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SAVE THE DATE FOR MIMGMA 2020 EVENTS

 **SPRING CONFERENCE**
May 7 - 8, 2020



 **FALL CONFERENCE**
September, 2020

 **THIRD PARTY PAYER DAY**
November 13, 2020

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Practice Focus

Practice Focus is published four times per year by the Michigan Medical Group Management Association (MiMGMA).

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Career Opportunities

Michigan MGMA has a career center on our website WWW.MIMGMA.ORG

Call To Authors

MiMGMA welcomes the submission of articles for publication in Practice Focus. Submit article proposals to Debra O'Shea at INFO@MIMGMA.ORG

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Open

Looking Back & Moving Forward



By Susan Lupo

As I kick off my year as president of MiMGMA, I would like to thank the MiMGMA membership for electing me to this position. I truly appreciate your vote of confidence. Over the past 15 years, MiMGMA

has been the driving force behind my personal and professional development through its outstanding resources that include networking with other healthcare leaders, educational opportunities, mentorships, friendships and leadership opportunities. Being involved in this organization has been a wonderful experience and I'm looking forward to another great year.

While looking back at 2019, I'd like to recognize two MiMGMA members who served this organization for many years and have both retired from their positions on the MiMGMA Board this year: Diane Bristol and Bob Karam. Diane served as our Legislative Liaison for over 20 years before retiring from her position earlier this year. Diane attended many legislative meetings in Lansing to represent our organization and did a great job fostering relationships with the Michigan State Medical Society and legislators throughout the years. She was very committed to her position and even continued to serve as Legislative Liaison after she retired as a practice administrator several years ago. Bob is a past-President of MiMGMA and has served in numerous roles throughout the years, most recently as our ACMPE Forum Representative. Bob is retiring from both his practice and MiMGMA in December. Thank you to Bob and Diane for your many years of dedicated service to MiMGMA. I am proud to call you my mentors and friends. Enjoy your retirement!

Please help me in welcoming our newest Board members who were appointed to the following positions this fall:

- Reimbursement Committee Chair: Janice Robinson (Bay Area Family Physicians, PC)
- Membership Committee Co-Chair: Evan Paulus (CMU Health)
- Membership Committee Co-Chair: Steve Ebben (Legacy Medical Group)
- Business Partner Committee Co-Chair: Fred Schaard and Valarie Parker (Carr Healthcare Realty)

I would like to thank Sandy Sprague (Great Lakes Eye Institute) and Kim Parker (Lisa L. Guyot, MD, PhD, FAANS, FACA) who are taking on new roles in the organization after each of them serving in other leadership positions in prior years. Sandy will be our new ACMPE Forum Rep and Kim is serving as our Legislative Liaison. Thank you both for continuing your service on the MiMGMA Board.

Lastly, I would like to congratulate all of our Board Officers who were elected at the Fall Conference on Mackinac Island.

- President Elect/Program Chair: Kenneth Rates (Michigan Medicine)

- 1st Vice President: Patty Povilunas (Northpointe Obstetrics & Gynecology, PC)
- Secretary: Natalia Szczygiel (Spectrum Health)
- Treasurer: Laura Mrozinski (Paragon Health)
- Immediate Past President: Kim Parker (Lisa L. Guyot, MD, PhD, FAANS, FACA)

The MiMGMA Board is in the process of addressing issues affecting our organization that have developed over recent years which include lower membership numbers and decreasing attendance at conferences and events. As a Board, we are committed to working through these problems to find effective solutions and will be asking for some feedback from all of you throughout this journey. We appreciate you taking a few moments to complete our survey so we can use member input to help shape the future of our organization.

[CLICK HERE TO TAKE MEMBERSHIP SURVEY](#)

Again, it is an honor to serve MiMGMA as your President. I will do my best to provide the leadership this great organization deserves so we can continue to provide our members with exceptional personal and professional development opportunities. ■

Congratulations



President

Susan Lupo, Nominee
Director of Operations
VisionCare Associates



President Elect

Ken Rates
MHSA, MBA
Michigan Medicine



1st Vice President

Patty Povilunas
CMPE
Northpointe OB/GYN,
PC



Treasurer

Laura Mrozinski, CPA,
CCMA, FACMPE
Paragon Health
Kalamazoo, MI



Secretary

Natalia Szczygiel
MHSA
Spectrum Health



Immediate Past President

Kim Parker
Lisa L. Guyot, MD, PhD,
PC

*To our newly elected 2019–2020
Executive Officers!*

Save the Dates: 2020 Events

Spring Conference

The 2020 Spring Conference will be held on May 7th and 8th in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan at Soaring Eagle Casino and Resort. This promises to be an informative event that addresses pressing topics facing medical practice management, provides overall leadership development content, and creates strong networking connections to help you advance your practice and career.

Fall Conference

The 2020 Fall Conference will be held in September. Exact dates and details will be coming soon.

Third Party Payer Day

The 2020 Third Party Payer Day will take place on November 13th, 2020 in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan at Soaring Eagle Casino and Resort. This aims to be another informative event with a fantastic opportunity to earn both ACMPE and AAPC CEUs. ■



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November 13, 2020



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2019 Year in Review

by Debra O'Shea

Executive Director, MiMGMA

2019 was an exciting year for MiMGMA. I am so grateful to be leading this organization as your Executive Director. As with any new job it is always a bit scary getting to know your new team. I feel blessed to have walked into a group with an excellent board of directors, engaged members and lots of overall enthusiasm from everyone I meet!

It has been a bit of a whirlwind year. We have made some operational/logistical improvements but Rome wasn't built in a day. Our number one goal for our first year was to be more accessible and responsive to members. We feel like we have hit the mark. If you ever feel we need to improve in this area, please let me know!

This has been a busy year! In addition to our day-to-day activities, conferences (Spring, Fall & Third-Party Payer Day) and webinars (one each month), we made some big changes.

Volunteerism is Up – Members Get Engaged!

We reinvigorated our committees with some enthusiastic volunteers and committee chairs. This is super exciting because it is great to see our members engaged. A lot of work gets done at the committee level so if you haven't signed up yet reach out to me personally with your questions (DOSHEA@EPOXYHEALTH.COM) or click our survey link to pick your committee.

[CLICK TO TAKE SURVEY](#)

Transition to New Association Platform

Our transition from YM to AMO was completed on December 1st. As reported earlier, we are making this move because the new system (Association Management Online or AMO for short) will enable us to provide better engagement and resources for all of our members. Our new platform is also mobile optimized so you can access MiMGMA from wherever you are! We have redesigned our website and our member services portal to better serve you. Over the next few weeks we will be working on adding content to the site.

As with any transition, there were some behind the scenes hiccups; however, generally speaking, the transition went smoothly. **Please remember that we need each of you to reset your password, sign in to your member center and update your profile.** You can access the site at [HTTP://WWW.MIMGMA.ORG](http://www.mimgma.org).

University Collaborations Yield Great Results

Finally, a shout out to our two new educational partners, Grand Valley State University and Detroit Mercy. We launched collaborations with both of these schools in 2019, and since then our student membership numbers have quadrupled. Students are our future leaders, so we are excited to work with these schools!

Happy Holidays and a big "Thank you" to all of our members. We have a great thriving association and I am looking forward to working with all of you in 2020. ■

More from 2019...

2019 Conferences

Thank you to all our members, vendors, and guests for your engagement and participation in our events this past year. Below are summaries in case you missed any key events.

Spring Conference

Michigan Medical Group Management Association (MiMGMA) hosted their annual Spring Conference on May 9 - 10, 2019 at the Blue Water Convention Center in Port Huron.

Keynote speaker Paul Long taught us about his idea of "Fundamism" and how it can improve the medical practice environment for practice managers, employees and customers alike. Our other

engaging speakers focused on a variety of hot topics including dialogue skills, telemedicine, social media, fraud & embezzlement, risk mitigation and state legislative updates.

After a full day of education, attendees, speakers and vendors were all invited to enjoy drinks and appetizers at the Port Huron Museum's Carnegie Center for our conference networking event. The networking event and the overall conference received fantastic reviews.



Fall Conference

Michigan Medical Group Management Association

(MiMGMA) hosted the Fall Conference on September 30 and October 1, 2019 at Mission Point on Mackinac Island.

The conference featured keynote speaker Avish Parashar who helped us learn how to respond to change with humor.

This event is typically geared toward any professionals in healthcare management and provides timely topics. This year's topics included change management, cyber security, legislative updates, marijuana laws, revenue cycle management and using social media effectively in your practice.

The conference content was a hit and so was the venue on beautiful Mackinac Island. ■

Third Party Payer Day

By Sandra L. Sprague, FACMPE

Michigan Medical Group Management Association (MiMGMA) hosted their annual Third Party Payer Day (TPPD) on Friday, November 8, 2019, at the Soaring Eagle Casino in Mt. Pleasant.

For those who may not be familiar with this event, MiMGMA invites speakers from many insurance payers to this day-long conference to discuss upcoming changes, problem resolutions, and to develop communication channels to be used by our medical offices as we interact with specific payers in our clinics. The opportunity to develop networking relationships with colleagues, vendors, and speakers is invaluable. MiMGMA offers MGMA and AAPC credits to attendees so not only is there valuable

networking but it's a chance for attendees to get those much-needed continuing education credits!

On Friday, November 8, 166 registered attendees arrived at the Soaring Eagle Casino in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan to hear speakers from Medicare WPS, BCBS, Medicare Blue, United Health Care, Availity, Medicaid, McLaren, Priority Health, HAP, Aetna, the Department of Insurance and Financial Services, Meridian, and Altarum.

Various vendors set up booths for our attendees to visit to learn more of their services; many of our vendors provided a raffle prize allowing several attendees to go home with a nice gift! A special "thank you" is extended to the vendors who are such strong supporters of our conference; without their support, our event would not be possible.

Typically, billers, coders, managers,

basically anyone involved in revenue cycle management in a medical office, have attended TPPD and have found its content to be extremely valuable when utilized in their personal practices. The return on investment (ROI) cannot be overstated.

For the attendees responsible for the compliance of the MIPS program in their personal offices, Altarum provided an update that was top notch! The MIPS program is a challenge of its own, Altarum stays up to date on the guidelines and does a fantastic job in sharing that information with those attending their break out session at TPPD.

TPPD 2019 was a success; for those who perhaps missed it, please watch for information in the future to attend the TPPD 2020... you will not be disappointed! ■

Free Monthly Webinar

Among the many benefits of MiMGMA membership, one that we are proud to offer our members is a FREE monthly webinar. We aim to cover relevant, timely subjects with content and ideas that our members can utilize to improve their practices. Below are many of the topics that our webinars covered throughout the duration of 2019.



- Tips for Enhancing Provider Schedules to Increase Revenue
- Behavioral Health Screening for Ambulatory Settings
- Make your Next Moment of Employee Recognition Lead to Better Healthcare
- The Resilient Leader: Building with Emotional Intelligence
- Discovering your Practice Brand
- Why Telemedicine and Patient Engagement Matter... For Your Practice
- Understanding What Private Equity is and How It Works
- Driving Efficiency Across Your Practice
- Claims from the Payer's Perspective: Through the Looking Glass
- Building a Compensation Structure 101

2019 Administrator of the Year Award

The 2019 MiMGMA Administrator of the Year Award ceremony took place at the Fall Conference where Christie Dando, FACMPE, was recognized as the 2019 MiMGMA Administrator of the Year! This is the highest award MiMGMA can bestow upon its active membership.

This award recognizes a medical group practice administrator who:

- Is an active member of the Michigan Medical Group Management Association
- Has exhibited exceptional leadership/management proficiency
- Has enhanced the effectiveness in the delivery of health care in his/her practice and community through a noteworthy achievement

Christie has been recognized for her dedication and support for her colleagues in the medical profession and to MiMGMA. Christie has held various positions on the MiMGMA Executive Board, including that of President. She has also been an active member of National MGMA.

Christie achieved both the level of CMPE and the designation of FACMPE. Christie is a true leader and understands the



responsibility of leadership in the medical office as was stated in the many accolades and compliments shared in the nomination process and actual award ceremony held on September 30.

On behalf of MiMGMA and Dean Schink, President of Specialized Insurance Services Agency, the sponsor of the Administrator of the Year Award, Sandy Sprague, FACMPE, presented Christie with a beautiful plaque and a nice check. Congratulations Christie!

The MiMGMA Administrator of the Year Award Committee would like to thank Dean Schink, President of Specialized Insurance Services Agency, for his ongoing generosity and support of the Michigan Medical Group Management Association Administrator of the Year Award. Dean and his agency, without hesitation, have sponsored this prestigious award for the past six years. The winner of this award receives a beautiful plaque and an impressive \$500.00 monetary gift. MiMGMA appreciates our partners who so willingly support our program with their time and financial resources! A special thank you to Dean for his support of this outstanding award! ■

FORMER ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD RECIPIENTS

Brian Walters	Southwest Michigan Behavioral Health	2018
Robert Karam	Paragon Health	2017
Gary Paavola	Michigan Vascular Institute	2016
Bob Wolford	Grand Rapids Ophthalmology	2015
Diane Bristol	Midland Ob-Gyn	2014
Charles Dobis	Lansing Ophthalmology	2013

MiMGMA's Mentorship Program

Advancing Leaders! This is what MiMGMA is all about! MiMGMA offers a Mentor/Mentee Program that is available to administrators/office managers who would simply like to build an additional support system or provide the basis to assist another administrator. The mentor/mentee relationship is one that can benefit both parties and can bring gratification to all involved.

To quote Terence F. Moore, "Leaders are learners, and

mentors can be invaluable in helping someone maximize their potential. These leaders build a cadre of people they can turn to for advice."

If you are interested in being a mentor or if you would like to be mentored; visit our website at WWW.MIMGMA.ORG and review the Mentor/Mentee program available to the MiMGMA membership. ■

Website Platform Change

By Debra O'Shea

MiMGMA has moved its operations to a new online member management platform. Our website address remains the same: [HTTPS://WWW.MIMGMA.ORG](https://www.mimgma.org). What has changed is the platform we use to manage our operations.

We are making this move because our new system (Association Management Online or AMO for short) will enable us to provide better engagement and resources for all of our members. Our new platform is also mobile optimized so you can access MiMGMA from wherever you are! We have redesigned our web site and our member services portal to better serve you. Over the next few weeks, we will continue to improve and update our website and the member resources we have available for you.

As part of the migration, all members and guests need to update their profiles. Please log into your account at WWW.MIMGMA.ORG to set up your profile at your earliest convenience.



Wellness is more than apples in the break room.

Wellness is about forming healthy habits in all areas of our lives: health, finances, emotions, careers, relationships. A wellness program that addresses all these factors can reduce healthcare costs, boost employee engagement and foster a healthy, productive culture and workforce — and Keyser has it.

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Renew your Dues for Another Year with MiMGMA

It's dues renewal time for most of our members! You should be receiving an invoice and reminders to your email on file as your membership gets closer to expiring. Please note that in order to renew your dues, you must log in to your profile on our new website. As you are doing so, please take a moment to update your "My Account" section with your correct information, such as job title, address, phone number, and ACMPE status.

Make the Most out of your Membership through Committee Involvement

We are thrilled to be welcoming a number of new names and fresh faces to our committees for the coming year. While we have been very successful recruiting new committee members, we still have room for more! If you are interested in joining any of our committees, please fill out this survey, and a committee chair will reach out to you regarding your interest.

[CLICK TO TAKE SURVEY](#)

Committee involvement provides a wonderful opportunity to connect with other industry professionals, expand your skills, discover your niche and support Michigan MGMA. There are so many benefits with such little time commitment — I encourage you to fill out the survey and explore your options today! ■

Membership Changes

by Steve Ebben

Member Services Committee Chair

The Membership Committee would like to thank Ken Rates for his prior committee leadership the past two years. As Ken assumes the MiMGMA President-Elect role, he has transitioned committee leadership to two new co-chairs. (Kudos to Ken that it takes two people to fill his prior role!)

Annual Goals

The key MiMGMA goals are to reach 161 active members by June 30, 2020, and to add 10 Emerging Leaders by this same time. The committee believes these goals are attainable, however significant effort will be required. Between July 2018

and May 2019, active membership decreased from 146 to 138. Membership committee welcomes feedback and participation from all. If others are interested in joining the committee, please contact Evan Paulus at EVAN.PAULUS@CMICH.EDU, or Steve Ebben at S.EBBEN@LEGACYCLINICIANS.COM.

Introducing Joint Membership with National MGMA

Michigan MGMA is always searching for ways to provide the best value for our members. We are now part of a pilot program that will include a joint membership option with National MGMA. This means that you can receive a discount by joining both Michigan and National MGMA. While the program has not launched yet, we will release details as soon as we can. Watch your emails for updates on how you can take advantage of more benefits at a better rate! ■

Recruitment of Faculty & Staff

By Dr. Pat DeVoy

The membership committee is currently working on increasing our faculty and student membership. Health Services Administration and Health Information Management faculty in Michigan should have received an invitation to membership email in the fall which also included information about student membership. There will be a virtual meet and greet for faculty in the near future and an email template sent to faculty to use for student recruitment.

Our members are our biggest asset in recruitment!

Michigan Medical Group Managers Association members: if you are aware of any faculty or students who are interested in joining MiMGMA please let me know! You may want to check with your current or former instructors or professors and let them know about MiMGMA membership and the benefits they will receive. And- do you have a son/daughter, niece/nephew, neighbor or friend who has a student who would benefit from MiMGMA membership? Please pass the word! Faculty membership is free and student membership is currently \$25 per year.

Provide your talent

Also, are you interested in providing your talent and expertise to an educational program in Michigan? Are you willing to sit on an advisory board for an educational program or act as a mentor to perspective medical practice managers? How about meeting with students and talking with them about a career in the medical management profession or speaking at a class about an area of your expertise (these may be done virtually)? Faculty are always looking for professionals who are willing to donate their time to guide, advise and direct the next generation of medical practice managers. Maybe your medical practice could sponsor a student's membership or the registration fee for a faculty to attend a MiMGMA conference.

Remember, we are all ambassadors for MiMGMA! If you have ideas or want to get engaged, please contact me: ■

Dr. Pat DeVoy

HIMT Program Director, University of Detroit Mercy

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New Member Spotlights: Meet Ashley Kamp and Nicolette Keller

ASHLEY KAMP is the current Practice Manager for The Center for Plastic Surgery of Northern Michigan, located in Traverse City. Ashley holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Michigan State University as well as a Bachelor's degree in Human Biology, also from Michigan State University.



Ashley Kamp

Tell us about your responsibilities at The Center for Plastic Surgery of Northern Michigan.

AK: As the Practice Manager I am responsible for almost anything. Anything from business strategy, budgeting, marketing, HR, accounting, I have a hand in all of these areas.

How did you get into healthcare/practice management?

AK: I have always had an interest in healthcare. Initially, I had thought I would follow the provider route into the healthcare field. I started working in a Dermatology practice as a medical assistant, then was hired at The Center for Plastic Surgery. Throughout my time as a medical assistant, I became someone the staff would readily come to with issues as I would always figure out a way to address them. The physicians saw my potential and subsequently offered me the practice management position where I have been the last three years. While I didn't always see myself in management, the practice I work for and the staff that I work with have been so supportive that they have helped me see it is where I am meant to be.

Why did you decide to join MiMGMA?

AK: I have received e-mails with a lot of helpful information and as I am newer to management feel that it is the perfect organization to help me network and learn from others in the same field.

What do you hope to get out of your membership?

AK: I hope to gather knowledge from sharing experiences, to network with fellow managers and to stay on top of the latest rules and regulations surrounding healthcare practices.

NICOLETTE KELLER is currently enrolled in Grand Valley State University's Masters in Healthcare Administration program with an anticipated graduation date of April 2020. Nicolette holds a Bachelor's degree of Arts in Sports Management from the University of Michigan. She is the recipient of the Upsilon Phi Delta scholarship award, which recognizes students for their academic and leadership excellence, as well as an Excellence-in-a-Discipline award recipient.

Tell us about your current role and responsibilities

NK: I am currently a Capacity Management Analyst for Spectrum Health in Grand Rapids. My responsibilities

include performing analytics for multiple service lines using different data sources including provider templates, visit type utilization reports and Epic reporting tools, interpreting data to identify and evaluate trends/patterns and determine and recommend process improvement opportunities, and to manage provider templates and patterns in order to provide feedback and support for greater patient access and efficiency.

How did you get into the field of healthcare/practice management?

NK: I chose to transition into the healthcare field after working in the sports industry for the Detroit Lions for four years. As an Event Coordinator for Ford Field and the Detroit Lions, I gained valuable experience in event/project management and I made many lasting professional connections within the industry. I knew I wanted to make a change into healthcare to make a real and noticeable difference in the lives of my community. Through my classes at Grand Valley (beginning in January 2018) and prior internships in healthcare I have learned that there is a lot of room for improvement within the healthcare industry and I am hoping to be a part of the strive for change and increased efficiency!

Why did you decide to join MiMGMA?

NK: I am currently a Master's student at Grand Valley State studying health administration. My group (5 members including me) in my Marketing class is currently working on a marketing plan/strategy for MiMGMA. We have spoken with several current members of MiMGMA and we hope to have a solid base of information to recommend to the organization! We are especially hoping to increase student membership for MiMGMA and what better way to start the improvement than becoming a member myself!



Nicolette Keller

What do you hope to get out of your membership?

NK: I hope to make meaningful professional connections with other MiMGMA members to network with and share information that will improve the healthcare industry. I also hope to display the benefits/advantages that MiMGMA has to offer to attract potential and future members to the organization!

Are you CMPE or FACMPE certified?

NK: I am not, but hope to someday be! I do have my Certified Revenue Cycle Representative (CRCR) certification through the Healthcare Financial Management Association. ■

Get Certified!

As you renew your dues and get ready for the new year, I encourage you to consider starting your Medical Practice Executive Certification (CMPE) in 2020. Here are some reasons why you may want to consider advancing your career with the CMPE designation:

- Medical practice leaders do not just “check the box” and show up to work. Instead, you continue to lead, learn, and grow by pushing the boundaries of innovation. Your team of employees, physicians, as well as your patients count on you.

- Set yourself apart with MGMA's career advancement resources. Both Executive Management (+2.88%)

• Total Compensation by ACMPE Status

Source: 2018 MGMA DataDive Management and Staff

	Not Certified	Certified (CMPE)	Fellow (FACMPE)
Executive Management Positions	\$121,500	\$125,000	\$171,789
General Management Positions	\$65,000	\$76,142	*

and General Management (+17.14%) positions with ACMPE certification

report greater compensation figures than those who are not ACMPE certified. ■

ACMPE Exam Registration — On-Demand Registration Opens March 2020

ACMPE exam registration is going on-demand. Beginning in March, ACMPE program participants can register and sit for their exams with as little as two days' notice any time of the year.

To become board certified, members must pass the multiple choice and scenario-based exam requirement. You must register for each exam individually.

Before registering for an exam, you must:

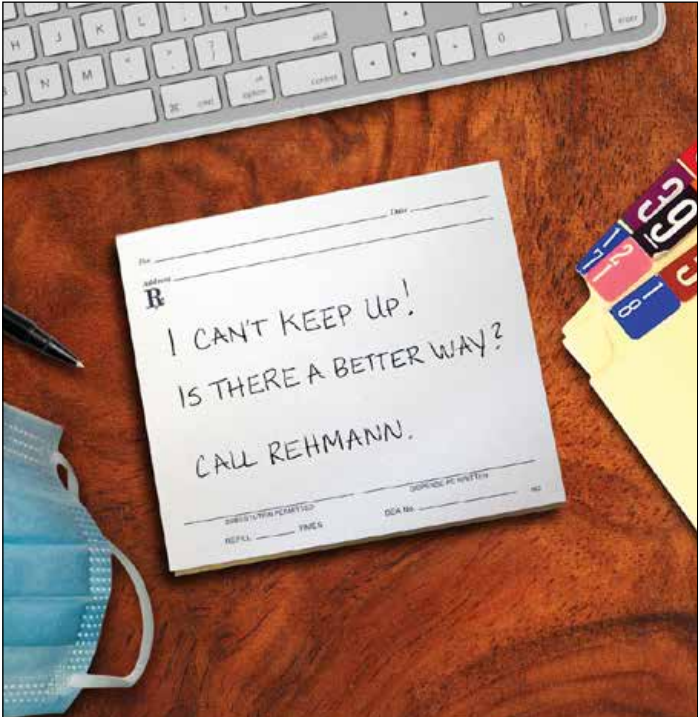
- Be an MGMA member
- Have been accepted into the ACMPE board certification program
- Completed the education and experience requirements*

**Those who have not yet completed their education and experience requirements may not register for the scenario-based exam.*

Exam Facts

- **Multiple Choice Test:** 175 multiple choice questions. The test is 3 hours and 15 minutes. Cost: \$165
- **Scenario Test:** 90 items consisting of multi-select, multiple choice, short answer or drag and drop questions covering 18-25 different practice administration scenarios. The test is two hours long. Cost: \$165

CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE NEW ON-DEMAND REGISTRATION PROCESS AND TESTING DETAILS



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How To Reduce Slow Pay Patient Issues: Top Three Ways for a Medical Practice to Reduce Past Due Accounts



By Michael Glass

When a practice provides a patient service, it has a right to expect to be paid on a timely basis.

However, anyone who has been in practice more than a few months has learned that prompt payment is not always the case.

Accounts not paid in a timely manner can have a serious impact on the cash flow of the practice. It is becoming increasingly important to be mindful of these trends as the economy may downturn and unemployment rates in your city remain high.

Practice Managers and their staff often learn that managing the accounts receivable is tricky and involves the delicate matter of asking for payment without coming across as harsh. There are new processes that once implemented, and the employees are trained on, can be effective in obtaining timely payments.

1. Have a defined financial and collection policy

One of the major causes of overdue receivables is that your practice has not clearly defined to the patients in writing when payment is due. If patients are not

clear on the payment terms, they may feel that 60 days payments are fine, especially if there are no penalties for paying late. Make sure that your payment terms are clearly stated in writing on the Patient Registration form and statement.

If payments are late, have defined procedure for the office staff to follow as to when to make a call (day 40). Practices are utilizing automated phone contacts made in the 'practice name' to help in this area.

2. Send out statements promptly and consistently

If you don't have a systematic billing system, get one! It's time to add an on-line payment option on your statement. Given the number of rising delinquencies and the stricter policies for lending, you do not want to be late or difficult in asking for payment.

3. Contact overdue accounts more frequently

No law says you can contact a patient only once a month. The old adage "The squeaky wheel gets the grease" has a great deal of merit when it comes to collecting past due accounts.

Doing the necessary follow up and getting out statements or reminder every 2 weeks can make a big difference in your cash-flow. There is technology available now to provide this. Doing so will enable

you to diplomatically remind the patient of the expected payment.

It's an excellent idea to use technology to contact late payers every 7-10 days. Billing programs such as Athena, eClinical, MacPractice and Epic and others make it easy to move patient info to a 3rd party for help.

Use a third party sooner. Once you have systematically pursued your past due accounts for (45-61 days) and they have avoided your attempts to contact them, you may want to send them a *final notice* allowing 10 days to pay. More than likely, if they have the ability to pay you they will do so or at least communicate their intentions before you place their account with a pre-collect service. Pre-Collect Third Party services allow you to keep 100% of the money if collected timely. Most offices do not have the time to pursue accounts going over 90 days, so at that point you should take the next appropriate step to get paid.

The impact of the "Third Party" tends to reprioritize the debt and forces the parent to make a decision on the payment. Designed for early intervention, a 'pre-collect' service can save the school the internal costs of working accounts beyond the point of reason. Typically, once an account reaches 90 days, you should consider using professional Third Party intervention.

For questions concerning Automated Reminder Call and Invoice Services, Accelerator®, Pre-Collect Services or Debt Collections in general call Michael at (248) 914-0346 or (877) 377-5378. ■



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2019 Year-End Tax Planning for Medical Practices: *Many last chance opportunities reward proactive taxpayers.*



By Jackie McDonald, Gordon Advisors, P.C.

As year-end approaches, medical practices should consider the many opportunities that might be lost if year-end tax planning is not explored. A practice may want to consider several general strategies, such as use of traditional timing techniques

for delaying income recognition and accelerating deductions. A practice should also consider customized strategies tailored to its particular situation.

For the 2019 tax year, taxpayers have relative clarity with respect to available credits and deductions. With the exception of a handful of industry specific tax credits and deductions that expired at the end of 2017, most temporary credits and deductions were permanently extended several years ago. A handful of other credits expire in 2019 through 2021.

The last few months of the year provide an important “last chance” to change the final course of your practice tax year before it closes for good. Among the reasons why year-end tax planning toward the end of 2019 may be particularly fruitful are the following:

Business credits and deductions

Many business-related tax credits and deductions that were periodically scheduled to expire were permanently extended in 2015. Others were twice extended one year for both 2016 and 2017, and are not available for the 2019 filing season unless extender legislation is enacted. A few were extended for a five-year period. Some others were modified and extended by TCJA. Taking inventory of what deductions and credits your business has been using and whether they remain available or will be removed in the near future can significantly impact your bottom line. Many of the provisions now periodically extended relate to energy-related activities, or specific industries, but it is important to make sure that any credits are considered in light of their availability.

Depreciation and expensing

TCJA made some significant changes to encourage businesses to expand and invest in new property. First-year depreciation allowances on certain business property, or bonus depreciation, has fluctuated over the last few years, but TCJA provides for 100 percent bonus depreciation for property placed in service before 2023. Additionally, the limitation on expensing certain depreciable assets has been increased to \$1 million, with a \$2.5 million investment limitation (subject to annual inflation adjustments). While 2019 is not necessarily the last time these benefits will be available, there has been no better time to take advantage of them.



Qualified business income deduction

Beginning in 2018, business owners are allowed to deduct up to 20 percent of their qualified business income (QBI) from sole proprietorships, partnerships, trusts and S corporations. This is one of the centerpieces of TCJA, and broadly applies to many taxpayers. The IRS has released comprehensive guidance on the deduction, which provides a great deal of clarification on its requirements. This is a completely new deduction, with new documentation requirements, which may require a year-end review of records. The deduction is also reduced and eventually eliminated, for certain businesses, including health professionals once the income exceeds certain amounts, so a year-end review may be helpful to get the most out of the deduction.

Cash method of accounting

Another provision arising from TCJA was a more permissive adoption of the cash method of accounting. Beginning in 2018, corporations with gross receipts up to \$25 million (\$26 million for 2019) can use the method, which is up from \$1 million in prior years. Many of the traditional end-of-year planning techniques relating to timing, such as income deferral or income acceleration, are made easier where the cash method of accounting is used.

Family Leave Credit

TCJA also created a new credit for employers making family leave payments to employees. The credit is only available to employers who have a written policy in place for the payment and credit. The credit expires after 2019, barring legislation to extend it, so employers who make these payments, and want to claim the credit should make sure to do so while they can.

These are just some of the considerations that can yield tax savings for your practice going into 2020. Please feel free to contact our offices and we can discuss specific 2019 year-end strategies that might be particularly worthwhile for your business. ■

Three Key Concepts of Real Estate Representation



By Fred Schaard, CARR
Healthcare Realty

Healthcare professionals are becoming increasingly more educated on the importance of having a real estate strategy to maintain and increase profitability. This is significantly important considering real estate is the second highest expense behind payroll for most healthcare practices.

You might say, “Great, but how much more is it going to cost to hire representation to ensure I am protected and achieve the most favorable terms possible?” If you are a tenant or buyer (as opposed to a landlord or seller who is interested in leasing or selling their property), the answer should always be ZERO! To be clear, it should not cost you anything to hire professional representation.

“How can a service not cost me anything?” you ask. Here’s your answer: Real estate is one of the largest industries in the world and contains several industry standards. One of them, is that the tenant or buyer should not be paying their agent. Landlords and sellers take on the responsibility to pay a commission to their representation as well as the representation of the buyer or tenant, with the goal of leasing or selling their property. This is a standard concession that spans both residential and commercial real estate.

However, people tend to understand this better when they consider residential real estate. Most people who have purchased or sold a home understand that the majority of transactions have a buyer and seller agent, and that the seller agrees to pay a commission to both parties.

The same is true in commercial real estate. Most owners have a commission agreement or amount of money set aside for each transaction. The traditional split is to offer each agent half of that amount of money. However, when tenants or buyers show up unrepresented, the listing agent typically gets a double commission, or at least, substantially more than if the tenant or buyer had representation.

#1: You Don’t Save Money Without a Tenant’s or Buyer’s Agent

Tenants or buyers may think “if I don’t have an agent, I’ll get a better deal”. Listing agents frequently insinuate or make this comment as well. However, the tenant or buyer is not listing a property ‘for sale by owner’ where they are choosing to sell the property without representation and can control if they save a portion of the commission. Instead, in most cases when a tenant or buyer does not have an agent, the listing agent will get paid an inflated or double commission; or the owner will simply pocket that money. This leaves the tenant or buyer in a position where they do not save money and typically receive a substantially inferior deal by paying more and receiving less concessions than they should have.

Many owners and listing agents understand that everyone

wants to feel like they are getting a better deal. The reality is, 99% of the time, they are not. Landlords and listing agents often put together offers that contain additional margins and encourage the tenant or buyer to counter their offer so the tenant or buyer feels like they are really ‘negotiating’. The tenant or buyer leaves with the impression they are saving money without representation and have really ‘cut the price’. However, this is all part of the owner’s or listing agent’s strategy.

Summary: Commissions for the tenant’s or buyer’s agent are built into the majority of commercial real estate transactions. Going without representation typically results in the tenant or buyer losing money and receiving substantially inferior terms.

#2: Don’t Pay a Consultant to Be Your Real Estate Agent

There are very legitimate healthcare consultants spanning nearly every healthcare industry. They can specialize in helping you open your first practice, scale to multiple locations, increase profitability, hire and train staff and beyond. However, the best consultants don’t try and do other professional’s jobs. Instead, like a coach or general manager, they assemble the best team.

There are some consultants who will try to be the ‘jack-of-all-trades’ and venture into specialties that go beyond their reach. Whether offering to be your real estate agent as part of their fee or accepting the standard fee from the landlord or seller, you should avoid consultants who don’t have the expertise or experience to ensure you receive the most favorable terms possible.



Understand that the consultant, if even aware of it, is not going to tell you they left tens to hundreds of thousands of dollars on the table, missed finding you the best locations or forgot to include key concessions that you should have received. Instead, they will tell you they took great care of you. Unfortunately, that is rarely the case. A great consultant will advise you to hire the best partners you can for your team, including: CPA, lender, real estate agent, attorney, etc. and will not try to be those people for you.

Summary: Don't allow your consultant to be your real estate agent and never pay them for real estate services. Likewise, a good real estate agent will not try to be your consultant either.

#3 Don't Pay an Attorney to Be Your Real Estate Agent

Because lease and purchase contracts are legally binding documents, you should always have an attorney, who understands real estate law, review your contract to advise and protect you. However, just like your real estate agent should not be giving you legal advice, your attorney should not be telling you what building or space to choose, how much to pay and negotiating terms for you. Unless an attorney spends 40 to 50 hours per week evaluating the market and negotiating on properties, they are likely unqualified to play real estate agent. Similarly, your real estate agent should not be drafting language in a binding contract.

The best teams of agents and attorneys have a high-level respect for what each party does. They complement each other, instead of trying to do the other's job. Additionally, if you are paying your attorney to be your real estate agent, you will spend thousands of dollars in unnecessary fees.

Summary: 1. Your real estate agent should be finding the best

properties and then negotiating the main terms of your lease or purchase; 2. Your attorney should then review and recommend changes that protect you and ensure you receive what your agent negotiated for you. Pay your attorney to be an attorney. Never pay your attorney to be a real estate agent.

Conclusion

A good real estate agent should save you dozens of hours of your valuable time by helping you avoid costly pitfalls and delays, while ensuring you receive the most favorable terms possible. It is very common for a healthcare specific real estate agent to save you tens to hundreds of thousands of dollars over a ten-year period. With that much at stake, ensure that you hire the absolute best agent you can. And... NEVER pay a consultant, negotiator or attorney to do what your real estate agent will do for you for free. ■

CARR Healthcare Realty is the nation's leading provider of commercial real estate services for healthcare tenants and buyers. Every year, thousands of healthcare practices trust CARR to achieve the most favorable terms on their lease and purchase negotiations. CARR's team of experts assist with start-ups, lease renewals, expansions, relocations, additional offices, purchases, and practice transitions. Healthcare practices choose CARR to save them a substantial amount of time and money; while ensuring their interests are always first. Visit CARR.US to learn more and find an expert agent representing healthcare practices in your area.





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