

FIRST CHOICE HEALTH

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

<http://www.FirstChoiceDoc.com>

Quarterly Newsletter

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2002

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Practice-Management Strategies: Recruiting The Right Person

Shortages of nurses and allied health professionals are predicted to last for several decades. In today's tight medical staff employment market, finding a skilled new employee – someone with “the right mix” to be a long-term member of your team - can be time consuming and challenging. The process of recruiting and selecting an employee must be effective and efficient.

There is no method for hiring a new employee that completely eliminates the risk of a candidate being a poor fit. To increase the likelihood of positive selection outcomes, always start with an assessment of the position (roles, scope, and responsibilities). Establish educational & experience qualifications (formal training & skills), and identify the interpersonal & communication skills necessary for successful integration with your current medical or office staff. Finally, if it doesn't already exist, establish a written job description for the position you intend to create or fill.

Recruitment strategies vary – with the least expensive and frequently most successful method being “word of mouth.” One of your current employees or a trusted peer may know someone looking for an opportunity similar to the position you seek to fill. Always let colleagues and contacts in your professional network know that you are looking for a new staff person.

A second, more traditional approach is to list the position in local newspapers or online employment portals. This process can be costly and inefficient, and you



should expect a wide range of responses to your ad – many of which will be from people lacking the basic skills, training, or qualifications necessary for consideration. You or your Clinic Manager will need to screen the responses, narrowing the pool of candidates to include only the most qualified individuals (based on the criteria established in the job description).

Another time-tested approach is to work with a local or regional placement agency that specializes in medical staffing. Initially, this may appear to be the most expensive course of action, but the advantage is that applicants are pre-screened, with backgrounds, qualifications, and experience verified prior to the candidate being referred to you for consideration. Online portals specializing in medical staffing are also increasing in number.

The process of interviewing a candidate can be as straightforward or as complicated as you prefer. In general, you will want to:

1. Screen the applicants and identify the top three to six candidates.
2. Conduct a telephone interview to get an idea of the applicant's personality and interpersonal skills, to confirm education & experience, and to determine whether or not the applicant's

Continued: Practice-Management Strategies



salary requirements are in your range. It is always a good idea to keep written notes from

each interview with a given candidate.

3. Set a time and location for a face-to-face interview. Meeting the candidate in the office or location in which they will be working if selected is usually the best plan. Conduct interviews with a predetermined set of questions for each candidate to answer. The questions should be written out with a space for the name of the candidate. Be consistent about recording each candidate's response to all questions. This will help you recall or differentiate specific candidates in the selection process, and limits your potential for exposure to any discrimination-based legal action.

4. REMEMBER you cannot ask questions related to race, religion, age, ethnic background, gender, marital status, or national origin.

Questions in these areas are "off limits." Stick to questions that are relevant to filling the position consistent with the requirements and qualifications listed in the job description.

5. Review the applicant's information prior to any interview. Allow plenty of time for the interview process with each candidate. Having your Clinic Manager or other staff members participate in the candidate interview – for the purpose of gathering informed second opinions - is usually a very good idea.

6. Interviewing is subjective. Once you decide on a top candidate we recommend doing a thorough education, employment, reference and (if applicable) license verification. In addition to providing a professional resume, the candidate should also have completed an "Employment Application" with name, address, phone, and other pertinent data. The candidate should also provide personal and professional references. Many employers have the candidate complete the employment application before or

after the face-to-face interview, and request the candidate's permission to contact the current employer.

7. Many employers also require the top candidate to successfully complete a pre-employment drug screen.

Achieving a successful outcome in the process of screening & hiring a new employee requires you to be diligent, focused, and consistent. Now more than ever, it pays to be wise in spending time hiring, rather than firing. If you have questions, need sample interview or job description forms, or would like to brainstorm interview questions, contact the First Choice Health Physician Assistance Program. Unlimited consultation on Human Resource issues - and on other topics of importance to you and your medical practice – is just one of the benefits available through the trained staff members of the PAP. Call us at 1-800-777-1323.

The Average physician reports seeing 120 patients and writing 179 prescriptions per week on average.

- Manhattan Research 2002

HIPAA and Your Practice

HIPAA and Your Practice

The Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act has led to unprecedented changes in the operational aspects of medical practices. HIPAA targets improved efficiency in the delivery of healthcare services (via standardization of electronic data interchange) and the protection of consumer information (via enforcement standards). The following article is based on information available online at www.hipaadvisory.com.

More Specifically, HIPAA calls for:

1. Standardization of electronic systems for collecting & protecting patient health, administrative and financial data.
2. Unique health identifiers for individuals, employers, health plans and health care providers.
3. Security standards protecting the confidentiality and integrity of "individually identifiable health information" - past, present and future.

Continued: HIPAA and Your Practice

Who Is Affected?

All healthcare organizations including solo-physician practices.

Are There Penalties For Violations?

Yes, HIPAA calls for civil and criminal penalties for non-compliance. The penalties range from \$25K (for violation of the same standard in the same calendar year) up to \$250K and/or imprisonment.

What Are The Compliance Deadlines?

Physicians will have 24 months from the effective date of the final rules to achieve compliance. Most rules were published in 2000. Revisions have been frequent. Compliance will be necessary by the first half of 2003.

How Will You Be Affected?

The fact is, in any medical environment, 19 separate security policies must be in place to meet 61 specific conditions (68, if the provider utilizes a computer network capable of transmitting client information).

What Action Steps Will Effective Compliance Require?

Action Steps will include:

- ❑ Building organizational and employee awareness of HIPAA-related issues.
- ❑ Comprehensive assessment of the practice's information security systems, policies and procedures.
- ❑ Developing a technological and systems-management infrastructure to implement the compliance plans.
- ❑ Implementing a comprehensive action plan, including:
 1. Developing new policies, processes and procedures
 2. Building "chain of trust" agreements with service organizations
 3. Designing & Implementing a compliant "information systems" infrastructure
 4. Purchasing new - or upgrading - information systems equipment
 5. Developing new internal communications protocols
 6. Training, implementation, quality & compliance assurance

The First Choice Health Physician Assistance Program offers online access to current HIPAA-related information at www.firstchoicedoc.com. When you access the PAP site, click on the **Practice Support** button for site descriptions and links to regularly updated HIPAA content. We will also continue to use our Newsletter to inform you of breaking news, changes, trends, and proposed modifications related to HIPAA.

It has been estimated that HIPAA compliance will consume 33 cents of every healthcare dollar spent between now and 2003.

THE SCIENCE & ART OF THE POWERNAP

According to recent results reported in a press release from the National Institute of Mental Health, research done at Harvard University strongly suggests that periods of sleep (including lunchtime or afternoon "cat naps") revitalize the brain's ability to process, sort and absorb information. It appears that even brief periods of sleep make people more effective learners -and, therefore, more effective professionals, employees, etc.

The article goes on to note that middle of the day periods of sleep may help people, especially early risers, compensate for the benefits lost as a result of interrupting or missing later stages of sleep. Just as defragmenting a hard drive improves a computer's ability to quickly sort, store, and retrieve data, the daytime "powernap" seems to increase a person's ability to retain and integrate information – and develop new skills. For the full text of the NIMH press release go to:

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/events/sleep.cfm>



Each year over 10-billion bandages are sold in this country. That is about 35 bandages per man, woman, and child.

(Sanjhay Gupta, CNN 8/1/02)

QUALITY, CONVENIENCE, & RELIABILITY

FIRST CHOICE HEALTH

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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**Bringing Balance to
Work, Home and Life**

This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. If specific health or medical advice or assistance is desired, the services of a licensed healthcare professional should be sought. The information in the First Choice Health PAP Quarterly Newsletter is not meant to replace the advice or expertise of your physician or healthcare provider. If you are experiencing health problems or contemplating lifestyle changes such as diet or exercise, consult your healthcare provider ahead of time to ensure your well being.

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