

30-DAY GUIDE TO
**SEEING MORE PATIENTS
WITHOUT WORKING
MORE HOURS**



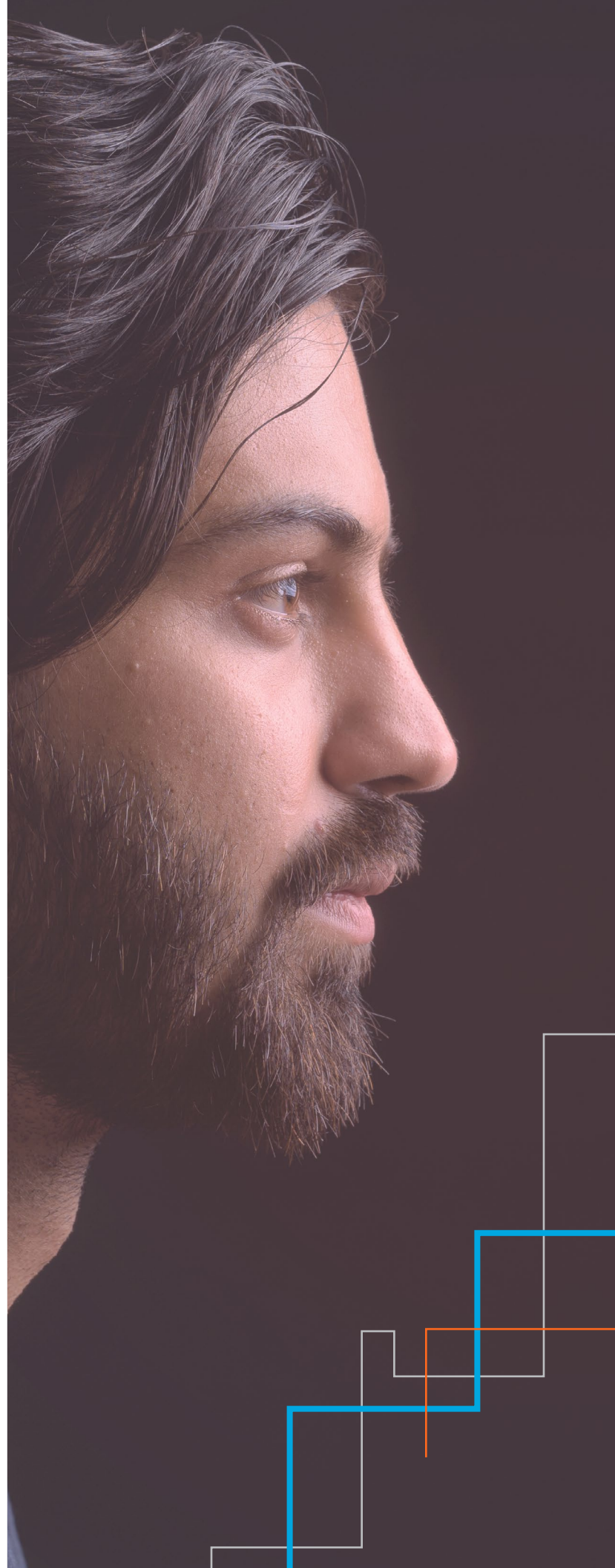
SEE MORE PATIENTS

Everyone has the same number of limited hours in a day. If it seems like your friendly neighborhood competitors are seeing more patients and bringing in more profit in the same eight-hour day to see patients, it might actually be true.

Clinics that learn how to best utilize technology and automate processes that could be done by a computer can quickly free up more time in the day. When you remove those burdensome administrative tasks, you can schedule more patients and bring in more income so your clinic can thrive.

One big challenge for clinics that want to implement technology and streamline workflows is simply not knowing where to start. It can feel overwhelming to make changes to processes that you and your staff have always done a certain way. This guide will help you do it methodically, allowing you to get to a point of seeing more patients in your clinic as quickly as possible while still maintaining your sanity.

Below you will find one process you can automate or tool you can start using each week over the next month to streamline your clinic operations.



WEEK 1:

EHR TEMPLATES

One study¹ of physicians in four different states across four specialty areas of ambulatory care found that physicians spend only 27% of their time face-to-face with patients, and 49% of their time in the EHR or doing “deskwork.”

Even in the exam room, physicians only spend 53% of the few minutes allocated for each appointment interacting directly with the patient; 37% of exam room time is spent working in the EHR. None of that includes the additional hours of work each night spent in the EHR.

Electronic health records arrived with much fanfare in medicine, promising to bring the efficiency of technology to a field that remained very traditional. But more than 50 years after the implementation of the first EHR², a study by the KLAS Arch Collaborative³ summarized it best:

“Despite decades of effort and billions of dollars of investment, the EHR has not lived up to its potential to improve care, reduce costs, or revolutionize the experience for caregivers.”

A Mayo Clinic study provided evidence⁴ of strong links between usability of EHRs and burnout among physicians. While EHRs have received a lot of blame—and perhaps rightly so, given that they have not traditionally been designed with usability in mind—they are not going anywhere. Electronic documentation of patient interactions will only increase in the future.

Fortunately there are EHR software vendors that are thinking about user experience from the perspective of physicians and care providers. The next generation of EHRs is

here today, and it’s capable of streamlining tasks that used to take hours so you can spend more time with patients.

You can set up templates and automated workflows in AdvancedMD EHR that quickly fill in repetitive information, so you don’t have to type everything for every patient encounter. They provide prompts for all the necessary information to reduce delays and claims rejections by CMS and commercial payors. They can also help you see which components of E/M notes⁵ could be completed by ancillary staff rather than the physician, allowing everyone to work at the top of their license and reducing unnecessary administrative tasks for the doctor.



WEEK 2:

AUTOMATED PATIENT REMINDERS & ELECTRONIC CHECK-IN

Few things frustrate clinics and doctors more than last-minute cancellations or no-show appointments. When patients cancel at the last minute or do not show up at all, it leaves gaps in the schedule that you cannot fill.

It's wasted time for your physicians and lost revenue, since the clinic is still open and you're still paying salaries and other overhead costs.

In an MGMA Stat poll⁶, 44% of clinics said no-shows are their biggest challenge, and 6% cited cancellations as an issue. In the MGMA Practice Operations Report, the median no-show rate reported by respondents was 5%, but another study found⁷ no-show rates much higher at 21% for established patients and 30% for new patients.

Even on the low end of that estimate, if your physicians have 20 patient appointments each day⁸ (which is about average), that is one no-show appointments each day. If your no-show rates are on the higher end, you could have as many as four to six no-shows every day. Each of those represents lost revenue. Some simple tools to remind patients about their appointment could make a big difference in the number of patients you see each day without adding any more appointments or extending the number of hours you work.

Automated patient reminders through AdvancedMD allow you to schedule and

customize reminder messages. You can create multiple types of reminders using the method(s) that your patients prefer. More than 52% of no-show patients⁶ say that they simply forgot to go to their appointment or forgot to cancel/reschedule it, so even a single reminder is better than none.

Multiple reminders in various forms are best, and should be scheduled to minimize cancellations and no-shows:

Email: send the first reminder via email 2 to 3 weeks prior to the appointment asking the patient to confirm and offering a simple way to reschedule if needed. This gives you plenty of time to fill the slot if they cannot come.

Text #1: send the second reminder 2 to 3 days prior to the appointment via text with the appointment day and time. If you offer electronic check-in you can include a corresponding email reminder three days before the appointment with links for the patient to complete their check-in intake and consent paperwork in advance. If patients don't have text message capabilities, you can email or call them instead.

Text #2: send the final reminder the day of the appointment via text. If the patient's appointment is first thing in the morning, consider sending this text the night before rather than sending it too early in the morning.

Some patients will still miss appointments or cancel at the last minute, so you can also use features like patient waitlist management⁹. This notifies patients via text of last-minute cancellations and gives them the option to take that slot instead of waiting for a later appointment.

Week 2 is also a good time to set up your electronic check-in process. Offering electronic check-in prior to the appointment allows patients to review their information, correct any errors, and pay for copays or other outstanding bills prior to their arrival. This can dramatically speed up the check-in process. It also keeps appointments on schedule because patients aren't sitting in the waiting room delaying their appointment while they fill out paperwork. Your doctors can see more patients during the day by staying on schedule and patients don't have to deal with long and frustrating waiting room times.



WEEK 3:

ONLINE SCHEDULING

Now that your schedule is filled with patients who are more likely to show up, the next thing to tackle is wasted time in your scheduling process. Online patient scheduling offers several opportunities to improve efficiency in your clinic.

It takes an average of 8.1 minutes¹⁰ for a patient to schedule an appointment by phone, which is almost three hours of your scheduler's time per week just for the initial appointments, not including any cancellations or rescheduling. In small clinics where a scheduler often wears multiple hats, this takes valuable time away from other activities and limits opportunities for your staff to help with other patient-focused tasks that could speed up appointments.

That wasted time on the phone for scheduling also has another negative consequence for your practice: if patients cannot call during regular business hours to schedule, or they simply don't want to call, your doctors have fewer appointments. When you have a last-minute cancellation as discussed above, a scheduling process that only happens by phone can limit your ability to fill it on short notice.

Fill Last-Minute Appointments

Online scheduling provides better opportunities for you to fill last-minute appointments. Patients can easily go online to see when the next appointment is and put themselves into the slot even if it's after hours. Many practices leave one or two appointments open for same-day or next-day appointments, but if nobody calls today to fill the open slots tomorrow you end up with gaps in the schedule and wasted revenue opportunities. Since the average wait time to see a doctor is around 24 days¹¹, getting more patients to fill short-notice time slots through online scheduling can increase your revenue today instead of pushing that patient off for almost a month.

WEEK 4:

REPORTING

In the final week of your 30-day journey to get more patients into your doctors' schedules, office managers and administrators should set up automated reporting.

A lack of information about important clinic metrics—like average number of no-show appointments per week—can make it hard for physician partners and executives to understand the need for better software that improves workflows and boosts efficiency.

The reality is that many physicians (and administrators) don't like medical office software and don't see its value in their day-to-day practice. As an office manager or administrator, your job is not to help them understand why they want software, but instead to show how better practice management, EHR and patient engagement software facilitates your goals of better patient care, higher patient volumes, and better revenue cycle management that leads to higher profits.

Automated reports and advanced analytics¹² that help you demonstrate the value of your clinic software can get more physicians and staff on board with using it and help you realize a return on your investment.

START TODAY with AdvancedMD

To get started on your efforts to increase patient volume in your clinic, contact AdvancedMD and schedule a demo. We'll discuss how the right practice management tools can add more patients to your schedule without asking your physicians and staff to work longer hours.

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