

The High Cost of Time

BY **BARRY H. BLOCK, DPM, JD**

Fifty years ago, medical practitioners spent most of their working time examining and treating patients. Yes, there was some charting and insurance billing involved, but notes were handwritten (often illegible) and usually very short with lots of abbreviations. This was a time when malpractice was much less of a risk and before the advent of managed care insurance. The first desktop computers weren't introduced until 1981.



Over the past five decades, the entire health-care environment has been turned upside down. Managed care is now the norm and most podiatrists use EMRs to chart patients. Insurance companies closely monitor billing patterns and routinely audit charts when they see red flags such as excessive use of a CPT code. These technological advances were supposed to improve efficiency, but as a recent

PM News Quick Poll shows, the result is that podiatrists are spending less time with patients.

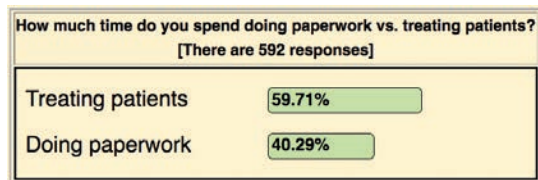
This results in a diminished level of

patient care as well as decreased revenue. If you're spending forty percent of your time doing paperwork, it's time to make some changes to your practice. Since the working time of a podiatrist should produce at least one to two hundred dollars an hour (or more), you should consider hiring a scribe or a virtual assistant to do most ministerial tasks at a fraction of the cost. This goes for basic tasks such as taking or developing x-rays, casting for orthotics, etc. As the cliché goes, time is money, but you can't buy extra time.

Respectfully Submitted,

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