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Inside This Issue

WORKING WITH STAFF

Six mistakes to avoid when you mentor millennials in your medical office

Somebody probably helped you move ahead in your career in medical administration. Now it's your turn to help another person progress in your field. Chances are this younger colleague is a millennial, born between 1981 and 1996. Here are some potential pitfalls to be aware of when mentoring millennials:

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HUMAN RESOURCES

How to conduct a virtual investigation

By Lynne Curry

Question:

We have a messy situation we need to investigate involving 12 and possibly more employees at remote locations. Nine months ago, we laid off our human resources officer. The accounting manager and I inherited many of her duties. Both of us have investigated minor issues in each of our departments, and our former human resources officer left a good protocol for conducting investigations in her file.

The protocol calls for bringing involved individuals into the corporate office to interview them. In the past, we spent considerable money flying employees in from the field for interviews. We lack the financial resources to do that this time.

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1. **Assumptions about their values and motivations:** It is important to avoid making assumptions about the values and motivations of your millennial mentee. Each individual is unique and may have different priorities and goals.

2. **Lack of clarity in goals and expectations:** It is important to establish clear goals and expectations from the outset of the mentorship relationship. Without clear goals, it can be difficult for the mentee to know what is expected of them and how to progress in their career.

3. **Insufficient support and guidance:** Mentoring is about more than just providing advice; it's about supporting and guiding your mentee as they navigate their career path. Failing to provide adequate support and guidance can lead to frustration and disappointment for the mentee.

4. **Insufficient communication:** Millennials often value open and honest communication, and they may feel neglected if their mentor is not available or responsive. Make sure to set aside time for regular check-ins and be open to your mentee's feedback and ideas.

5. **Lack of flexibility and diversity in learning opportunities:** Millennials often appreciate the opportunity to learn and grow in their careers, and they may be more motivated when they are given a variety of learning opportunities. Failing to offer flexible and diverse learning opportunities can lead to boredom and a lack of motivation for the mentee.

6. **Insufficient support for work-life balance:** Work-life balance is important to many millennials, and they may be more productive when they are able to maintain a healthy balance between their personal and professional lives. Failing to support your mentee's efforts to maintain a healthy work-life balance can lead to burnout and reduced productivity.

By avoiding these pitfalls, mentors can effectively support and guide their millennial mentees as they navigate their career paths and strive to achieve their goals.

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QPP

MIPS 2022 data submission period is now open

MIPS eligible clinicians can start submitting their 2022 data through March 31. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has opened the data submission period for Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) eligible clinicians who participated in the 2022 performance year of the Quality Payment Program (QPP). Data can be submitted and updated until8 p.m. ET on March 31, 2023.

How to submit your 2022 MIPS data

1. Go to the Quality Payment Program sign in page.
2. Sign in using your QPP access credentials (see below for directions).
3. Submit your MIPS data for the 2022 performance year or review the data reported on your behalf by a third party. (You can't correct errors with your data after the submission period, so it's important to make sure the data submitted on your behalf is accurate).

How to sign in to the QPP data submission system

To sign in and submit data, clinicians will need to register in the HCQIS Authorization Roles and Profile (HARP) system. For clinicians who need help enrolling with HARP, please refer to the Quality Payment Program Access User Guide (zip).

Note: Clinicians who are unsure about their eligibility to participate in MIPS for the 2022 performance year can check their final eligibility status using the QPP Participation Status Tool. Clinicians and groups that are opt-in eligible will need to make an election to opt-in or voluntarily report before they can submit data. (No election is required for those who don't want to participate in MIPS.)

More information

To learn more about how to submit data, please review the following resources available on the QPP Resource Library:

- 2022 Data Submission User Guide
- 2022 Data Submission FAQs
- 2022 CMS Web Interface User Guide
- 2022 CMS Web Interface FAQs
- 2022 APP Data Submission User Guide

Payment adjustments

2023 MIPS Payment Adjustments are in effect based on 2021 performance. In August 2022, each MIPS eligible clinician received a 2021 MIPS final score and associated payment adjustment factor(s) as part of their 2021 MIPS performance feedback, available on the Quality Payment Program website.

2023 MIPS payment adjustments, based on each MIPS eligible clinician's 2021 MIPS final score, will now be applied to payments made for Part B covered professional services payable under the Physician Fee Schedule. Payment adjustments are determined by the final score associated with your Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN)/National Provider Identifier (NPI) combination.

MIPS eligible clinicians, identified by TIN/NPI combination for the 2021 performance year, will receive a positive, neutral, or negative MIPS payment adjustment in 2023 if they:

- Were a clinician type that was included in MIPS;
- Enrolled in Medicare prior to Jan. 1, 2021;
- Weren't a Qualifying Alternative Payment Model (APM) Participant (QP);

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- Were a Partial Qualifying APM Participant (Partial QP) that elected to participate in MIPS as a MIPS eligible clinician; and
- Met one of the following criteria:
  - Individually exceeded the low-volume threshold;
  - Were in a practice that exceeded the low-volume threshold at the group level and submitted group or APM Entity data; or
  - Were part of an approved virtual group.

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LEARNING MANAGEMENT

Spring a pop quiz for your training program

By Doug Striker

Remember tests in school? Pop tests? Quizzes? And the dreaded finals? As students, they were the bane of our existence. As trainers, however, we need to test ourselves and our programs constantly. If they aren't working, our offices may fall behind. And that is a big deal. It is critical that you know how to evaluate your training program. (I know our teachers thought diagramming sentences was a big deal, too, but I'm thinking this might be bigger.)

But do you know how to evaluate your training program? Often, our training is so uber-responsive to staff needs that we hardly have time to be strategic about the future, let alone what we've achieved in the past.

Well, I'm here to tell you that, with just a wee bit of planning and forethought, you could be looking at monthly, quarterly and annual reports that help you determine exactly how effective you're being and how much your office is advancing thanks to your efforts.

How to evaluate your training program

Here are some steps and Ideas to get you started:

1. Decide what you want to measure: This is perhaps the most important step. You need to figure out what impact you're trying to achieve. There may be several indicators that you'd like to measure, such as:

- Reduced help desk calls: easily measured
- Increased self-driven access to your Learning Management System (which would indicate that people know how to train themselves); your LMS should provide this information at the touch of a button
- Increased productivity: this is harder to measure but if you build a partnership with the office manager or COO, I'm certain they will be able to provide their own measurement techniques for productivity. You can tag-team on their goals and use training to improve efficiency and productivity

2. Once you know what you want to measure, set benchmarks, such as:

- Percentage drop in help desk calls
- Percentage increase in LMS usage
- Percentage of the change in output

3. Measure your success against your goals, such as:

- Have help desk calls decreased? Also, are there particular training areas (i.e. Microsoft PowerPoint) that have seen a marked decrease since a particular webinar or class training?
- Have people been accessing the LMS on their own? An LMS should easily be able to tell you whether there has been an increase in usage (and what areas are attracting the most users). This type of behavior change impacts not only their productivity, but also your time. That's a measurable achievement!
- Has your word processing staff been able to produce more thanks to time-saving tips you've shared with them? Work with their manager to establish and measure these outcomes.
- ROI impact. Here's the really cool thing about measuring your impact: you can tie it to savings and a return-on-investment (ROI) for your training program. This is the piece that will ultimately increase your value at the office. If you can directly tie the above measurements to cost savings, you will suddenly see the bean-counters' eyes light up with understanding of why training is important!
- Help desk improvements: What is the help desk professional's hourly rate? Even a salaried, on-staff help desk professional (or IT staffer who has to cover the phones) can figure out how much he/she makes an hour and then evaluate month-to-month how many hours they spend on the phones, translating that into a dollar figure.
- LMS usage: Imagine a professional who charges $500 per hour having to sit through a classroom training or one-hour webinar. That's a huge loss. Instead, that professional uses the LMS to access the exact information he/she needs in 10 to 15 minutes. That's a direct savings for the office.
- Data entry improvements: The faster the billing staffers can work, the more they achieve. There are many ways you might work with another manager to measure this output and place value on it. Again, you need to establish a long-term relationship with the proper executive to determine the impact of your trainings. (This will likely also lead to a better understanding of the team's needs, creating a snowball effect of positive impact!)

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HIPAA

Proposed rule would standardize how to send healthcare attachments

It might get easier for your medical office to send healthcare attachments and electronic signatures.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), has issued a proposed rule, "Adoption of Standards for Health Care Attachments Transactions and Electronic Signatures, and Modification to Referral Certification and Authorization Transaction Standard (CMS-0053-P)." If finalized, the proposed

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(HIPAA: Proposed rule would standardize how to send healthcare attachments, from page 5)

rule, would adopt standards for "health care attachments" transactions, such as medical charts, x-rays, and provider notes that document physician referrals, and office or telemedicine visits.

The modifications to the HIPAA transactions would support both health care claims and prior authorization transactions, standards for electronic signatures to be used in conjunction with health care attachments transactions, and a modification to the standard for the referral certification and authorization transaction. The is a part of ongoing efforts to significantly reduce paperwork burdens and empower health care providers to focus on direct patient care and streamline the care experience for patients and providers.

"The proposals in this rule would provide a valuable tool to support the electronic submission of health care information," said CMS Administrator Chiquita Brooks-LaSure. "Health care providers are often forced to use manual processes such as mail, fax, or internet web portals when they respond to requests from health plans, leading to delays and less time for patient care. These important steps would promote more consistent and reliable communications among the partners involved in health care transactions, improving the care experience for all."

HIPAA and the Affordable Care Act require the Health and Human Services Secretary to adopt a health care claim attachment standard. HHS is proposing these new requirements on HIPAA-covered entities, which include health plans, health care clearinghouses, and health care providers who electronically transmit any health information in connection with transactions for which HHS has adopted standards.

The proposed rule is available to review here, and the deadline to submit comments is March 22, 2023. CMS encourages comments from all interested members of the public, and in particular, from patients and their families, providers, clinicians, consumer advocates, health plans, and health care professional associations.

For more information on the HHS proposed rule visit: https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/fact-sheets/administrative-simplification-adoption-standards-health-care-attachments-transactions-and-electronic

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FEDERAL PRIVACY LAW

10 basic steps to comply with HIPAA

HIPAA (the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) is a federal law that protects the privacy of individuals' personal and medical information. HIPAA is important for medical offices because it sets standards for the protection and handling of this sensitive information, which is critical to maintaining the trust of patients and ensuring the confidentiality of their medical records.

HIPAA requires medical offices to implement and maintain certain safeguards to protect PHI, including physical, technical, and administrative measures. These measures help to ensure that patient information is only accessed and used by authorized individuals, and that it is handled in a way that maintains its integrity and confidentiality.

Non-compliance with HIPAA regulations can result in significant fines and legal consequences for medical offices, as well as damage to their reputation. Therefore, it is important for medical offices to take HIPAA compliance seriously and to make it a priority in their operations.

1. Implement and enforce strict policies for access to and handling of protected health information (PHI). This includes physical access to documents, as well as access to electronic PHI through password protection and other security measures.
2. Conduct regular staff training on HIPAA regulations and your office's specific policies and procedures. This can help ensure that all employees are aware of their responsibilities when it comes to protecting PHI.
3. Establish clear procedures for handling and disposing of PHI, including shredding paper documents and securely deleting electronic files.
4. Use secure methods for transmitting PHI, such as encrypted email or secure file transfer protocols.
5. Use strong passwords and implement other security measures, such as two-factor authentication, to protect electronic PHI.
6. Regularly update and test your office's security systems to ensure they are effective in protecting PHI.
7. Conduct regular audits of your office's HIPAA compliance and make any necessary changes to your policies and procedures.
8. Implement strict protocols for accessing and using patient records, including the requirement for staff to log in and out of electronic record systems.
9. Limit access to PHI to only those staff members who need it to perform their duties.
10. Establish a process for handling suspected or actual HIPAA breaches, including notification of the appropriate parties and corrective action.

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YOUR CAREER

Healthcare job boom seen by 2030

The most lucrative job of 2030 will be registered nursing, with a projected job growth of 15 percent in the next decade.

Writing for Allwork, Daniel Lehewych says success in the future of work will be determined by how much workers are willing to expand their skill set. Software development will be the most lucrative STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) job by 2030.

He reported 62% of Americans are considering changing their job in 2022. And at least 36% are making such considerations for the sake of earning more money.

The healthcare industry will see the biggest boom in lucrative jobs.

The COVID-19 pandemic has proven to be devastating to healthcare systems.

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As a result, healthcare providers are tired, and many are even quitting jobs they've had for decades to escape the overwhelming stress.

Despite this, healthcare will see a massive boom in employment opportunities by 2030. According to *The Motley Fool*, the most lucrative job of 2030 will be registered nursing (RNs). RNs have projected job growth of 15% over the next decade.

"Registered nurses (RNs) assess patients' health problems and needs, develop care plans, and maintain patient medical records. In 2016 there were around 2.9 million registered nurse positions in the U.S. By 2030, there could be 3.5 million RN positions. The median wage for registered nurses last year was $68,450. This position requires an associate's degree at minimum, although many registered nurses hold bachelor's degrees," according to the report.

In the same report, various healthcare occupations are mentioned:

- **Physical Therapists:** "The number of physical therapists could increase to 337,000 by 2030, up from nearly 217,000 last year."
- **Nurse Practitioners:** "Employment for nurse practitioners is expected to grow from 150,000 last year to 205,000 by 2030."
- **Physician Assistant:** "There were around 104,000 physician assistant positions in the U.S. last year. By 2030, that number could rise to more than 144,000."

In each case, *The Motley Fool* determines the "lucrativeness" of each position not by its salary but by job growth. In each case, however, healthcare jobs are well-paying—in the positions mentioned above, salaries range from $80,000-$110,000.

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YOUR CAREER

Use all four stages of effective communication

By Doug Thorpe

Managers face a constant struggle to improve communication within their work teams. Besides being able to accurately articulate any technical aspects about the work (every industry has its key phrases, terms, and buzz words), business leaders have to be ever-mindful of some very basic principles of effective communication.

We usually think about communication as a two part/two person transaction. You speak, I speak, we hear and we act. This is the way most adults perceive the process of communication. When we need to talk to our teams, we usually just think about crafting a message as though it is being addressed to one person.

I submit to you that there are really four stages of communication. Being an effective communicator requires a laser focus to ensure the parts are working to their maximum potential.

The four stages are:

1. What you mean to say—Your communication as a manager must first be grounded in the thoughts you develop as facts and circumstances come together. When you process all of the information at hand, SOME kind of thought process should lead you to a decision. A message to the team begins with the thoughts that you will have. Sometimes the thoughts are significant and profound. At other times they are pretty simple. Your thoughts become the root of your message.

Be sure your mental checklist is functioning clearly before you start talking to the team. Be clear about what you mean to say.

2. What you actually say—You have your thought, but then words must be applied to express that thought. Numbers 1 and 2 are very closely tied together but are just enough different to cause a potential problem.

Let's face it, most of us have had a moment where an idea pops in our head, but we cannot find the perfect words to explain the essence of that idea. Our words fail us. This stage is especially troublesome when you have to communicate 'on the fly'.

When you have a chance to write a speech, you get more time to process your thoughts and formulate the words. Great speech writers make careers doing this for politicians and celebrities. However, managers on the front line seldom have that luxury. As events unfold at work, you are required to respond quickly. Your words can easily become muddled.

If words fail you, it is possible you will be sending a message that is different from your original intent. Also, words that have double meanings can confuse the message. Tone and positioning of words can impact the meaning. There are numerous ways that the words you DO choose to express may send a message different from what you intend.

3. What the listener hears—When we think of translating a message from one language to another, we often hear about 'something getting lost in translation'. Unfortunately, that can happen with communication within the same language. You can take a perfectly structured thought (Item #1) that is represented well by the words you choose (Item #2), but still have trouble getting your message across.

Clearly, the responsibility to correctly hear a message falls on your listener. Any form of translation that changes the message corrupts it. The risk at this stage is that word meanings can vary from person to person. As the manager, if you make a statement "I am concerned about this ________", some may hear the message as saying "I am mad, but just not telling you".

4. What the listener now feels—Whether the translation being heard is correct or not, there is still one last hurdle to overcome. How does your message make the listener feel? The content of what you meant versus the listener's conclusion after processing your words may spawn a surprising reaction.

For some, there are trigger words that spark bad feelings. For others, there are words that inspire and motivate. The listener's initial feeling about the message will have a direct impact on the success of the communication. If the effort ends poorly, the manager must essentially start over with this entire 4 stage process.

So, we have discussed the four stages of communication. What is a manager to do?

In situations where people have solid, effective relationships, there is a history

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that can smooth any of the rough edges stemming from a breakdown of any of these four parts. When people have worked together for some time, they can (and should) develop a sense of understanding that helps to bridge the communication gap. Key words and phrases take on meanings of their own and become the go-to way to express a topic.

Yet, when someone new joins the team, communication bridges are not yet available, so the manager's message needs to stick to the basics until the history can be accumulated. The latter is also true when new topics are introduced to the team.

As the manager, it is your responsibility to watch for breaks in all four of these stages. Better communication can be achieved by effectively using all elements. Find ways to let your team know that for their benefit you want to be a good communicator. Let them provide feedback, too. Iron out phrases and words that miss the mark or generate the wrong conclusions. If you can broaden your view of the communication process, you can become a more effective manager.

In what ways have you experienced communication problems with your work team?

***Doug Thorpe** is a performance-driven senior executive, entrepreneur, board member, thought leader, and coach with more than 40 years of success in executive leadership, management, and small business. Leveraging his extensive experience, he is a trusted guide for mid-cap companies to large global enterprises requiring expert assistance with leadership development, team performance, employee engagement, culture shifts, and change management.*

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CYBERSECURITY

Are former staffers still accessing your office's accounts?

With post-pandemic churn in the labor force, workers are leaving in record numbers and the cybersecurity threat to employers is real.

In a recent study, phishing-resistant multi-factor authentication (MFA) provider Beyond Identity gathered responses from former employees and found a vast majority of employees (83%) admitted to maintaining continued access to accounts from a previous employer. The cybersecurity threat this poses is coupled with the fact that more than half of these employees (56%) said they had used this continued digital access with the specific intent of harming their former employer.

Ongoing access to sensitive information paired with frequently malicious intent spelled disaster for these former employers. When the survey turned to focus specifically on responses from managers and business leaders, 74% admitted their company had been negatively impacted by a former employee breaching their cybersecurity.

The most common hacks and infractions included logging into corporate social media (36%), looking through company emails (32%), and taking company files and documents (31%). More than one in four former employees even went so far as to log in to the back end of the company's website.

Results were gathered from currently employed persons, all of whom had previously left a single position. Their locations varied, as did their industries, levels of employment, and genders. However, in spite of this variance, responses were alarmingly similar and revealed a risk to employers globally.

Fortunately, there was a saving grace for companies. According to the survey, a professional, detailed offboarding process could accomplish two important things: prevent unauthorized access by former employees by eliminating their passwords and other insecure authentication methods, and simultaneously generate goodwill, thereby lessening the motivation to harm a former employer.

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Also, while we know who was immediately involved in the situation, we won't know which other individuals we may need to interview until we conduct the first interviews. Making last-minute decisions to interview additional individuals in our main office would involve complicated plane and work schedule changes and result in a huge delay. We may need to interview some when they're off-shift.

We discussed me flying into the two locations; however, the individuals involved work a variety of shifts and I can't afford to be away from home long enough to catch everyone in person.

Is it workable to investigate using videoconferencing?

Answer:

Given the shift from in-person to virtual work environments and COVID-related travel issues, virtual investigations are becoming more common. A few tips:

Pre-investigation planning

You need to be even more organized when conducting a virtual investigation. In many investigations, interviewees tell you what they want to or what makes them look good and others look bad. You need to collect and assess relevant documents, including written statements; manager and supervisor notes; and employee files, emails, and texts—ahead of time so you have them when you conduct your interviews.

When you have these documents at hand you can ask, "You wrote a text to 'S' Feb. 2 saying 'ABC.' What was your intent with that text?" If you do use documents and want to catch a witness's first, honest reaction, make sure you've practiced the share screen function.

Security

Learn your video conferencing platform's security feature, including private meeting rooms, access codes, and

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how to control who enters the meeting and how you can monitor meeting participants.

When you interview witnesses in-person, they may record the interview with a Smart phone hidden in their pocket. Some videoconferencing platforms allow anyone to record the interview just by pressing a button.

Off-site witnesses may even have bystanders sitting in on your interviews just beyond the screen who slip them notes. To partially address this ask, "Is anyone in the room with you?" or "Is anyone able to hear you?"

Proactively address technology

Since you'll be interviewing some individuals in their homes and or other locations, let your interviewees know ahead of time how to download and install the videoconferencing software you plan to use. Those with unreliable Internet connections may need to move to a different site or reschedule.

Interview practices

In an in-person interview you would ask the witness, "How are you today?" and other routine questions to ease the witness into the interview. Some individuals new to virtual investigations forget to do that or they ask fewer questions. Ask enough questions of each witness to ensure you've fully mined their perspective and recollection.

I like to conclude interviews by asking, "What should I have been wise enough to ask you?" and "What should I be wise enough to ask others?" After that you can ask, "Who else should I interview to fully understand this situation?" You may also want to summarize what you've heard and ask your witness to confirm the accuracy of your summary.

Your investigation summary

At a minimum, your investigation summary needs to outline the allegations and/or the conduct that led to the investigation, along with the date of the allegations and/or conduct and the date the investigation opened. You also need to list the names of those interviewed, the documents you reviewed, and the applicable employer policies and/or laws and regulations. Finally, you'll summarize the facts collected and how they relate to the policies and/or laws and regulations.

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