



A NEWSLETTER FOR THE MEMBERS OF
OHIO MEDICAL GROUP MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

MedMANAGEMENT *Matters*

Volume 2 / Issue 3
FALL 2011

Message from the *President*



Ohio MGMA President
William H. Thorner,
CMPE

Senior Business Director,
Ophthalmology and
Neurosurgery
Cincinnati Children's Hospital
Medical Center

I hope this summer is going well for you and your practice. I would like to take this opportunity to discuss training future leaders in practice management. I think we owe it to our profession to educate and mentor future leaders. This summer I gave an opportunity to Tyler Fry, a Xavier University student pursuing graduate studies in hospital and healthcare administration. He had the opportunity to work on human resources projects, strategic plans, business plans, financial statements, and other challenging projects. I encourage you to reach out to students in your local community or staff within your office, and look for ways you can develop future leaders in practice management. Please communicate with anyone who could benefit from the Ohio MGMA. We would like each member to share their knowledge about practice management and the benefits of the Ohio MGMA. If you would like a sample development plan, I would be glad to share with you.

Please contact me or an Ohio MGMA Board Member if we can help you or your practice. My phone number is (513) 636-8879 or email at william.thorner@cchmc.org.

Ohio MGMA Conference



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Never Even Think Of It"

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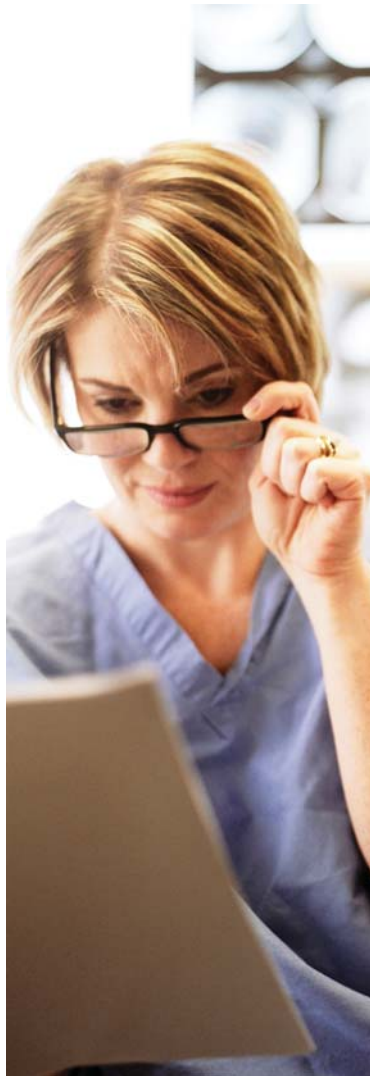
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MedMANAGEMENT *Matters*



MedManagement Matters

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Advertising

Advertising space is available for industry suppliers. For rates, ad specs and deadline dates for future issues please contact the Ohio MGMA office at (330) 621-4353 or by email at main@ohiomgma.com

A Call to Authors

Ohio MGMA welcomes the submission of articles and other information from our members for publication. To submit a potential article/information for the next issue please contact the Ohio MGMA office at (330) 621-4353 or by email at main@ohiomgma.com

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OHIO MGMA

Purpose & Objective

- To promote a program of mutual education in the field of medical group practice administration.
- To disseminate information of mutual interest.
- To improve administration in medical groups in order to serve the members of the Association, the medical groups they represent and medical group practice.
- To cooperate with other organizations having similar aims and objectives.

Upcoming *Events*

Save The Date

Friday, September 16, 2011

Ohio MGMA Annual Fall Conference

Predicting the Future of Medical Practice Management

8:30am – 4:00pm

The Conference Center at NorthPointe
Lewis Center, OH

Featuring Keynote Speakers:

Rosemarie Nelson

Principal, MGMA Healthcare Consulting Group

Jamie Verkamp

Partner and Director, Growth and Development, (e)Merge

Brian O Phillips, M.A., M.Ed.

Chief of Medical Informatics

Ohio University College of Osteopathic Medicine and Assistant Professor

Ohio University College of Communication

Webinars

Ohio MGMA has been pleased to offer our members 6 free, educational webinars so far this year. Stay tuned to the Ohio MGMA website at www.ohiomgma.com for more information and registration on upcoming webinars for our members.

Local Chapter Meetings

Cincinnati MGMA

CMGMA Upcoming Luncheon Meetings

November 18 - Orley Rumberg

December 9 - VonLehman

Salary Survey

All meetings will be from 11:30 am - 1:00 pm.

More information:

www.mgmacincinnati.com

Miami Valley MGMA

2011 Annual Seminar & Vendor Show

September 14, 2011

More information:

www.mvmgma.com

Northeast Ohio MGMA

Fall Symposium

September 7, 2011

Contact Chapter President:

Lisa Tavallali

ltavalli@gmail.com

Save The Date

Predicting the Future of Medical Practice Management



Ohio MGMA Annual Fall Conference

**Friday,
September 16, 2011**

**The Conference
Center at NorthPointe
Lewis Center, Ohio**

**Registration is
open online at
www.ohiomgma.com**

“FRAUD? NOT IN OUR PRACTICE. MY OFFICE MANAGER WOULD NEVER EVEN THINK OF IT”



Timothy S. Childers,
CPA, MBA

Principal - Healthcare
LarsonAllen LLP

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With over 20 years experience in working with medical practices, I can't count the number of times I have heard those words come out of a physician's mouth. We all develop a very high degree of trust over long periods of times with our staff but as we experience rough economic times it is time to reconsider the way your practice operates. Please consider these facts from a recent national survey conducted by the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners:

1. A typical organization will lose 5% of its annual revenues to fraud. A global figure that amounts to \$2.9 Trillion in losses. Based upon same, the average medical practice doing \$5 million in annual revenues is losing \$250,000 per year to fraudulent activities.
2. It is estimated that nearly 6% of fraud losses occur in the Healthcare Industry with a median loss of \$150,000 per fraud case.
3. The vast majority of the fraud is occurring within small organizations with less than 100 employees. This is primarily due to the lack of internal controls that small businesses have to help prevent fraud.
4. As we all know, during these tough economic times, employers have been reducing staff which reduces the proper segregation of duties which increases the businesses susceptibility to fraud. In addition, tough economic times will drive employees to steal from their employer to support their personal lifestyles.

As practice administrators, you are experienced in the medical field but typically you are not an accountant and especially not an expert in fraud. As a result the question becomes: how can you run your business, take care of your employees and patients but still operate a business that is efficient and highly profitable? An efficient and well operated practice can properly deter the risk for fraud and as a result create profits.

We recently dealt with a practice whose administrator was in charge of the majority of the practice's daily accounting; i.e. processing payroll, handling payables, recording journal entries, and so on. Sound familiar to anyone? The practice clearly lacked the proper staff to properly segregate duties. As a result, the administrator was easily able to misappropriate funds from the medical practice.

Some of the more common fraud schemes we see include:

5. Skimming of Cash Receipts/Write off-Adjustments to receivables
6. Refund checks to friends or relatives
7. Payments to fictitious vendors and supply vendor "deals" to get business
8. Payroll adjustments to wage rates, hours, and excess vacation time.
9. Falsified Expense Reimbursements
10. Inappropriate use of credit cards for personal expenses

Now that we hopefully understand the possible fraud schemes; what can you do to protect yourself and your practice's assets? Here are just a few suggestions that we have found effective in preventing and deterring fraud that are typically inexpensive to implement:

11. When is the last time you reviewed your bank reconciliation, bank statement, or questioned any of the business expenses or payroll costs? If you answered never or seldom then you may be at risk for fraud and are possibly losing profits and cash flow every year.
12. Share duties – For example, if the administrator is responsible for substantially all of the businesses operations try teaching another admin staff how to perform bank reconciliations. It is simple and properly segregates responsibilities which will increase the detection of fraud and makes it difficult for your office administrator to be able to easily steal from the practice.
13. Does your business have an employee manual that includes language surrounding a zero tolerance policy and ethical conduct codes?
14. Implement good hiring practices including background checks, reference contacts and verifying work histories – An ounce of prevention is worth of pound of cure.
15. Implement and monitor internal controls such as dual check signatures or an independent review of payments to vendors.
16. Mandated vacations for all employees for at least one week in duration each year. Believe it or not, there are many cases of fraud being committed by trusted employees who never seem to take vacation so that they can consistently cover up their schemes.
17. Training employees on what constitutes fraud and how it is prevented, detected and reported.

If you suspect fraud in your practice or are simply



concerned that the opportunity for fraud exists, here are a few simple recommendations:

18. First, don't take anything for granted.
19. Investigate before accusing because the fraud will likely continue if you continue to monitor it.
20. Understand your areas of weak internal controls.
21. Don't tip your hand to other management team members until you know all of the facts.
22. Finally, contact your CPA, Attorney or

consultant for their advice.

23. Consider having an outside organization conduct a professional and thorough fraud examination.

"The bottom line is that it is important for practices to take a pro-active approach in protecting themselves from fraudulent activities. Overall you should get involved and create a business environment that is efficient, effective and creates controls that are essential to mitigating the risk of fraud."

Connect to your Peers Instantly - The Ohio MGMA Listserve A NEW Ohio MGMA Member Benefit...

Ohio MGMA is pleased to announce our newest member benefit that will help you connect to your peers instantly, the Ohio MGMA Listserve.

The Ohio MGMA Listserve is a private group, reserved ONLY for Ohio MGMA members. We expect our listserv to be an environment where our members can go to each other for the sharing of questions and information. We have made this process as easy as possible by allowing you access to the listserv through your own email editor. We do expect listserv participants to adhere to the member code of conduct and participation guidelines to ensure a positive experience for everyone and to help you make the best use of this new resource.

Members of Ohio MGMA will be automatically subscribed. You may unsubscribe if you do not wish to participate in the Ohio MGMA Listserve. Instructions on how to modify your listserv account settings, the way you receive messages or to unsubscribe can be made by following the instructions and links received from your initial subscription email from ohmgma-request@listserv.com. You will also receive a monthly reminder email with information on how to change or update your listserv settings.

How to use the Ohio MGMA Listserve:

To post to the Ohio MGMA listserv all you need to do is open your email editor and send your email to: ohmgma@listserv.com

When replying to a message posted to the Ohio MGMA listserv is it important that you select **"Reply to All"** when responding so that everyone on the listserv can benefit from information shared. Selecting "Reply" will only respond back to the initial poster.

Posts will also be archived so that you can go back and review information that has been shared. Archives can be accessed at: <http://mailman.listserv.com/listmanager/listinfo/ohmgma>

If you ever want to unsubscribe or change your options (eg, switch to or from digest mode, change your password, help remembering your password etc.), visit the subscription page at: <http://mailman.listserv.com/listmanager/listinfo/ohmgma>

General information about the mailing list is also located at: <http://mailman.listserv.com/listmanager/listinfo/ohmgma>

NOTE: You must know your password to change your options (including changing the password, itself) or to unsubscribe. Normally, Mailman@listserv.com will remind you of your mailing list passwords once every month, although you can disable this if you prefer. The monthly reminder will also include instructions on how to unsubscribe or change your account options. There is also a button on your options page that will email your current password to you.

Membership Reminder

Review and Update Your Membership Profile!

By checking and updating your Ohio MGMA Membership Profile periodically, it will ensure we have your proper contact information.

We need your current contact information so that you receive the most out of your Ohio MGMA membership as we send out industry information, updates for new job board posts, educational opportunities and information on our planned events.

Instructions:

- go to www.ohiomgma.com
- select "Directory" from the toolbar on the top of the homepage
- login with our username and password (contact our office if you need help remembering; main@ohiomgma.com)
- find your name and review your profile
- update your profile as needed, by emailing correct contact information to: main@ohiomgma.com



ACMPE Update



Ohio MGMA ACMPE
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ACMPE Membership – It's About Education and Learning And Doing It Without Spending A Lot of Money

So you've become a member of the American College of Medical Practice Executives. You've decided to continue your professional journey and need to pursue continuing education. It doesn't have to be complicated or expensive and there are numerous ways to receive credit hours in a three year period.

As part of your membership, ACMPE requires a minimum number of continuing education to attain and maintain the designations of Certified Medical Practice Executive (CMPE) and Fellow (FACMPE). The continuing education requirement enables you to demonstrate personal and professional development and stay current with changes in the medical practice management field.

Here are some tips and options for pursuit of educational credits provided by the College for your consideration:

Submit CEU Hours On-line

Submit your CEU hours online. There is no more paperwork to mail or fax. Your transcript is kept online and you can log your hours today. Also, keep a paper copy of your educational hours submitted for at least three years so that if an audit is conducted, you have the back-up documentation (agenda, handouts) showing the topic, learning objectives, and speakers. Submit your continuing education hours at mgma.com by selecting *Professional Development*. On the next page, select *Transcripts* from the menu on the left.

Advancement Requirement

A cumulative total of 50 credit hours must be reached for advancement to CMPE or FACMPE (assuming all the other requirements have been completed).

Maintenance Requirement

Once you have advanced to Certified or Fellow member status, 50 hours of qualifying credit hours must be earned and submitted

every three years. All members are on the same three year cycle (Jan.1, 2010 through Dec. 31, 2012). A prorated requirement will be calculated for Certified Members who advance after the start of a cycle.

Activities Approved for ACMPE Credit Hours

To qualify, the activity subject matter must be relevant to the ACMPE Body of Knowledge for Medical Practice Management. You may receive credit for continuing education taken within one month prior to your Nominee acceptance date. There are also many cost effective options available.

Educational Offering Options for Your Consideration

- Educational programs
- College/university course work and independent study courses
- Published articles, books and chapters authored by you
- Book editorship
- Formal, oral presentations at least 30 minutes in length
- Distance-learning programs (e.g., audio conferences, self-study, Internet courses)
- Poster presentations
- Earn ACMPE continuing education credit for reading MGMA Connexion magazine articles and completing the related assessment that is in pdf format. Each assessment is on the ACMPE website, equals one credit hour, and is available no more than 12 months after the article's original issue date.
- Participate in a study group preparing for the ACMPE board certification exams (*hour-for-hour credit when making or listening to a formal presentation*)
- Conduct or participate in internal staff training (must cover topics from the Body of Knowledge)



- Participate in a board retreat with a formal presentation
- Attend a vendor presentation that covers more than product features (such as the regulatory issues behind a system)
- Participate in education by a medical malpractice insurance carrier
- Complete quizzes associated with some professional magazines
- Participate in free webinars or online courses

Exam Requirements and Process

Occasionally questions come up about how to get registered for the ACMPE exams and/or how to select an exam date and site. Here are the three basic steps in the process that you can provide to any Nominees who come to you with questions:

- 1. Exam eligibility** – Before taking the exams, you are required to submit a resume documenting a minimum of two years’ experience in an ambulatory or other healthcare management position. (This may be done after submitting registration fees. Please e-mail your resume to Karen Porter at kporter@mgma.com.)
- 2. Confirmation of eligibility** – Within five business days of paying your exam registration fees, you will receive an eligibility confirmation e-mail with your personal user name and password allowing you to make an appointment for your exam at an ACT testing facility.
- 3. Select exam date, time and location** – Once provided with a username and password, you must go to the ACT Web site to reserve the test location, date and time that fits your schedule. Please note that exam appointments are made on a first-come, first-served basis, so scheduling early will help ensure the best choice of appointment time and location.

Of course you can also direct Nominees to contact the Certification Help Desk toll-free at 877.275.6462, 1869 or acmpe@mgma.com.

You are responsible for your professional development and ACMPE is here to help you to achieve your goals. Please feel free to contact me if there is anything I can do to help.

Wishing you all the best in your professional journey.

Please join Ohio MGMA in congratulating the following Ohio MGMA Members for achieving their Fellowship with the American College of Medical Practice Executives (ACMPE)



Arna Bea Safar, MBA, FACMPE, CPC, Supervisor, Revenue Cycle, University Hospitals Physician Services, Cleveland, Ohio, has submitted the followed professional paper to fulfill her Fellowship requirement: *“Implementing Pathology Professional Component Billing for Clinical Pathology Services,”*



Richard G. Wagner Jr., FACMPE, executive director at Toledo Radiological Associates, Inc. in Toledo, Ohio. Mr. Wagner submitted the following three case studies to fulfill his Fellowship requirement: *“The Impact of a New Competing Business Model on One Traditional Radiology Practice,”* *“Evaluation of Options for Maintaining a Siemens BioGraph PET/CT in Today’s Challenging Outpatient Reimbursement Environment”* and *“Dedicated Breast MRI – Go It Alone or Joint Venture?”*



Carl Whittenburg, FACMPE, Director, Business Affairs, Department of Radiology, University of Cincinnati College of Medicine, University Hospital, Cincinnati, Ohio, has achieved his fellowship in the American College of Medical Practice Executives by writing three case studies. They are *“How Converting to a Medicare Certified Rural Health Clinic Gave a Solo Practice Physician a Chance to Succeed”*, *“Improving the Financial Health of an Imaging Center through a Hospital Joint Venture”* and *“Creating a Compensation Plan for an Academic Radiology Department”*.

We would also like extend our congratulations to National MGMA Member, Elizabeth Hathaway, for achieving her Fellowship:

Elizabeth Hathaway, MHA, FACMPE from The Sports Medicine Center, Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio. Ms. Hathaway submitted the following historical paper to fulfill her Fellowship requirement: *“The Maturation of the Healthcare Management Profession in the United States.”* She was the first fellow for 2011.



SNEAK PEAK *Fall Conference Speaker*

Vendor Management – Building Relationships for Your Medical Group

Vendor relationship management done with purpose and thoughtfulness can deliver successful negotiations for any medical group, small or large, multispecialty or single specialty. Everyone is trying to “do more with less” and concerns about the economy add fuel to that fire! Preparation and setting objectives well before contract discussions begin is the first step. Know what you want as an end result, and try to set aside preconceptions about how to get that result. Be prepared; collate all the information that will be helpful to the vendor in preparing a solution for you and in preparing a thorough quote; look at your past purchase history; invite the staff most impacted in the purchase to participate in the solution and vendor exploration. Consider too what the vendor wants; it isn’t always “just” a quick sale.

very necessary role by educating buyers about the possibilities. Consider how your providers learn about the new solutions in the pharmaceutical world – isn’t that type of introduction to a new product or solution for your group just as helpful to making an informed selection?

Vendors also want to establish a relationship with you and they recognize that delivering quality information and proving to be a reliable resource for you will lead to long-term investment in future sales. Start things off on the right foot by first helping the vendor understand your medical group. Lay out your needs and preferences for a solution to meet your objective. Be open to a dialogue that allows the vendor to ask probing questions and even challenge some of your assumptions. Transparency in decision making can help develop successful relationships. Invest in the time to explain your decision-making timeline, who in your organization is involved and what the process entails.

Vendors often lead the market with innovative solutions. Allow them to inform

Vendors as Educators

As a responsible and smart buyer for your medical group, you need to know what is available and in this very complex and volatile market, it is a challenge to stay “in the know.” Vendors perform a



Rosemarie Nelson

Principal, MGMA
Healthcare Consulting Group
www.mgma.com/consulting/nelson



you about future solutions which may play into your timeline. If you're working closely with a vendor on a key part of your operation, invite that vendor to strategic meetings that involve the solution they work with. Vendors are the experts in that area of your practice and you can tap into that expertise in order to give you a competitive advantage. Take notes, recap action items and follow up with the vendor when you need additional information or price quotes. If you don't manage the process, the vendor will and their timeframes may not mesh well with your timing. Let the vendor know what you expect and ask if your expectations are reasonable with the vendor's ability to deliver. Remember, your vendor expects a certain level of commitment from you too. That doesn't mean accepting pricing blindly; get competitive bids and let vendors know your plans.

Remember there are a few old clichés that are clichés for the fact that they continue to live on. For example, "there is no free lunch" meaning that your best bargaining may prove your undoing. If you have not

found a win-win agreement, you may actually have put your vendor in a compromising or precarious position that could leave you without that vendor in the future!

Contracts are critical documents that are important to buyers and sellers. Be sure to take note of important items discussed throughout the sales process and include specifics in a contract addendum to establish equal understanding and the importance of each of those items. If you're using an RFP (request for proposal) in your purchase process, let the vendor know you plan to include their RFP response as a contract addendum, so they prepare a response specific to your needs.

Healthcare may at first glance appear to be a very specialized market, but it is a business like all other businesses when it comes to relationships and managing vendors. Get your game plan in place and be prepared to deliver honest and deliberate communications in your quest to obtain the right solution at the right price at the right time from the right vendor for your practice.

REPUTATION INSURANCE

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Patient Satisfaction Initiative – Here's Your Plan



Susan Keane Baker, MHA

Susan Keane Baker is the author of *Managing Patient Expectations: The Art of Finding & Keeping Loyal Patients*. She speaks and writes for health care organizations on patient satisfaction issues. For her free special report *60 Ways to Make Your Organization More Patient-Friendly*, visit the home page at susanbaker.com.

You've got 85,000 things to do this week and somehow patient satisfaction keeps falling into the "important but not yet critical" bucket. Finding the time to plan your strategy for improving patient satisfaction seems impossible.

Here's a four-week plan to get you started. Each week you have four tasks to accomplish. At least team meeting activity is included, so you can involve everyone for greater buy-in right from the start.

At your Week 1 team meeting, distribute copies of your patient satisfaction survey to your colleagues and ask them to complete the surveys as they think your patients would. The gaps between how your team rates you, and the highest possible rating become your needs identification for opportunities

for improvement. And now your patient satisfaction initiative is something the team has identified as important. The needs they identified can become the reason for the program and your highest priorities once you complete Week 4 of this plan.

If you don't have a patient satisfaction survey, you can use the Clinician- Group survey published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services at <http://tinyurl.com/3erw2c4>. And if you do have your own survey, it wouldn't be a bad idea to discuss the CG-CAHPS survey at a team meeting.

As you review the plan, you may have questions. Please email your questions to me at susan@susanbaker.com and I will answer them within two days.

Week	Actions
Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up Google Alerts and Twilerts for your physician name(s) and the name of your practice. • Team meeting: Complete patient survey as you think your patients would. Where you don't indicate the highest score, what actions would be needed to accomplish it? If you don't have a satisfaction survey, use the appropriate Clinician Group CAHPS survey. You can select it at http://tinyurl.com/3dyem8y. • Attitudes: "I'm so happy to see you!" "Thanks for coming to see us today!" "Thanks for being our patient." • Arrange for seating in each exam room.
Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associates begin introducing themselves with first and last names. • Team meeting: First impression self-assessment & discussion. Self-assessment can be printed from http://tinyurl.com/3erw2c4. • All staff write down questions asked by patients and how often they are asked. • Physicians, NPs, PAs begin providing handwritten or personalized checklists for patient post-visit activities.
Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team meeting: As a group, begin working on the response to your patients' most frequently asked question. Continue weekly to create your Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) database. • Discuss, role play, and coach gracious acceptance of patient compliments. • Each MD, NP, PA asks five patients "What could we be doing to make visiting us a nicer experience for you?" Compile results and prioritize improvements. • Assign pertinent website checklist items to associates to research and write first draft. Each associate is back-up for first draft, provides feedback to author. Second draft is distributed to entire team for review
Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institute tracking & reporting system for all tests, specialist consultations, etc. • Team meeting: Brainstorm ways to create a sense of belonging for patients. • Decide how you will communicate FAQ information to patients. One option – post on your website. • Create systematic process for identifying and respecting patient preferences.

Good luck! I look forward to hearing about your successes with this plan!

Ohio MGMA Board Nominations, Deadline 9/14/11

A message from our Past President:



It has been my honor to serve this organization through my participation as a Board member. The education, networking, and leadership skills I have gained during my tenure have been invaluable. I challenge each of you to consider serving on the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors is responsible for overall policy and direction of Ohio MGMA. This governing body is tasked with setting the agenda of Ohio MGMA activities, events, education and conferences to further the mission of Ohio MGMA.

If you are looking for an exciting and rewarding leadership experience, I urge you to complete the Candidate Profile

Form which can be found on the Ohio MGMA website at www.ohiomgma.com and email it to: main@ilmgma.com or fax to [\(770\) 516-2459](tel:770-516-2459) by **September 14, 2011**.

Pursuant to the By-Laws, the Board will nominate the Slate of Officers and present to our membership thirty (30) days in advance of the election. Members will then have 30 days to vote electronically for or against the nominated Slate of Officers.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Cheryl Hanlon, RN, FACMPE

Past President, Ohio MGMA and
EHR Manager and Government Affairs
Matrix Healthcare Management Solutions
E-Mail: chanlon@matrixmso.com

“As physicians, we have so many unknowns coming our way...

One thing I am certain about is my malpractice protection.”

Medicine is feeling the effects of regulatory and legislative changes, increasing risk, and profitability demands—all contributing to uncertainty and lack of control.

What we do control as physicians: *our choice of a liability partner.*

I selected ProAssurance because they stand behind my good medicine. In spite of the maelstrom, I am protected, respected, and heard.

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Group Purchase

Another Opportunity to Control Practice Expenses

Savvy practice administrators search for purchasing power when buying goods and services including medicine, medical equipment, office equipment, and other supplies. Group purchase organizations (GPOs) typically negotiate increased discounts, and better terms and benefits with manufacturers through large volume purchases. Buying through large GPOs can translate into better pricing and value for physicians and medical practices. Here are a few things to consider when developing relationships with these organizations.

Get to know the GPO

- Learn about the leaders within the organization and their experience working with medical practices and negotiating large group purchase contracts.
- Review the GPO's track record (length of time in business, focus on physicians).
- Review the types of businesses affiliated with the GPO including manufacturers, service companies, and medical societies.
- Understand the structure of the organization: local or national, large or small, nonprofit or for profit.

Evaluate pricing and benefits to find the best value

- Obtain pricing and benefits from several GPOs.
- Determine any required membership fees.
- Compare benefits offered such as prices, rebates, specials, and ordering discounts.
- Assess volume or product requirements.

Evaluate how easy it is to work with the GPO

- Is the process easy and is knowledgeable help available to answer questions?
- Are the contract terms simple to understand? Does it spell out details such as market share requirements and termination clauses?
- Does the GPO require purchasing direct from the manufacturer or from a distributor?

Monitor purchases through the GPO contract

- Check your invoices and make sure you are receiving the correct contract pricing.
- Check with competitors periodically to ensure your practice is still obtaining the best value.
- Make sure you are receiving routine communications about price and benefit changes.

Buying through a GPO can support controlling costs in the medical practice. However, just like any other cost saving opportunities, it requires practice administrators do their homework.



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