



"Ghost" Clinicians Support In-Basket Workloads to Improve Clinic Day Workflows

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Faculty/Presenter Disclosure

Faculty:

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Relationships with commercial interests:

None



Background

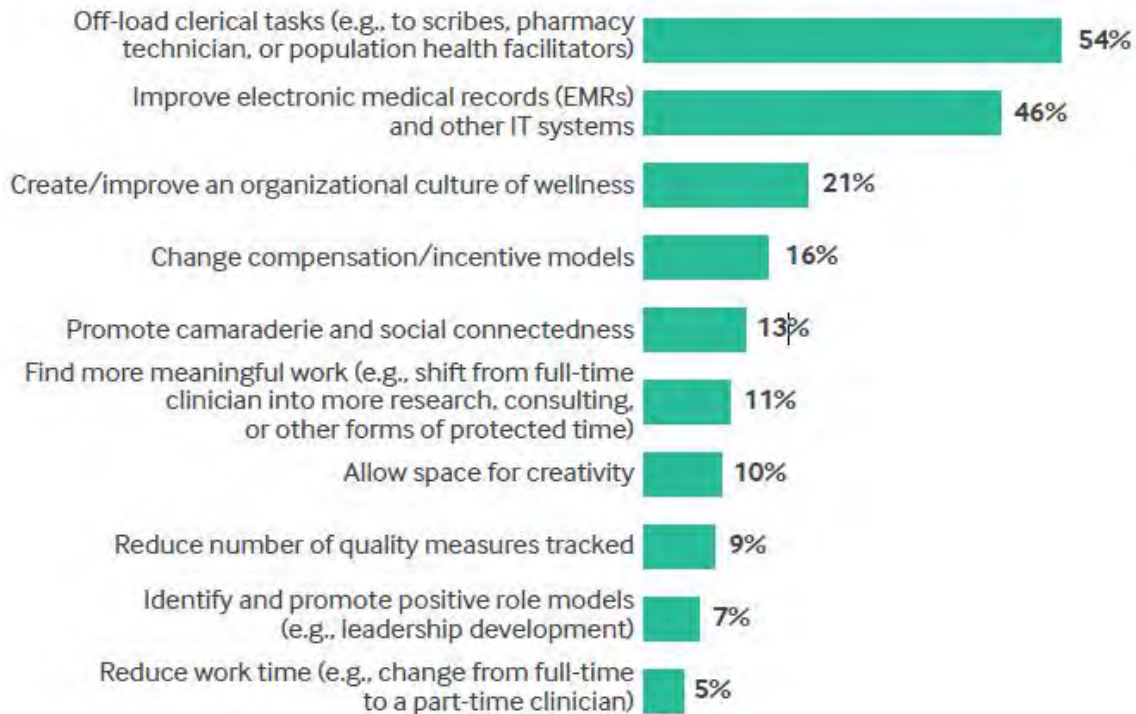
Current estimates are that **clinicians spend up to 2 hours working on the electronic health record (EHR) for every 1 hour of direct patient care in clinic**. The PCP prioritizes scheduled-patient needs during the work day but then is unable to address in-basket workloads in a timely manner.

During this era of physician burnout, **it's critical to develop strategies to minimize distractions and reduce the time spent entering data on the EHR** to allow clinicians to complete the scheduled patient-care workday in an efficient manner.

Robust cross coverage of in-basket workloads when doctors are out of office is important for addressing patient care needs without delay and for not impacting continuity of care, while also recognizing clinicians' needs for rest and renewal.



What are some tools/initiatives that health care organizations can deploy to reduce or guard against clinician burnout?



Base = 703 (multiple responses)



Table: "Seeking Solutions to Physician Burnout: Roundtable Report" by NEJM Catalyst and IMB Watson Health, 2018



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Intervention

Who is the Ghost Clinician?

This is a PCP, working virtually, who's available to assist the health-care team in real time. No scheduled patients allows for this clinician to focus and efficiently manage in-basket work assignments.

The Ghost Clinician Priorities:

- To cover “heavy” in-basket work for PCPs out of office; to complete “today’s work” to provide patient care without delay
- To support health-care teams’ message management and walk-in patients’ needs virtually



Results

With implementation of the Ghost Clinician, there was a measured overall 10% reduction in PCP “time spent on EHR after hours per scheduled day.”

And . . .



More Results

Clinicians working the Ghost shifts and the primary care teams have reported a variety of positive outcomes:

Virtual clinician workflows can build stronger and more cohesive teams with an enhanced culture of working together and awareness of mutual reliance.

We've seen increased patient satisfaction with more timely returns on messages, labs, imaging, etc., and less PCP angst on return from vacation knowing that their health-care teams took care of their patients' needs.

Flexibility and diversity in PCP practice with the Ghost role leads to clinicians upcoding FTE to contribute to teams and help balance a sustainable work week.

The initiative has been a win-win-win for patients, the PCP, and staff.