

Incentive Plan

EMSA Patient Financial Services staff is divided into four (4) areas, pre-billing, coding, patient account follow-up, and customer service. Although the four areas perform distinctly different job functions, their day to day work is very dependent on one another for the overall success of the Revenue Cycle.

There are perceived benefits to implementing an incentive program, and there is much research as to their effectiveness without clear conclusions. In many situations they have been successful usually when creativity in accomplishing one's objectives is required. (e.g. Sales, Marketing) In production environments and in situations where teams are interdependent upon each other they tend to be detrimental and end up being difficult to manage. The experience from many experts in the Revenue Cycle field is that it is detrimental to the revenue cycle process to ensure the staff works as a team. There can be positive outcomes such as rewarding individuals when they have gone beyond their required work which gives them an incentive to continue. However most of the research shows that the personality of the team member is the deciding factor on whether or not these incentive programs are successful. There are few ways to objectively implement an incentive program in our environment across all the areas of our Revenue Cycle team. Previous attempts to create and implement performance based programs with additional incentives have led me to believe the results would be unfavorable instead of favorable to our overall success. In discussions with other industry experts I have come to the conclusion that an incentive plan no matter how well designed and implemented evolves into an entitlement and ultimately damages morale or creates a rift among team members.

RECOMMENDATION:

Our philosophy at EMSA is that there are 5 keys to success in Revenue Cycle:

1. Clearly defined Job Descriptions and workflow designs
2. Clearly articulated Quality and Productivity Goals for all Staff Members
3. Effective Technology Infrastructure
4. Deploy at all levels Report Cards that are published widely
5. Sustain a Culture of Accountability.

Currently the staff's job description's outlines their expected productivity. Weekly the supervisors articulate to the individual staff members their percent of accuracy and productivity, and provides on-going education based on individual needs. On a weekly basis a dashboard is provided to the supervisors to show an overall view the work performed from the previous week compared to past weeks, which will help staff to strive to continue perform well.

CONCLUSION:

We believe that by continued process improvement and adhering to the 5 keys to Revenue Cycle Success we can be far more effective than attempting to design a "silver bullet" incentive program in order to try and motivate our team members to a higher and better performance.