

system, electronic health record system and an interactive website linked to a patient portal.

Many small practices lack the internal expertise to select and maintain information technology (IT) applications. My own IT support vendor ranks closely behind my family in importance. When my system is having problems, my family drops to second place!

Check the experience and stability of the support vendor that you select. How does the vendor recruit and train staff, and are they certified? How does the IT support vendor charge for services (hourly or monthly rate, special “after hours” rate), and what’s the method for prioritizing requests for assistance?

Human Resources

Your employees are your most important assets. Recruiting, hiring, firing, supervising, training, performing regular evaluations, making sure you comply with state and federal law, reviewing your benefit package and upgrading your salary scales are some of the tasks that you should be doing on a regular basis.

You have three options for outsourcing. You can ask an external consultant to do one or more of these tasks. You can also ask a single vendor to help with multiple human resource tasks in what is called business process outsourcing (BPO).

You can also partner with a professional employer organization (PEO). With the PEO option, your employees are actually on the payroll of the PEO and you “lease” them back.

Compliance

If managed care ranks first as the aspect of practice management that physicians hate, compliance ranks a close second. Believe it or not, some practices don’t pay any attention to compliance at all, putting

themselves at great risk.

You should have a formal compliance plan that addresses Medicare and Medicaid issues, and you should also be compliant with other relevant rules and regulations such as OSHA, CLIA and HIPAA Privacy and Security. With respect to HIPAA, the Omnibus Final Rule that went into effect in 2013 changed some of the original requirements, so make sure you are up to date.

The best resource for creating a compliance plan is an attorney who is

experienced in that aspect of medical practice management. Consultants other than legal counsel can help you with operational issues, such as policies and procedures. Most attorneys and other consultants charge an hourly rate.

Remember, you don’t have to do everything internally. If the increasing complexity of medical practice management feels overwhelming, investigate the outsourcing option, keeping in mind that your external partners will work best with internal support and guidance.

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