MFM Practice Management in the era of COVID-19

SMFM Practice Management Division

Practice Management - COVID

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Practice Management - COVID-19

OUTLINE

- Clinical operations & implementation
- Scheduling
- Staffing
- Financial and strategic planning

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Clinical operations & implementation

How have you changed the administrative structure of your practice?

- Create a clear command structure
  - Central hub for incoming information
    - Policy / Staffing / Operations / Financial / IT / HR / Purchasing
  - Streamlined, centralized decision-making
  - Avoid downstream right hand-left hand issues

- Regular, frequent communication
  - Multiple different audiences
  - Communicate the targeted WHY, WHAT, and HOW
  - Solicit and receive feedback – how are they coping? what do they need?

Clinical operations & implementation

Guidelines Implementation

- Importance of quick responses to change and implementation (COM-B)
  - Capability
    - o Best member of team from important areas
      - Admin, physicians, NPs, sonographers
    - o Are recs coming from other areas- hospital system, university
      - Possibility of change, advocacy for your site
  - Opportunity
    - o Where are the safety points
      - Time in office (telemed, online forms, registration, pt flow, means of entering office)
      - Susceptibility to infx of employees, pts

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Clinical operations & implementation

Guidelines Implementation

Motivation
- o Single lead with time- maybe not your key inpatient person Influence at system level
- o Educated on issue at high level
- o Communicator
  - In development with key groups
  - With outside groups (hospital or university system)

Clinical operations & implementation

How have you instituted telehealth within your practice?

- Choose a technology that everyone (patients and providers) can easily use
    - Video visits have higher reimbursements typically than phone visits
- Create well-defined workflows
    - Clinical protocols to differentiate between essential in-person vs. telehealth visits
    - Workflows to create, communicate, and execute the telehealth visit
- Communicate to patients the WHY and make it easy for them
- EMR adjustments
    - Schedules: Clearly differentiate in-person vs. telehealth visits
    - EMR note templates: Adjust accordingly to facilitate appropriate billing

- Tips:
    - Cluster your telehealth visits separate from your in-person visits if feasible
    - Assign a person to solely perform telehealth visits from home if feasible

TL/BF

Clinical operations & implementation

Visitor policy

- Policy implementation may be different between hospital and office based practices

- In most situations, no visitors!

- Patient satisfaction

- For ultrasound: offer videotaping

- Prenatal visits

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Clinical operations & implementation

PPE

All of the masks, explained

- Purchasing challenges
  - What is needed/required?
  - GPO/Joint Purchasing
  - State stock piles
  - Import Regulations
- https://www.fda.gov/media/136403/download
- CDC Guidance
- Re-use

Clinical operations & implementation

PPE use

- **Registration Desks**
  - Acrylic screens
  - Patients must disinfect hands (even over gloves) and don masks upon arrival
  - Strict no-visitor policy
  - Prescreen all patients the day before for sx to determine if they can or should stay at home

- **Cleaning Supplies**
  - Antiseptic wipes, Alcohol, Cidex, Lysol, Spray Cleaners – all in short supply and are extremely expensive

- Order early to build inventories in advance

- Concerns regarding the risk of improperly used PPE serving as vectors for transmission – must continually train, reinforce and monitor use by both patents and staff

- Centralize inventories, control distribution. Pilferage is a serious concern

Scheduling

Patient and ultrasound schedules

- Minimize risk
- Depends in part on COVID prevalence
- Maximize the use of Telehealth
  - Consults
  - Prenatal visits
- Ultrasound schedule spacing
  - Use expert opinion for guidelines
  - Reach consensus internally
  - Communicate & circulate to referring practices
- Fetal surveillance spacing

Scheduling

NT to NIPT for low/average risk patients

- Existing schedule

- Future schedule

- Communicate with:
    - NIPT companies
    - Check payer coverage
    - Referring providers
    - Patients

Scheduling

Provider work schedules changes?

- Depends on your mix of inpatient and outpatient
- Depends on where your practice
  - # of sick pregnant patients
  - Redeployment to critical areas
- Be flexible if a provider is on quarantine or sick
- Alternate providers between work from home and work from the office/hospital
  - Pros & cons
  - Burnout
  - Difficult to implement in a small practice

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Scheduling

How has your practice supported working from home?

- Some stuff can be done from home with adequate technology
  - Scheduling
  - Advice nurse / Phone triage
  - Billing/coding
  - Telehealth visits
    - Many MFM consultations and follow-up visits
    - Genetic counseling
    - Remote US reading

- Some stuff can't...
  - Reception/check-in
  - Ultrasounds and procedures
  - In-person visits (lab, nursing, physician)
  - Administrative oversight and leadership

TL/LP

Staffing

Staff Redeployment Strategies

- Minimize onsite staff to extend longevity, prevent burnout.
  - Our patient volume is down approx. 30%
- Pay staff to stay at home as the schedule permits
  - Financial relief is available through the Federal Paychecks Protection Program that provides generous incentives to keep staff members employed.

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Staffing

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Staff Redeployment Strategies

- Be familiar with Federal Paid Leave Programs – 3 categories
    - Individuals who are sick – up to 2 weeks at full pay
    - Individuals taking care of people who are sick – up to 2 weeks at 2/3 pay
    - Individuals who are required to provide childcare – up to 12 weeks at 2/3 pay
    - Reimbursement for these extended leave expenses are reimbursed through payroll tax credits – administered through payroll vendors (ADP, Paychex)

Staffing

Staff Redeployment Strategies

- Physician can rotate through the following assignments
    - Doctor of the Day – fields all call from nursing and others that come up during the day
    - Work remotely
        - Read scans
        - Conduct virtual visits
        - Screen upcoming schedules for patients who can be switched to virtual visits
        - Prep charts in advance for other MDs
    - Minimize the number of sites the MDs rotate through

LP

Staffing

Staff Redeployment Strategies

- Front desk staff
  - Rotate staff members who are needed to work reception desks with work at home personnel

- MAs & Sonographers
  - Rotate paid days off as the schedule permits

Staffing

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How did you keep your staff engaged?

- Be visible

- Be transparent

- Keep communicating

- Explain decision hierarchy
  - Support the staff with their concerns
  - Help explain the bigger picture

Staffing

Staff Engagement

- Offer assistance to keep employees' morale up and their anxiety down

- Staying connected:
  - Virtual town halls
  - Virtual happy hours

- Understanding impacts of organizational changes (RIFs, Terminations)

- Emphasize EE Benefits: EAP

Financial & Strategic planning

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What can your organization do now to provide short and long term solutions?

- 10 Day Goal
  - Assess Financial Condition
  - Leverage Assets

- 20 Day Goal
  - Implement Operational Changes
  - Monitor / Adjust Strategy

- 30 Day or Post Apex Goal
  - Create and Publish Recovery Plan

Financial & Strategic planning

Sustaining Financial Viability

- Change in Models Everywhere
  - Telemedicine
    - GCs
    - NPs
    - Total OB care
    - Lab F/U
    - Results F/U with change in management
    - Pre-pregnancy consults
  - Telephonic services in many states
  - Remember consent for telephonic service in some states
  - Doxy.me
  - Coding. (SMFM Website)
    - https://s3.amazonaws.com/cdn.smfm.org/media/2301/COVID19_Updated_Telemedicine_White_Paper_April2020.pdf

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Financial & Strategic planning

Sustaining Financial Viability

- Personnel changes
  - Must change with patient case load to keep financially viable

- PPP (Payroll Protection Program)
  - For Small businesses < 500 employees
  - *ALSO FOR: Sole proprietors, independent contractors, and self-employed persons*
  - 2.5 X average payroll over last year
  - Forgiven if
    - 75% spent on payroll
    - 25% can be spent on mortgages, rent, utilities
    - No change in employee number
  - If not forgiven- loan maturity of 2 yrs, 1%

APPLY NOW!!!

Paycheck Protection Program

Th... gram provides loan ... ss for retaining employees by ... orarily expanding the traditional SBA 7(a) loan program.

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ACCESSING PAYER INFORMATION

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Medicare

- The leader in redefining policy in this period with COVID-19
- Rules are constantly shifting
- The most current information
  - https://www.cms.gov/files/document/covid-19-physicians-and-practitioners.pdf
  - https://www.cms.gov/About-CMS/Agency-Information/Emergency/EPRO/Current-Emergencies/Current-Emergencies-page
  - https://www.cms.gov/files/document/covid-dear-clinician-letter.pdf

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ACCESSING PAYER INFORMATION

Commercial Insurers and Medicaid

https://www.uhcprovider.com/en/resource-library/news/Novel-Coronavirus-COVID-19/covid19-telehealth-services.html

https://www.humana.com/coronavirus/telemedicine

https://codingintel.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/CodingandReimbursementduringtheCOVID19PandemicPACApril12020.pdf

https://www.bcbs.com/press-releases/blue-cross-and-blue-shield-companies-announce-coverage-of-coronavirus-testing

https://static.cigna.com/assets/chcp/resourceLibrary/medicalResourcesList/medicalDoingBusinessWithCigna/medicalDbwcCOVID-19.html

https://www.aetna.com/health-care-professionals/provider-education-manuals/covid-faq.html#acc_link_content_section_responsivegrid_copy__responsivegrid_accordion_11

https://www.cms.gov/files/document/03052020-medicaid-covid-19-fact-sheet.pdf

https://www.medicaid.gov/state-resource-center/downloads/covid-19-faqs.pdf

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ACCESS SHORT-TERM RESOURCES

1. A line of credit can be a valuable resource for a practice
   - Provides ready cash in cash flow shortfalls
   - Easy to access
   - Works best in long-term relationships with lending institutions
2. Business interruption insurance is often part of a more comprehensive liability policy
   - Can make you whole if there is a loss of income
   - Typically associated with local disasters
   - How insurance companies respond depends on policy language

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ACCESS SHORT-TERM RESOURCES

3. LOANS AVAILABLE THROUGH THE SBA

Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)	Category	Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL)
• Payroll expenses • Employee salaries • Mortgage interest • Rent and utilities • Interest on debt prior to 2/15/20	Uses	• Payroll • Fixed debts • Accounts payable • Other expenses that can't be paid due to disaster impact
2.5 x business's average monthly payroll	Amount	Up to $2 million
1% APR	Interest Rate	3.75% APR
No payment for 6-12 months, then a 2-year term	Terms	Up to 30 years
Up to 100% with approval	Forgiveness	No forgiveness

Financial & Strategic planning

Financial Implications

- The current crisis is generating substantial legislative and regulatory activity, along with other legal developments, that deserve constant attention.

- CCFRA ESPL and FMLA Expansion, CARES Act – *Guidance is still being published.* *https://www.krostcpas.com/news/the-economic-injury-disaster-loan-eidl-program-vs-the-paycheck-protection-program-ppp*

- Mitigate financial exposure – diversification of revenues (There was $75M set aside from the new legislation for COVID related research consider: $200,000 RAPID grant from the National Science Foundation)

Financial & Strategic planning

Financial Implications

- Staff implications - Months of social distancing could increase disruption of revenue formation leading ultimately to lower labor participation and decreased productivity growth
  - Economic impacts
  - Financial crisis
- Prioritize initiatives with:
  - Lower capital requirements, lower risk profiles, proven positive impact on cash flow, higher chances of saving jobs
  - Lead with compassion and "ice in the belly," "keep your cool in a critical situation"
  - Trying to understand the economic impacts of this pandemic
  - Plan for the worst and hope for the best

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