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THE TEN COMMANDMENTS *of* PRIVATE PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

1. Run your practice as a business, not a personal fiefdom. Avoid employing relatives or friends.
2. Operate an attractive orderly practice that is pleasant for staff and patients to visit. Be sensitive to the real “total experience” that your patients have in dealing with your practice. Ask them regularly about problems and possible improvements.
3. Communicate regularly with your staff. Establish consensus on all important practice issues, especially that patients always come first. Tell your Office Manager and staff that they are not expected to know everything—asking questions and seeking help is encouraged.
4. Interact with your staff professionally and avoid overly personal relationships.
5. Establish, monitor, and enforce clearly written policies for personnel management, financial control, patient interaction, operational issues, and ALL compliance obligations including HIPAA, OSHA, ERISA, EEOC, and Medicare Fraud and Abuse.
6. Unless you truly enjoy office management, delegate the authority and responsibility to carefully chosen staff, and spend your work time practicing medicine. It is more profitable and a higher calling.
7. Identify problems and areas for improvement, then resolve them on a reasonable timeframe. Nothing kills incentive more than a working environment wherein the same problems fester and are discussed repetitively without action.
8. Seek professional assistance to resolve issues that you and your staff lack the knowledge, credentials, or experience to address in house. Like self-medication, “winging it” is a risky strategy.
9. Utilize the services of experienced, carefully-chosen advisors (e.g. CPAs for financial statements and tax filing, attorney for legal advice, and practice consultants for strategic and operational management). Follow their advice. It can be your best investment.
10. Stay current clinically and involve yourself in professional enrichment activities to some degree. Enjoy your life and family. A positive attitude and well-rounded lifestyle will help maintain the drive necessary to maintain a successful practice.