

The Hidden Opportunity of Artificial Intelligence



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Physicians are typically the only human resource within a medical practice without a formal job description. Everyone seems to need *something* from the physician - it's not uncommon to see multiple staff members standing outside a closed exam room door waiting for a physician to step out. The fragmented environment of a medical practice creates small, yet constant, cognitive friction that often breeds frustration and contributes to burnout.

Leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) to reduce this burden for clinicians - as well as your staff - can have powerful benefits. Consider these applications for AI, and use them as a jumpstart for identifying opportunities within your own practice. Note that it is important to first ensure that your use of AI complies with your organization's policies and protected health information (PHI) requirements.

Record Summary. When a new patient presents with a stack of records, develop an AI tool to summarize the key findings (or use a feature your EHR system may

already offer). Be specific—for example, ask it to pull the results of a particular lab test over time. Train the tool based on how you like information presented - and stay curious. AI will never replace your clinical judgment, but it can summarize hundreds of pages much faster than you can.

Prior Authorization. When a prior authorization is requested for a patient, ask the AI tool to gather the clinical rationale and draft a letter on your behalf. You should review the letter, make appropriate edits, and make the final decision, but the tool can handle much of the legwork.

Knowledge Management. The nurses' station is often littered with sticky notes—reminders of tasks, information, and instructions. AI can be "trained" to remember and retrieve these important details, serving them up when and where they're needed. Beyond the nursing team, AI-powered knowledge management can be a game changer for appointment schedulers, laboratory staff, and billing teams.

Policies, Procedures, and Administrative Tasks. Busy clinicians rarely have the time or energy to create the materials required to manage a practice. This may include lab protocols, a new vanity phone number announcement, a registration form, an employee leave policy, website content, or an offer letter for a new medical assistant. To get more value from AI, invest more effort in your prompt. Instead of simply asking, "We need a leave policy on....," upload your current policy and explain what's working - and what isn't. Even if your input is somewhat disjointed, the additional context will produce a more useful result. For legal documents, AI can help develop a first draft, but an attorney should always review the final version.

Financial Insights. It's challenging to navigate pages of Excel® spreadsheets trying to glean information about opportunities to improve the financial health of your practice. AI can be leveraged to analyze the data and surface actionable insights for you. Another valuable use case is prioritizing accounts receivable for follow-up based on factors such as the likelihood of collection or financial impact.

Patient Lens. Increasingly, patients are using AI as the "front door" to healthcare. Put yourself in a patient's shoes and run a few searches. If you're a gastroenterologist, for example, ask, *"I've been having stomach pain for a week. Do I need to see a doctor, and if so, what kind of specialist should I see?"* Review the response to understand what information patients are receiving before they ever call your office. Consider using it as inspiration for an article on your website. At a minimum, understanding the information patients are receiving is incredibly valuable.

You can also ask the AI tool, *"I'm looking for a pediatrician for my newborn son in [Your Town]. Who do you recommend?"* What does it report? If your pediatric practice isn't at the top of the list, it may be time to learn more about answer engine optimization (AEO), which is becoming just as important as traditional search engine optimization (SEO). Artificial intelligence will never replace your expertise, judgment, or compassion, but it can remove countless small burdens from the day, allowing you and your team to spend more time

focused on what matters most: caring for your patients.

Call-out: Hot Tip! Challenge the AI tool. Ask questions such as, "Are you certain this is the best way to structure this?" "What important considerations might this recommendation be overlooking?" or "How confident are you that this information is correct?" You may be surprised by the tool's candor - and by the additional layer of insight your follow-up questions uncover.

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