



# NO ONE IS A ONE-MAN-BAND



Our practices are busier than ever, and COVID-19 has strained our offices in ways we never saw coming. At this year's ASRS meeting, Paul Hahn, MD, PhD, FASRS, shared insights from the ASRS surveys sent out during the height of the pandemic. The drastic (albeit relatively brief) decrease in clinic volumes created "threats to staff and, perhaps at an unprecedented level, even physician employment," he said. Amid the chaos, retina specialists "demonstrated a prioritization of patient safety and vision often before their own [safety]," he concluded, applauding clinicians for their heroic efforts.

So how did we get through it? Many practice administrators and owners became something of a one-man-band to get everything done. That's simply what it took to keep our patients and staff safe while we sorted out how to handle COVID-19 in an essential health care setting.

The problem is, we can get used to being overly busy, and we forget what it's like to have time to actually heat up the leftovers before eating them for lunch. More often than not, we have excellent staff by our side, but we are too busy to notice. Your technician might be top-notch and hinting at taking on more responsibility, but it's faster to handle things yourself than it is to train him or her to do it for you.

However, putting in the extra work *now* to foster growth and independence among our staff is the key to lightening our workload down the road, according to this month's featured author, Maureen Waddle, MBA. The more engaged managers are with the entire office team, the better everyone will perform, she says. Remember how long it takes to train those new employees? If we train our managers well, they can keep the office running smoothly, help to onboard new employees, and reduce staff turnover by as much as 59%, according to Ms. Waddle. That's a lot of work off our plates.

One area in which to encourage a climate of shared responsibility could be identifying medication coding errors, as Joy Woodke, COE, OCS, OCSR, describes in this month's Coding Advisor column. Ensuring our employees are communicative when dealing with mistakes can save us a lot of headaches.

It's time we all take a step back and remember that we don't have to do everything ourselves—we have a team to help us, and fostering leadership within our offices is the best way to balance everyone's workload. ■

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### 6 How to Identify Medication Coding Errors

By Joy Woodke, COE, OCS, OCSR

### 8 How to Lighten Your Management Burden

By Maureen Waddle, MBA

### 10 Growth Strategies, Part 2: Building the Patient Pipeline

By Jim Flynn

### 14 The Retirement Red Zone

By David Mandell, JD, MBA,  
and Andrew Taylor, CFP