

Why You Should Not Reward Your Billing Staff for Collections



Do not incentivize and reward your billing staff for reduced days in accounts receivable, increased collections or decreased non-contractual (bad debt) write-offs!

I bet you thought I was going to say that billers are paid to do a job and they should not be incentivized for doing the job you hired them to do.

Not true – I am not against incentivizing employees to do a job at all; most people enjoy a challenge and feel great when they reach a goal.

However, when a subset of employees in your practice is incentivized for increasing revenue, you can be sure it will create resentment and low morale for the rest of your employees. Do you think word won't get around that you're rewarding the billers? If so, you're completely wrong. There are no secrets in a medical office. People know what others make, and regardless of what your Employee Handbook might say, it is not grounds for termination for employees to share what they make with others.

What I do encourage you to do is to incentivize your ENTIRE staff to reduce days in accounts receivable, increased collections and decrease non-contractual (bad debt) write-

offs. Ultimately, your entire staff is responsible in one way or another for collections.

Consider how each person in your practice must contribute to the overall effort to make sure collections are at goal:

Front Desk: entering/verifying demographics and picking the right insurance plan for each patient; collecting the correct amount at time of service, whether it is an exact amount or an estimate of the patient's responsibility.

Phones/Scheduling: making new patients aware of financial policies and what will be expected at time of service ("Please remember to bring the credit card you'd like us to keep on file for you"); making sure that Medicare patients know the difference between an Annual Wellness Visit and a Complete Physical.*

All clinical staff including Physicians/PAs/NPs: making sure that the patient signs an Advance Beneficiary Notice (ABN) for any services that insurance will not pay for, regardless of whether the patient is Medicare or non-Medicare**, before the service is rendered.

Manager: addressing patient complaints that escalate to you quickly and efficiently, not giving a patient any reason not to pay; making sure you have an easy-to-read-and-understand Financial Policy*** explaining your collection at time of service policy.

Everyone: embracing a culture of Customer Service, making sure that patients are satisfied with their experience; sending a consistent message to patients that you are interested in bringing them value for their dollars and reinforcing your desire to have an ongoing relationship with them.

Complete the [Contact Form here](#) to request any of the free resources discussed in this post and listed below.

- *Cheat Sheet for Medicare visits
- **Non-Medicare Advance Beneficiary Notice (ABN)
- ***Financial Policy

Image by Samuel Zeller