



HAPPY STAFF = HAPPY PATIENTS

Most physicians have no formal training in business, and this has become a problem for the modern-day health care practitioner. Although we are all extensively trained in ophthalmology, we tend to forget that our world is rapidly changing. This is particularly true for our patients' demands and expectations. One of the most important success indicators in health care is patient satisfaction, and a crucial factor for keeping your patients happy is keeping your staff happy.

In a study examining this relationship between patient satisfaction and staff satisfaction, investigators found that patient satisfaction was positively correlated with the general job satisfaction of the practice's staff.¹ Conversely, no significant correlation was observed when patient satisfaction was compared with the general job satisfaction of the practice owner and other physician colleagues.

Maintaining a happy staff is easier said than done, but I have three specific tips, outlined briefly here, that have worked well for my practice over the years.

QUARTERLY REVIEWS

Reviews provide staff members with a great opportunity to share their feedback, and they offer physicians the chance to make assessments of their own. When

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feedback from the staff is taken into consideration or acted on, it has a positive effect on employees' overall job satisfaction.

AUTONOMY

Good employees want to make choices on their own, and to accomplish this they need the right tools to remain productive. Find a way to help make their jobs easier, and they will help improve your practice.

STRESS REDUCTION

Encourage your employees to engage in daily activities that help reduce stress—simple things such as exercise, time with family, or another activity that motivates them and can help them improve their quality of life. In turn, this can help reduce absenteeism and strengthen

interpersonal relationships in the practice.

I hope these tips are helpful, and I encourage every physician to seriously consider the satisfaction of his or her staff. It can make a huge difference in keeping patients happy and in improving patient outcomes. ■

1. Szecsenyi J, Goetz K, Campbell S, Broge B, Reuschenbach B, Wensing M. Is the job satisfaction of primary care team members associated with patient satisfaction? *BMJ Qual Saf.* 2011;20(6):508-514.

ERIK L. MERTENS, MD, FEBOPHTH

CHIEF MEDICAL EDITOR