employees. Employees frequently have skills and abilities that reach beyond their positions. This is especially prevalent in the entry-level positions often found in chiropractic offices and that rely on ‘on-the-job’ training for those positions. Career development offers employees the opportunity to take part in more advanced or diverse activities (e.g., training, networking, etc.) that result in improving existing skills, gaining new skills, taking greater responsibility at work, and earning higher incomes. Developing and enhancing chiropractic assistants’ (CAs) and doctors’ knowledge base has never been more important than it is now. The number of compliance regulations for healthcare is growing by the day, and doctors are finding it nearly impossible to keep up with them all. Well-trained and dependable assistants are not a luxury; they are a necessity. Now is the time to develop your assistant’s abilities so his/her important skills contribute to the protection of the practice. Having someone with truly qualified eyes watching over the business side of the practice allows the doctor to focus on the treatment side of the business and let his/her passion and energy drive practice operations.

If your office hasn’t kept up with ongoing training and education for your team members, make training a priority for the coming year. Use the checklist at the end of this document to plan training strategies, to determine baseline skills for various employees, to plan new skills for yourself, and take greater responsibility for the delivery of services and care in your office. Use the topics on the checklist for mini-training sessions during your weekly staff meetings. Coupled with your KMC University personalized curriculum, these topics provide an outline of what to work on with individuals and/or your entire team.

While the checklist is not all-inclusive, you can use it see where you need some additional training. Since job satisfaction is directly related to the confidence employees feel with regard to their jobs, make this year the year that you contribute more to the practice AND to job satisfaction. Explore training opportunities in your area—look for state chiropractic conventions, online webinars or other types of online training. Set goals to work on each quarter and then notice how meeting the goals bring more efficiency, effectiveness, and success to your office. Don’t be surprised at how these changes affect turnover rates and employee satisfaction, too.
Chiropractic Skills Checklist

General Chiropractic and Office Skills

☐ Mastery of general chiropractic terminology
☐ Mastery of general third-party payer terminology
☐ Mastery of general phone skills
☐ Mastery of general computer skills

Front Desk Skills

☐ Proper handling and completion of new patient phone calls
☐ Proper scheduling techniques for NP visits and routine visits
☐ Ability to accurately schedule multiple appointments from the Report of Findings through the first examination
☐ Mastery of the practice management computer system
☐ Basic collections capabilities in order to keep patient account balances in check

General Third-Party Insurance Skills

☐ Recognizes how major medical insurance works
☐ Competent with Worker’s Compensation in your state
☐ Experience with Personal Injury for the state
☐ General knowledge of Medicare, including enrollment, who is covered, your carrier, and chiropractic coverage
☐ General knowledge of Medicaid as it applies to the state
☐ Excellent collections skills and techniques when working with third-party payers

Coding Knowledge

☐ Ability to correctly apply all coding used in a chiropractic practice
☐ Basic ability to use ICD-10 diagnostic coding and apply it to proper billing
☐ Strong ability to code for Chiropractic Manipulative Treatment (CMT) Therapies and X-rays
☐ HCPCS coding for chiropractic durable medical equipment and other non-CPT coded items
☐ Mastery of the coding rules as they apply to timed modalities and procedures
☐ Well-grounded in the proper use of modifiers for chiropractic reporting and billing
☐ Strong foundation in how Evaluation and Management coding is used in chiropractic.
General Billing and Collections Knowledge

The following items relate to Major Medical, Worker’s Compensation and Personal Injury:

- The ability to properly verify third-party insurances; recognize the nuances of each
- Strong proficiency in paper and electronic billing techniques, systems, and schedules
- Strong system skills to ensure accurate input of mail-in billing and collections system
- Extensive experience processing and posting inbound third-party payments, including line item postings
- The skills necessary to install and properly manage a system that includes proactive aging report follow-up, reactive daily follow-up, and ongoing tickler follow-ups to maximize collections
- High-level ability to conduct appeals processes with third-party payers in order to collect all monies due to the office
- Experience with proper patient billing and follow-up techniques, including statements and collections processes
- The ability to record statistical management for the Billing and Collections Department to maximize efficiency in reporting to doctors and management

Medicare Knowledge

- Familiar with proper Medicare verification, including identifying replacement plans, secondary and supplemental insurance, and other self-insured Medicare options
- Experience with special Medicare billing requirements including MIPS and carrier policies
- Mastery of special coding requirements for Medicare, including diagnosis and CPT coding and special modifiers
- Able to master proper use and management of the Advance Beneficiary Notice (ABN)
- Well-grounded in the requirements and elements of the Medicare Appeals process

Compliance Knowledge

- Mastery of the rules as they apply to patient financial policy including proper fee schedules, legal discounts, and hardship agreements
- Familiar with the Office of Inspector General (OIG) Compliance Program for small practices and commitment to follow these rules
- Compliant with HIPAA privacy policies related to requirements for healthcare employees
- Mastery of the compliance policies and procedures for your practice