

## Practice Management White Paper

Have you ever peered inside an antique clock? It's an incredible sight. Gazing at all of those gears and mechanisms interwoven for the purpose of precision timekeeping just breeds more interest. Which piece propels the moving parts? What happens when they stop? Where does this thing go? Looking at a seemingly broken clock can be more intimidating than magical, and is certain to leave anyone but a clockmaker feeling lost. Nobody in their right mind would try to repair it themselves. Sadly, there are plenty of people who become overwhelmed and just settle for another timepiece that will never be as unique and valuable. For those who decide not to ignore the problem, the only choice is to take the heirloom to an expert who can completely dismantle it, clean the parts, find the issue, and put it all back together again better than new. What does any of this have to do with healthcare practice management? Good question! The answer is, plenty!

Just like a fine piece of timekeeping antiquity, a healthcare practice has multiple unique pieces of various shapes and sizes that must be carefully assembled for pristine functionality. Further, not every practice is identical and so, there is no cookie cutter production line that can be implemented in its construction, nor is there a generic repair manual shoved in a drawer. Why? Because people of a particular culture, sub-culture, geography, medical need, gender, and other demographics make up each individual practice. Akin to our metaphorical clock's internal parts, these structural elements take expertise and care to put together correctly. A good medical practice consultant firm is comprised of experts who know how to meticulously take apart an organization, find the parts that are functioning poorly, repair them, give them a good shine, and then reassemble them to work better than ever before. Most often, the core issues of a practice in need are elusive until someone takes the time to thoroughly engage in this process. Luckily, that is precisely what HPA healthcare management consultants do!

### **Who are We?**

Health Professionals Alliance is a national healthcare company that offers a solution-based platform for private Physician and Dental practices to access services, financial, analytics and consulting expertise. Because we take on so many essential roles as practice management consultants, we are uniquely equipped to uncover what is slowing your organization's success. HPA has built an impressive coalition of medical service specialists and relationships within the healthcare industry with a mission to advance private practices. Our goal is to equip your practice with all the tools necessary to stay independent, profitable and build value while maintaining control over the quality of care your patients depend on.

Health Professionals Alliance exists to make your life easier and medical practice management consulting is a major way we do that every day. Our process has been proven to ensure your practice is able to maximize revenue for years to come.

## **Why Practice Management?**

Some doctors and dentists hear about practice management consultants and think, “I don’t need anyone to train my team how to answer phones. We’re good.” Fair enough! Basic office operations are part of healthcare management and your organization may have those completely covered. The only problem with that notion is medical practice consulting services are so much more than that. Running a successful practice is like juggling an entire cutlery set and trying not to get nicked by the blades. It’s complicated and it takes a lot of expertise. When dealing with endless staffing, billing, accounting, technology and compliance requirements, many medical professionals have no idea how their services turn into paychecks. That leaves a lot of room for things to go wrong.

For example, it may seem to you that too many details are being missed and your Operations Manager just can’t handle the job. Professional practice management consulting firms like HPA will review your entire organization piece by piece, until the real issue is revealed. In this particular scenario, it’s possible that your manager is actually doing great work but their duties have grown far beyond their title. Maybe they’ve morphed into doing the job of an Operations Manager, Financial Director and Clinical Manager, which means the actual problem is the structure of your practice. Medical practice consulting services include the creation and recruiting of missing roles within an organization that were overlooked or have evolved during an extended growth period. This new structure could even be approached on a temporary basis by hiring someone part-time or as a specialized consultant so you can see the rewards before you fully commit. That’s what we in the business call a win, win!

Physician and dental practice management companies take on the hard work of uncovering any and all missteps your organization may be taking. That kind of attention to detail is beyond any practice’s internal abilities because you’re too busy caring for your patients; as it should be. Unfortunately, being a great doctor is only one yet very important aspect to running a successful practice and professional medical group consulting will help you fill in the blanks.

## **How HPA Delivers for You**

Health Professionals Alliance is primarily a membership-based company and naturally members have full access to our medical practice management consultants. That said, we are happy to provide a full range of our healthcare consulting services to outside practices as long as the process boosts our members in some way. Sometimes the benefit may come in the form of added experience that will pad our expertise, or it could be that the

revenue earned from providing independent practice management consulting is able to fund additional services for our members. No matter the scenario, we absolutely love the healthcare practice management work we do because it's all about solving elusive problems. Who doesn't love a good puzzle?

From our very first conversation with you, our practice management consultants are engaged in one mission that may yield various avenues of assistance. The first thing we need to know is what you are experiencing and which staff members are best suited to examine more closely regarding the issue(s). Because the number of potential medical practice management problems and solutions are so plentiful, sometimes it's just easier to use real world examples. How about one now!

A short while ago an awesome fertility medicine clinic out of Seattle came to us in need of a strategic planning session, which we were happy to provide under our healthcare practice management umbrella. From the start, it was clear the problem had nothing to do with making money because the revenue was flowing in just fine. That told us, administratively they were in good shape. Still, one of their physician owners was getting ready to retire and the organization was struggling to get a plan in place for her departure. Our healthcare management consultant looked through every agreement and conducted multiple interviews to reveal why this was so challenging. We were able to map out three different areas of concern and they all shared one specific common denominator. Eureka! The only hiccup was, the problem was the soon-to-be retired owner. She was refusing to give up running the practice which made it impossible to plan for a future without her. Obviously, they couldn't go on this way but the other owners hadn't been able to figure out a way to work around her. Our practice management recommendation was to address these three key areas by building committees to examine each one of them thoroughly. While the retiring doctor would have a seat on each committee, she would not be the chair, which meant her input was welcome but in no way would she be running the show. Of course, the immediate feedback focused on how difficult it would be to do this and we acknowledged that. It was then our job to remind the medical group that if they didn't do this now, they would find themselves scrambling to create a working leadership structure after the retirement evolved from a plan to reality. And that would be much harder.

This scenario just demonstrates how sometimes it takes an outside healthcare management consultant to look at a problem with fresh eyes and say out loud an unpopular truth. Even though this organization probably understood the basic crux of the issue, they couldn't see their way through it, and needed the expertise of our practice management consultant to offer impartial recommendations.

## **Our Step-by-Step Approach**

As you have no doubt gathered up to this point, healthcare practice management consulting is all about getting to the genesis of the problem. Since there can be no standard to-do-list for each individual organization, we felt the best way to take you through our process is to expose you to some common questions our consultants ask themselves throughout.

➤ **Is your shareholder agreement setting you up to fight with one another?**

You'd be surprised how often during the healthcare management consulting journey we find that the wording in a practice's shareholder agreement is causing unnecessary angst. Usually, medical leadership believes there are personality clashes that can never be mended but often, that couldn't be further from the truth. Maybe there are real or imagined reimbursement disparities that are pitting people against each other? Or perhaps you have overlapping roles causing a tug of war? When our practice management consultants dive into your shareholder agreements with a fine-tooth comb, we will examine its language against the knowledge of past disagreements to uncover where the disconnect is taking place. Once you are able to address the real problem, everyone can relax and enjoy coming to work again!

➤ **Is your communication system really working for you?**

If you're upset because your employees are taking too long to respond to your emails and voicemails, all the processes in the world won't help with that. It's possible that your organization has outgrown its communication systems and the real problem is there are insufficient alerts or counterintuitive tools in place. Our practice management consultants will interview all the players and evaluate the system in question. Not all communication platforms are created equally and some are better suited for a healthcare practice. Even though this isn't a product or service that we provide ourselves, part of our recommendations will include referrals for companies who do. Our only goal is to make sure your team is set up for success!

➤ **Do you have the right people in their roles?**

It may or may not surprise you that many medical practices make some hiring decisions void of any relevant expertise. How does that happen? Well, a lot of physicians are just nice people and want to give friends or family a job, even if they lack the experience or education. While this scenario isn't always at play,

there are many times our healthcare practice consulting concludes that a staff member may be holding your organization back, and no amount of training will do the trick. Part of the problem may be that you aren't aware of every aspect the position requires. Our consultants can build the role for you with a detailed outline of standard duties, required skillsets, and a recommended pay range so when you find the right person, they will stay for the long haul.

➤ **If you have certain changes in mind, how will they impact your practice?**

You may already have some ideas you want to implement in your organization, but have you run the numbers yet? If you want to invest X many dollars in one area, how does that influence other areas of the practice? Does it come from the bottom-line and how will that affect shareholders? Does it increase costs to your patients and how might that alter the care you give? While investing in your business is essential, it's really important to understand the chain of impact that will result. Because healthcare practice management consultants routinely take apart organizations, they understand how all the pieces fit together and can help you plan your changes with a broader view. This kind of insight will help limit possible negative outcomes you didn't see coming.

➤ **Can your technology systems talk to each other?**

One way that HPA medical practice consulting stands out from the crowd is our use of data analytics to empower organizations. If you're familiar with the tech side of your industry, you know that most healthcare practices implement two or three different systems that don't communicate with one another. Our daughter company, DataDX, software is not meant to replace your existing platforms but rather interact with them to spark system collaboration. This way you can access combined reports that allow you to see how different parts of your practice affect other areas. Our medical practice consultants can help evaluate the systems you have in place to make sure they are operating at the capacity you need them to. If not, we can refer to experts to help you upgrade.

➤ **Is your Accounting Software working the way you need it to?**

No matter who is doing your numbers, the accounting systems you have in place must fit your organization, not vice versa. Part of this level of healthcare management consulting is evaluating various aspects of your platform and your comprehension of the monthly reports. For example, your electronic health record (EHR) software is so much more than patient notes and lab results. It's how you

get paid by patient account tracking and where insurance write-offs, allowables, and discounts are calculated. Important stuff, right? Also, is your payroll getting tallied correctly? There is no end to the nightmare that comes when your platform isn't accounting for paid time off or taxes properly. HPA will take a good look under the hood and point you in the right direction if you need a tune-up.

➤ **Does your culture suck and if so, why?**

The culture of a healthcare organization isn't like any other business and needs to be cultivated with that in mind. You can't boost morale by putting a ping pong table in the break room like some tech start-up company. Why is that? The answer is nurses. Nurses take their job seriously and they are always looking for ways to improve their patient care. They are less concerned with recreation activities at work and would likely just look at that ping pong table and see where more exam tables could go. HPA medical management consultants will do a thorough assessment of how your people feel about their time at work and what they believe is or isn't working. If your staff feels like the culture sucks, it's best for your practice to find out why and change it for the better.

HPA practice management consulting will take your concerns for your organization and turn them into questions that lead us to the heart of the problem. Once our evaluation is complete, we will provide you with a final report that clearly shows what we said we would do, what we did, and why we did it. That segues into a series of comprehensive recommendations to shift your practice in the right direction. Our consultants will breakdown the process for you into clear steps, and if there's an area we can help, we will do that at your request. If the answer lies outside of our wheelhouse, our consultants are sure to know the right companies to put you in contact with to get what you need. Sometimes, the answer is one you can take care of yourself once you realize where the issue stems from. No matter what, HPA is dedicated to providing all the healthcare management services necessary to get your practice back on track.

## **In Closing**

Just as a clockmaker has the expertise to dismantle the fragile antique timepiece in order to save it, Healthcare practice management consultants can do the same for your organization. It is with precision and patience that our consultants dig into every aspect of a practice to determine what is missing, broken, and disorganized, or who is improperly cast in their roles. Our experts will meet with your leadership, interview your staff, evaluate your systems, review your contracts, and ask the right questions to ensure your practice has every opportunity to thrive. Health Professionals Alliance cares about your

ability to remain independent, successful and most importantly, care for your patients. Helping people is why we get up in the morning.

## **Call to Action**

### **Author Bio – Eric Schulz, VP Business Development, Healthcare Consultant**

As one of Health Professionals Alliance core members, Eric brings over two decades of experience to bare as a champion for medical practices nationwide. Not only is he recognized for his academic pursuits with a Bachelor's of Science from the University of Oregon and a Masters of Business Administration in Healthcare Management from OHSU; but Eric is well-known as a nice guy who loves what he does. He believes that the best outcomes rise from people who are empowered to do their best. Having seen up close with his own loved ones some of the best and worst experiences our healthcare system has to offer, he decided every human deserves only the best. So, Eric works every day to help medical practices fine tune their operations so doctors can spend their time and energy on the people they serve. Isn't it nice to know you have someone on your side?

## **Social Proof - Testimonials**

### **Case Study**

### **FAQs**

- *What makes a good practice manager?*

A good practice manager has the expertise to take your practice down to the studs and rebuild it better than ever. They take the time necessary to find the genesis of the problems so they don't come back later.

- *Why is practice management important?*

Healthcare organizations are so complex that no one person can manage everything at once. To help the different departments run as one finely tuned machine, every practice needs another pair of expert eyes once in a while.

- *What skills do healthcare managers need?*

- *What does healthcare administration do?*

- *What qualifications does a practice manager need?*
- *What makes a good clinic manager?*