

Adding Esthetics to A Medical Practice

By Mara Shorr

With the ever-changing health care laws, rules and regulations, more medical service providers are adding esthetic services. With that transition, I'm often asked how a previously insurance-based practice can begin to add esthetic services. Here are six points to consider when adding esthetic services to an insurance-based practice.

Cash, Insurance or Both?

Determine your reasons for wanting to move to cash services and away from only insurance-based procedures, and determine how long it will take. Will the business be giving up insurance-based services altogether? If so, determine what the timeline, whether it is one year, three years or five years.

Some practices may want to continue to offer both insurance-based and cash services in the same business indefinitely, referring patients and clients back and forth. The answer to this question will determine the destination of the journey.

Skin Issue Targets

Figure out which issues you're looking to treat, and then do your homework on how a medspa would treat them. Ask your patients which services they're interested in receiving, and if/where they're currently receiving them. Determining price points is key, and making sure you have a strong enough initial referral patient base is incredibly important.

Get Training

Proper training for new

procedures is paramount. Take the proper courses when it comes to new procedures, such as injectables and lasers. While a weekend course is great, make sure you leave the training session 100% comfortable with what you learned. Make sure all of your questions are answered by a reputable trainer before you treat a single client. Complications are more likely to arise when you are not confident in what you're doing, and complications lead to unhappy patients, lawsuits and worst of all, death.

Update Environment

Be somewhere your clients will want to come and pay for services out of their own pocket. Are you opening an adjacent office space to your current practice? If you're transitioning a few exam rooms in your current office, ditch the worn carpet and sterile-feeling exam rooms in favor of a warm, welcome, updated environment. This may require a makeover of your existing space or, at the very least, turning your exam rooms into a tastefully decorated, relaxing environment.

Update Staff

Evaluate your staff as well, making sure they look like they're in an esthetic environment, complete with fresh skin and smiles on their faces. You'll need to hire additional providers specific to this industry, such as an esthetician. Remember, medspa clients have a lot of provider options, not just a list given to them by their insurance company.

Notify Your Patients

Let your previous patients know

about your new services. Whether it is a printed postcard or an ongoing monthly e-newsletter, alert your existing patients of your new services. Make sure that when they enter your office, they're surrounded by your internal marketing efforts, including branded framed signage and customized brochures on your new procedures in every treatment room, as well as your reception area.

Establish Financing

Offer your clients financing for their new procedures. In your previous days, insurance covered the majority of patients' visits, and they had to come to your for health reasons. Things are different now, and you'll often be asking patients to open up their wallets for larger amounts than their previous co-pay. Look into patient financing opportunities, allowing them to pay for their procedure in a comfortable timeframe. We have a successful financing option with 0% interest over a 12-18 month period, allowing the client to spread out payments for their laser treatment package, for example. Fees aren't any higher than they would pay to process a standard credit card.

While this transition is a big step, it's one that has been successful for a number of medical practices. ✂



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