KMC UNIVERSITY

Time Management Data Collection Toolkit

Financial Department Work Schedule

You may be working in the financial department full-time or splitting your time between your financial duties and running the front desk or some other area of the practice. Without a work schedule for your financial department duties, you may let important tasks take a back seat to other things.

A work schedule lets you organize and classify all necessary tasks within your working hours. It shouldn't be rigid; rather it's a guide to help you dedicate specific time to every essential task so that nothing slips through the cracks.

We know that financial department duties are never completely caught up; these jobs are in constant and perpetual motion. If time isn't budgeted for each important duty, things may be left completely undone—thus destroying productivity. Some days, certain tasks require less time; other days you have to stop a task at the designated time and move to the next task. There is a sense of accomplishment that comes with knowing that all your duties will eventually be completed.

The main advantage to organizing duties in this manner is that you won't use dedicated calling time to process time-consuming paperwork. You schedule uninterrupted calling time for the most productive time of the day. This process helps you review your duties based on frequency. It provides context and a point of organization that allows you to build a schedule that ensures all duties are completed in the most efficient manner.

Task Identification

Consider the duties required when working in the financial department regardless of full or part-time status. Below is a list of the most common tasks and their typical frequency as they occur in the KMC University Billing and Collections System. Become familiar with the list as you'll be asked to customize a set of tasks based on this list later in this toolkit.

Tasks to Be Completed Daily

Check the Tickler File	Whether your tickler file is electronic or paper, this very important part of your follow-up system must be reviewed daily. These reminders direct you to account notes to confirm payments have been received or to complete follow-ups. The tickler file is a critical component of an effective follow-up system.
Outbound Follow-Up Calls	These calls are divided into two categories: proactive (accounts receivable follow-up) and reactive (follow-up) calls. Spend time every day making outbound calls to keep cash flow moving. Proactive calls should be made at least three times a week and reactive calls should be made no less than twice a week, scaled to your practice.
Electronic Billing	It is usually most efficient and effective to send electronic billing batches daily. Also, check prior days' edit reports and act on any bounced claims.
Payment Posting	Incoming insurance and patient payments, including zero-pays, should be posted daily. Use a line-item posting method to drive your follow-up processes. Skipped or incorrectly-paid bills fuel your reactive call process.
Update Statistics	Office statistics should be noted daily in your corresponding stat sheets so practice leadership can review them as they manage productivity. Include important financial department statistics such as outbound calls, resubmissions, total billing and total collections.
Insurance Verification	A best practice is to allot time daily to verify new and returning patient information.

Pre-Authorizations	If your office is a participating provider in a managed care network, you must stay current with all authorizations. The best way to manage this is with a daily tickler follow-up system.

Tasks to Be Completed One or More Times Per Week

Paper Billing	Billing via the mail on CMS-1500 billing forms should be done *once or twice a week*. This includes personal injury or worker's compensation billing with **office notes attached.** Adjusters look at these bills monthly, and too many bills could be a red flag.
Records Requests	Requests for entire charts, files, or x-rays, usually don't require immediate action—*once or twice a week* will suffice. Someone in the department can assist with this work so it doesn't detract from financial department specialists' core duties.
Forms Completion	Some forms (e.g. authorization, workers' compensation, etc.) require time to complete. Allot time *weekly* to keep these current. Keep forms in a designated space until the appointed time and then complete them all at once.
Report Typing	Appeals and other reports shouldn't interrupt the financial department's daily duties; schedule time *weekly* for these duties.
Chart Audits/FUBAR Files	From time-to-time you will come across charts or computer accounts that are "fouled up beyond all recognition" or FUBAR. Don't stop what you're doing to fix these on the fly as that can change your mental direction and stop your flow. Instead, make time in your schedule several times a week to address these issues. Whether auditing an entire chart or chasing pennies on a ledger, this task requires dedicated time.
Weekly Meetings	Weekly team meetings, doctor update meetings, etc. should appear in your weekly schedule; allot enough time to maintain communication with your team.

Tasks to Be Completed One or More Times Per Month

Patient Statements and Billing	Patient balances should be addressed via monthly statements after checking each bill for accuracy. Follow a 30-60-90-day schedule and create a plan for bills that are 120 days overdue. Devote time to these balances during regular outbound calling time.
Collection Actions	Review accounts that have been turned over to a collection agency or your attorney. Stay in touch monthly and ask for status reports.
Attorney Long Term Follow Up	Personal Injury or Workers' Compensation cases that have been dismissed and are being managed by an attorney need constant oversight until the balance is paid in full. Use a tickler file to connect with each patient at least once-a-month to determine the status of the case. Add details to your internal financial notes in order to stay on top of these important balances.

Analysis Meeting with the Doctor	Key department team members should meet with the doctor at least once-a-month to analyze the aging report, update current trends, etc. While weekly departmental meetings with the doctor are best, never go more than a month without one.
Monthly Compliance Duties	Track the annual duties you've spread through each month on your Compliance Officer's Annual Calendar. Complete these duties once-a-month to make quick, easy work of compliance activities.

Tasks to Be Completed As Needed

We can't predict all the things that will come up during a given week. Sometimes, we have to do things on a "less than routine" basis, but it kills your plan and schedule when you don't allow for these duties. We'll work these into your schedule with a placeholder each week. These are some examples of duties that are infrequent, but necessary.

"Emergencies"	In every busy office, things come up that are not a part of your day-to-day duties. But someone has to do it! We'll allow for specific time weekly to complete these "as needed" tasks as they come up. The beauty of including a placeholder for them weekly is that we can confidently wait to address these items until they come up. Of course, a true emergency will be handled immediately.
Inventory	Often, the billing personnel or office manager is required to maintain office inventory. This can include not only office supplies, but also clinical supplies, durable medical equipment and nutritional supplement orders. Allow time in the schedule to keep track of inventory on an as needed basis. If you have a postage meter that needs to be replenished, this can be worked into your schedule during your "as needed" time block.
Credentialing or Re-Validation	It may be that credentialing is a rare occurrence in your office and it doesn't make sense to allow time for it in a regular schedule. This is one of those items that can be added to the "as needed" time placeholder when necessary. Re-validation, in Medicare for example, comes up every five years. When it does, remember to include it in your tasks that week.
Equipment Maintenance	Proactively taking care of your equipment helps it last longer. However, this is not something that needs to be in your schedule on a regular basis. Include this in your "as needed" time block when appropriate.

Task Identification Sheet

Now that you've reviewed the most common duties in your department, break your actual duties into categories that you can organize. The table below contains examples that you delete as you add your own tasks. Think about all of your duties; some may be outside the financial department but they are still important to your schedule. Make your list using the columns below.

DAILY WEEKLY MONTHLY AS NEEDED

TO BE COMPLETED EVERY DAY	TO BE COMPLETED ONE OR MORE TIMES PER WEEK	TO BE COMPLETED ONE OR MORE TIMES PER MONTH	TO BE COMPLETED AS NEEDED
Check your tickler file	Paper billing	Patient billing	Replenish postage meter
Make phone calls to insurance companies	Records requests	Collection actions	Fill out credentialing applications
Electronic billing	Reactive calls that are not done daily	Attorney long term tickler follow up	
Posting checks	Forms completion	Analysis meetings with the doctor	
Keeping stats	Report typing		
Verification	Chart audits/FUBAR		
Pre-authorization	Weekly doctor meeting		
Pre-certification			
Lunch			

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DAILY | WEEKLY | MONTHLY | AS NEEDED

TO BE COMPLETED EVERY DAY	TO BE COMPLETED ONE OR MORE TIMES PER WEEK	TO BE COMPLETED ONE OR MORE TIMES PER MONTH	TO BE COMPLETED AS NEEDED

Assigned Task List Sheet

Next, review your tasks from the prior sheet and determine where each duty best fits your schedule. Consider what your schedule looks like. For example, do you cover the front desk on Tuesday mornings? Limit financial department tasks on Tuesdays. Is Thursday a day with no providers in the office? That's a good day to do work requiring detail.

	TO BE COMPLETED EVERY DAY	TO BE COMPLETED ONE OR MORE TIMES PER WEEK	TO BE COMPLETED ONE OR MORE TIMES PER MONTH	TO BE COMPLETED AS NEEDED
MONDAY	Post Checks Electronic Billing	Paper Billing	Statements/Billings Collection Actions Attorney Follow-Ups Compliance Duties	Inventory Review Policies/Procedures Equip. Maintenance Refill Postage Meter Cred. Re-Validation
TUESDAY	Post Checks Check Tickler File Call Ins. Companies Verification	Record Requests		
WEDNESDAY	Post Checks Electronic Billing Verification	Chart Audits FUBARs Reac. Calls Not Done Daily		
THURSDAY	Post Checks Pre-authorizations Verifications	Complete Forms Doctor Meetings		
FRIDAY	Post Checks Electronic Billing Verification			

Create Your Draft Working Schedule

Instructions

Every task that you have identified has now been placed into a day/week that you feel fits into your personal and departmental work schedule. Your task now is to look at your individual day and create time slots for each of the 4 categories and all your tasks.

Remember, this is a WEEKLY Schedule, so you need to plan time for each of the WEEKLY, MONTHLY, and AS NEEDED tasks that were listed into the appropriate day and time that you completed in step 2. A key point is even if you do not have “tasks” assigned into a category (ex. AS NEEDED), it is best to schedule a time to work those tasks in each week so that you do not feel stressed or overwhelmed when these projects come up in the work place. By having this time allotted, non-urgent items can be saved for this spot in the schedule.

Keep in mind that our goal is not to define the specific times for you, but to give you the tool so you can do it for yourself. Look at your duties so you have the capability of being in control of your daily schedule; you will not become overwhelmed and you can accomplish every task on your list!

Working Schedule

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
_____AM						
_____AM						
_____AM						
_____AM						
NOON						
_____PM						
_____PM						
_____PM						
_____PM						
_____PM						

	TO BE COMPLETED ONE OR MORE TIMES PER MONTH
Week One	
Week Two	
Week Three	
Week Four	

RECOMMENDED LEGEND	TO BE COMPLETED EVERY DAY	TO BE COMPLETED ONE OR MORE TIMES PER WEEK	TO BE COMPLETED ONE OR MORE TIMES PER MONTH	TO BE COMPLETED AS NEEDED

Sample Calendars

Here are two sample calendars so you can see how a fictional CA who works part time in the financial department may work out a schedule, and one for a full-time financial department CA. These are examples only. If you need assistance with working out your schedule, call us at 855-TEAMKMC

<table>
<tr><th></th><th colspan="5">SAMPLE PART TIME WEEKLY FINANCIAL DEPARTMENT SCHEDULE</th></tr>
<tr><th></th><th>MONDAY</th><th>TUESDAY</th><th>WEDNESDAY</th><th>THURSDAY</th><th>FRIDAY</th></tr>
<tr><td>8:00 AM</td><td rowspan="4">Work at the Front Desk
Compile Weekly Stats
Prep training for team meeting</td><td rowspan="4">Tickler Follow-Up Calls
Proactive Calls
Reactive Calls
Insurance Verification</td><td rowspan="4">Work at the Front Desk
Manage Pre-Auth and Pre-Cert Updates</td><td rowspan="4">Tickler Calls
Reactive Calls
Proactive Calls
Insurance Verification</td><td rowspan="4">Work at the Front Desk
Catch Up Ticklers</td></tr>
<tr><td>9:00 AM</td></tr>
<tr><td>10:30 AM</td></tr>
<tr><td>11:00 AM</td></tr>
<tr><td>NOON</td><td>Weekly Team Meeting</td><td>Lunch</td><td>Lunch</td><td>Lunch</td><td>Lunch</td></tr>
<tr><td>1:00 PM</td><td>Print and Send Paper Billing</td><td>Process Records Requests and
Forms Completion</td><td rowspan="2">Work at the Front Desk</td><td rowspan="2">Work at the Front Desk</td><td>Catch Up Reactive Calls</td></tr>
<tr><td>2:00 PM</td><td>Paper Action File Follow Up</td><td>Paper Claims Billing</td><td>Process Electronic Billing and Review
Edit Reports</td></tr>
<tr><td>3:00 PM</td><td rowspan="2">Monthly Task Place Holder</td><td>Post Checks and Zero Pays</td><td>Post Checks and Zero Pays</td><td>Post Checks a nd Zero Pays</td><td>Post Checks and Zero Pays</td></tr>
<tr><td>4:00 PM</td><td>Chart Audits and FUBARs</td><td>Catch Up Insurance Verification</td><td>Chart Audits and FUBARs</td><td>As Needed Task Place Holder</td></tr>
<tr><td>5:30 PM</td><td>End of Shift</td><td>End of Shift</td><td>End of Shift</td><td>End of Shift</td><td>End of Shift</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>MONTHLY and/or < YEARLY TASKS</th><th>PRN or SPECIAL TASKS</th></tr>
<tr><td>Week One</td><td>Print and Mail Patient Statements</td><td rowspan="4">Training Time in the KMCU Library
Handle Special Marketing Projects
Month End Close Out
Refill Postage Meter
Perform Inventory
Credentialing or Re-Validation
Appeals and Reports</td></tr>
<tr><td>Week Two</td><td>Perform Monthly Compliance Duties Including Monthly Doctor Meeting</td></tr>
<tr><td>Week Three</td><td>Review Collection Accounts; Turn in Accounts to Collection Agency; Meet with Collection Agency for Updates</td></tr>
<tr><td>Week Four</td><td>Attorney/WC Long-Term Follow Up</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><th></th><th colspan="5">SAMPLE FULL-TIME WEEKLY FINANCIAL DEPARTMENT SCHEDULE</th></tr>
<tr><th></th><th>MONDAY</th><th>TUESDAY</th><th>WEDNESDAY</th><th>THURSDAY</th><th>FRIDAY</th></tr>
<tr><td>8:00 AM</td><td>Tickler Follow-Up Calls</td><td>Tickler Follow-Up Calls</td><td>Tickler Follow-Up Calls and Verification</td><td>Tickler Follow-Up Calls</td><td>Tickler Follow-Up Calls</td></tr>
<tr><td>9:00 AM</td><td>Reactive Calls</td><td>Proactive Calls</td><td>Proactive Calls</td><td>Reactive Calls</td><td rowspan="3">Proactive or Reactive Call Catch Up</td></tr>
<tr><td>10:30 AM</td><td>Compile Weekly Stats</td><td rowspan="2">Reactive Calls</td><td rowspan="3">Cover Front Desk</td><td rowspan="2">Proactive Calls</td></tr>
<tr><td>10:45 AM</td><td>Prep training for team meeting</td></tr>
<tr><td>11:00 AM</td><td>Insurance Verification</td><td>Insurance Verification</td><td>Insurance Verification</td><td>Insurance Verification</td></tr>
<tr><td>NOON</td><td>Weekly Team Meeting</td><td>Cover Front Desk</td><td>Lunch</td><td>Lunch</td><td>Lunch</td></tr>
<tr><td>1:00 PM</td><td>Print and Send Paper Billing</td><td>Lunch</td><td>Manage Pre-Auth and Pre-Cert Updates</td><td>Process Records Requests</td><td>Chart Audits and FUBARs</td></tr>
<tr><td>2:00 PM</td><td>Chart Audits and FUBARs</td><td>Process Electronic Billing and Review Edit Reports</td><td>Process Electronic Billing and Review Edit Reports</td><td>Process Electronic Billing and Review Edit Reports</td><td>Process Electronic Billing and Review Edit Reports</td></tr>
<tr><td>3:00 PM</td><td>Post Checks and Zero Pays</td><td>Post Checks and Zero Pays</td><td>Post Checks and Zero Pays</td><td>Post Checks and Zero Pays</td><td>Post Checks and Zero Pays</td></tr>
<tr><td>4:00 PM</td><td>Monthly Task Place Holder</td><td>Chart Audits and FUBARs</td><td>Chart Audits and FUBARs</td><td>Chart Audits and FUBARs</td><td>As Needed Task Place Holder</td></tr>
<tr><td>5:30 PM</td><td>Go Home</td><td>Go Home</td><td>Go Home</td><td>Go Home</td><td>Go Home</td></tr>
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