

MAY 20, 2019

VOLUME 35 NUMBER 7

## PHYSICIAN PRACTICE ASSESSMENTS AND YOUR MORNING CUP OF COFFEE: YESTERDAY VS TODAY...BOLD, COMPLEX, AND NOT SO SIMPLE ANYMORE



There was a time when the decision for your morning coffee was quite simple: black, cream and/or sugar. Today, it's not only regular or decaf but half-caf, too. The milk varieties are endless, consisting of no fat, 1%, 2%, whole, soy, almond or half-and-half. And then the actual coffee choices of espresso, cappuccino, lattes, and more. You used to buy coffee from a canteen truck or coffee shop. Then we added drive thru, and now mobile ordering. The varieties and delivery innovations keep on coming. Even the hospital cafeterias sell branded coffee and have specialty kiosks.

Like the coffee of today, it is not hard to notice the changes in workflow, skill mix, and technology within our physician practices. With over 500 practices reviewed by AMS in the last few years, we can accurately attest to the causes that have led to these changes, including EHR implementation, reimbursement adjustments, provider-staffing model changes, and so on. With these transformations come workload standard adjustments...and this is where AMS shares Dunkin and Starbucks' innovation for staying on top of the trends.



As AMS begins work for two more physician practice groups—one for a group owned by a for-profit hospital, and one project consisting of over 40 practices that are part of a health system—we thought we'd check in with the lead consultant on these projects, Shari Robbins, AMS Vice President and physician practice specialist, to see what has changed, then vs. now.

“It is essential to account for work functions performed in today's practice environment,” comments Shari. “There are numerous factors that are impacting productivity that were not the case in the recent past; Factors such as:

- **Patient Portal Management:** Clinical and scheduling inquiries that come into the practice from ‘virtual patients’.
- **Telehealth:** Related to the above, virtual appointments include the patients' taking and sending their own pictures to enhance the diagnosis of their problems. With this becoming common place, these ‘transmissions of medical images’ create new challenges on confidentiality, compliance and HIPAA.
- **No Show Rates:** Rising across the country are no-show rates and it is essential to consider the impact on the clerical staff as they schedule/reschedule and prepare for the patient visit.

- **Care Management:** With the Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH) model being a key part of primary care, allotting clinical time to manage high-risk patients is essential.
- **Centralization of Work Functions:** Services such as call centers, referral management, and nurse triage are examples of how practices are trying to economize and offset processes away from the practice setting.

“As practices strategize on how to effectively utilize resources, it becomes essential for workload standards to embody the true functions being performed,” advises Shari. Simple black coffee benchmarks don’t work in a world where a medium/grande extra hot, caramel macchiato with soy with extra foam may be the preferred drink. For more information, please find the AMS Physician Group Practice prospectus attached.

## AMS ANNUAL MEETING NOTES UPCOMING 52<sup>ND</sup> ANNIVERSARY



AMS’ annual meeting was held at the Capital Grille restaurant, Burlington MA, on Friday, May 10, 2019. This was the second year that the meeting has been repositioned from its longstanding November date. The restaurant opened three hours early at 8 AM to accommodate AMS so we could accomplish the packed agenda.

Being on an October 1 fiscal year, having the meeting in the Spring lends itself to a more contemporary discussion of industry topics. For whatever fiscal year our clients are on, the first six months of calendar 2019 is critical in positioning the organization for success. Specific agenda topics included a review of the recent contracts signed or committed to, updates on AMS research and development projects, and a peak-under-the-tent to ongoing IT and infrastructure improvements, now completing stage 2.

Regarding new contracts, clients are from all over the country, currently representing 15 different states, and range from the nation’s leading health care systems to individual hospitals and health care entities. The project focus areas include identification of cost savings and cost management opportunities, and implementation assistance to achieve the mutually agreed upon project results.

Examples of project areas include: clinical (Laboratory, Respiratory, and Surgical Suite to name a few); both Labor and Non Labor Benchmarking; Physician Practice Assessments, and Interim Management in Central Supply, Laboratory and Surgical Suite.

At the meeting, service and commitment was recognized to the following employees for their years of outstanding service to the company:

Linda Mynahan, MSN, RN, NEA-BC for 5 years and Kim Seward for 10 years.

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## Navigating the shift from episodes of care to continuous care

AMS is uniquely qualified to assist your health care institution with assessing your affiliated group practices. With more than 50 years of experience in health care management, operations improvement, and information systems integration, AMS has the expertise to align with today's patient-centered services while focusing on the organization's financial goals.

*Assess current operations and identify future opportunities*

### Service Descriptions

#### OPERATIONS

✓ **Operational Analysis:** Through interviews, questionnaires, data analysis, and on-site observations within the physician practice, AMS develops an accurate assessment of your current operations and the potential areas for improvement. This provides a comprehensive understanding of the existing system to establish a baseline for initiating improvement.

✓ **Workflow Assessment:** The efficiency in which patients are seen in the practice is essential from a provider, staff, and patient satisfaction perspective. The flow of patients throughout the care process is measured utilizing a variety of both qualitative and quantitative methods. Workflow is charted to identify and solve potential bottlenecks in work and information flow that could delay a patient at any stage of treatment.

✓ **Support Staff Workload Measurement:** AMS analyzes the clinical and clerical support personnel to develop practice-specific workload standards that consider work functions performed, skill mix, electronic health record (EHR) management, and workflow. These standards allow the practice to match staffing to volume demands to optimize productivity.

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### How we can help

#### Operations

- Operational Analysis
- Workflow Assessment
- Support Staff Workload Measurement
- Practice Layout Review
- Productivity Monitoring
- EHR Optimization

#### Management Review

- Practice Organizational Structure
- Management Skills Development

#### Financial Systems

- Charging Systems
- Costing Models
- Managed Care Contacts
- Provider Utilization

#### Planning and Marketing

- Market Assessment
- Industry Trends

#### To learn more, please contact:

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✓ **Practice Layout Review:** AMS, utilizing current and projected volume, can maximize existing space to balance staff needs and patient throughput. AMS has extensive experience enhancing space configurations and implementing recommendations, and has worked with architects and builders as needed.

✓ **Productivity Monitoring:** The AMS cloud-based productivity monitoring system, Quantify™, is a tool that tracks and measures department and organization performance. Quantify combines AMS' decades of labor productivity improvement experience and proprietary data with additional department-specific and management engineered workload standards. The standards can be developed by AMS or supplied by the user.

✓ **EHR Optimization:** From implementation to optimization, AMS can assist practices with utilizing their EHR to best meet the needs of their patients and practice. AMS has experience with many of today's most prominent EHR systems and can tailor our approach to address key workflow issues to streamline "clicks" and improve efficiency.

*Exemplifying expertise in over  
1,000 practices nationwide*

## MANAGEMENT REVIEW

✓ **Practice Organization Structure:** A practice organization structure review documents the current management span of responsibility and identifies possible opportunities to streamline practice management in an effort to promote more efficient and effective functional reporting relationships. AMS considers the practice specialty, size, and total FTEs when determining the optimal span of responsibility.

✓ **Management Skills Development:** AMS conducts management training — based on identified need — to properly develop or enhance management skills and can address topics such as leadership, teamwork, and effective communication.

## FINANCIAL SYSTEMS

✓ **Charging Systems:** AMS reviews, audits, and analyzes your use of CPT codes — our staff are ICD-10 certified — to verify the process and ensure appropriate reimbursement according to visit type, tests, and code.

✓ **Costing Models:** We have developed cost accounting models for physician practices that tie labor, supplies, and equipment requirements back to a charging system. This analysis allows statistics to be captured to accurately reflect true resource consumption.

✓ **Managed Care Contracts:** AMS outlines provisions to consider when entering into a managed care contract or reviews current managed care contracts prior to the renewal date to address the organization's reimbursement goals.

✓ **Provider Utilization:** AMS performs workload analyses based on WRVU and patients per day per provider to ensure cost-effective care delivery. Further, AMS' access to the most current compensation comparative data can ensure alignment with today's salaries and incentive plans.

## PLANNING AND MARKETING

✓ **Market Assessment:** AMS works with key stakeholders to assess current practice and determine if future viability exists for potential new service lines. This could include research, development, and the implementation of a business plan. Additionally, marketing enhancement opportunities will be identified to further promote specialties within the existing geographic.

✓ **Industry Trends:** Documentation of new approaches to patient care and industry best practices by specialty can be outlined to include key topics such as technology enhancement, staffing efficiency, workflow improvement, and equipment utilization.