

## **Making a Difference...**

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As I meet and work with healthcare organizations around the country, I am often reminded of how important what we do on the business side of healthcare is. When I think back in time to my first financial position in healthcare, I quickly realized that we are truly blessed. We don't have the skills and talents to provide direct health care to a patient, that has been reserved for those with that calling, but we do have the business skills and talents to ensure that physicians, nurses and all direct care professionals can continue to focus on providing the level of care that is needed.

Early in my healthcare career I realized when organizational decisions are contemplated that purely focus exclusively on either the medical or the business aspects, the outcome most often misses the mark. Balancing both sides of the equation is what works best. It requires business and medical professionals to consistently work together.

### **A Balancing Act of Teamwork**

Another balance that is equally important in our line of work is between mission and margin. Healthcare organizations have a unique mission, different than any other industry in our economy. This is even more apparent with the degree of not-for-profit and faith-based healthcare organizations, as they are the largest segment within the hospital and clinical industry. Serving their communities in a compassionate manner with a higher calling is a good summation of the mission statements I have run across. But this compassion would quickly disappear if the bottom line was ignored or not paid it's appropriate due. In my humble opinion, those organizations that have found that right balance are the ones truly *living up to the mission and optimizing the margin*.

Unfortunately, many healthcare organizations have not been able to strike this balance. Why? Well, it goes back to perspective. Those that have achieved the mission/margin balance have deliberately chosen to align their actions with their missions.

### **Charity Programs Change Lives – My Tale**

From my personal experience (and many of you reading this have stories that come to mind as well), this mission aspect of our business makes a difference in numerous lives each and every day. In all of my engagements with healthcare organizations across the country, I've heard a variety of reasons for providing or not providing charity care respective to an organization's mission. These reasons range from "well they're just trying to not pay" to "they didn't comply with our policy, so they were declined" to "we give enough charity". Well, I was one of those people at one time. For those that have never been humbled to that degree, I can tell you it is an experience I would not wish upon anyone. But it also taught me a valuable life lesson. No matter how successful, we are not exempt from significant personal and professional challenges in our lives.

I was and still am appreciative for those in healthcare that showed compassion. They had an impact on my life that I will never forget. Based on that experience, I have intentionally turned my gratitude into a lifelong calling to financially support those

organizations. Today, my job is to help healthcare organizations live up to their missions and still improve the bottom line. How could I ask for anything better?

### **It Has Never Been Easier**

By providing charity care for your respective communities, you are making a difference in more lives than most probably ever realize. A Chief of Medical Staff once told me that more than seventy percent of health issues are psychosomatically related. If this is true, just imagine the associated health benefits with letting patients know they have been approved for charity, if they qualify, at the point of service (POS) or even before.

Today's financial clearing solutions are designed to help you achieve your mission and margin goals. For example, they can automate the charity screening process to make "fast-track charity" a reality for your organization and permit you to live up to your *mission*. On the margin side, focused collection can also become a reality for your organization and permit you to optimize your *margin*.

As you can probably tell, I just call it like I see it. I've seen the mission/margin balance become a reality in a number of healthcare organizations; but even more importantly, I've seen it first hand. That's all the proof I need to know it works and makes a difference.

If you'd like to learn more about how your hospital can make a difference, please feel free to contact me. Please join me and we can make some great things come to reality – sooner than later.

Finally, don't forget to thank your staff today; it's their day-to-day efforts that make it happen.