

Embracing Mentorship as an Emerging Professional

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It's time to take charge as a leader and nurture the next generation of MSPs.



Medical Staff Services is certainly a unique field. The profession has been in existence for well over 50 years, yet the field is still unknown to the general public. I often get quizzical looks when I tell people what I do for a living. My husband likes to say I'm in charge of the doctors. Even within health care, many people do not understand the roles and responsibilities of the Medical Services Professional. I know that when I joined the Medical Staff Services department over 20 years ago, I wasn't exactly certain what my duties would encompass. I had been in various roles in the health care setting for several years, but this field was largely unknown to me. Needless to say, I had a lot to learn!

While each facility is different, there are core functional areas that are consistently seen within Medical Staff Services departments: processing credentialing or privileging requests, complying with accreditation and regulatory standards as well as state and federal requirements, analyzing information to recognize red flags and trends, participating in professional practice evaluations and managing expirables. In addition to these core responsibilities, many departments also maintain continuing medical education (CME) programs, support numerous meetings, create and revise bylaws and policies, enroll providers in health care insurance networks, create and/or revise delineation of privilege forms, and communicate information to medical staff. These responsibilities can certainly seem daunting to the new Medical Services Professional.

For various reasons, health care organizations today are finding it more difficult to locate and attract qualified, experienced candidates for roles in Medical Staff Services; hence, the field is seeing an influx of interested but untrained applicants. Having recently needed to fill a vacancy left by a long-term coordinator, I was initially focused on finding applicants with experience. As a lean department, I wasn't sure I had the resources to train someone with no prior

experience. However, it quickly became apparent that there was not going to be a large pool (or even a small puddle) of experienced MSPs looking for a new position. My thoughts then turned to what characteristics, or skill sets, I was looking for in this role. I knew I needed someone who was: organized; detail-oriented; able to communicate effectively; flexible; had the capacity to develop relationships with physicians, their delegates and co-workers; as well as the capability to keep information confidential and exhibit ethical behavior. I recently read a book titled "The Ideal Team Player" by Patrick Lencioni. The premise of the book is that you want to hire someone who is hungry, humble and smart. These are the virtues that enable you to build a cohesive, high-performing team. I knew that if I could find someone with these characteristics, I could train the applicant in the duties of the Credentials Coordinator. Sure enough, I was able to hire a very competent individual who is excited to begin her career as an Emerging Medical Services Professional. At two months into her position she is doing a fantastic job.

An Emerging Professional, in the context of Medical Staff Services, is an individual with 0-5 years of experience in the field. These may be newly graduated college students or those who have chosen to change careers mid-stream. What these professionals

lack in experience they make up for in excitement and the ability to view issues in an unbiased setting. They provide a fresh perspective on processes and help us to look at ways to improve and become more efficient. They can provide the impetus to utilize new technology or to use current technology more effectively. I once had a picture in my office of

into a more digitally literate environment. These are all exciting developments and the new MSP has much to offer our profession.

As always, NAMSS is front and center in identifying the needs of the Emerging MSP and helping to provide information and learning resources. The NAMSS Products

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the running of the bulls entitled "Traditions – just because it's always been done that way doesn't mean it isn't incredibly stupid." These new MSPs help us look at the traditional ways we have conducted our business and determine if it is time for a change. This has probably never been more true than recently with COVID-19 and its impact on the work environment. Numerous members in our field found themselves working from home, utilizing Zoom and WebEx meetings for the first time and finding ways to complete credentialing in an entirely online environment. Millennial and Gen Z MSPs will be leading many of us older professionals

and Resources Subcommittee is tasked with reviewing, evaluating, updating and recommending new educational products and resources. The members are currently focusing on educational resources for the new Medical Services Professional. To that end, the Emerging Professionals Resource page on the NAMSS website has been updated. The page provides information and links to educational resources for MSPs with limited experience. Available information includes:

» "State of the Medical Services Profession Report" – A great summary of the core functions and responsibilities of the MSP as well as a peek into the future of the field.



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- » Online courses such as Credentialing 100 and MSP Roles & Responsibilities.
- » Credentialing Specialist Online Certification Preparation Course information for the MSP with at least three years' experience.
- » Reference guides: "Comparison of Accreditation Standards" and "NAMSS Glossary of Terms."
- » For those with 5-plus years of experience, there are links to the CPMSM Certification Preparation and the NAMSS Leadership Certificate Program.

Take a look at the available resources to help emerging MSPs advance in their chosen career. Whether it be a basic understanding of the career field or information to aid in studying for certification exams, NAMSS has it covered. We hope you will stay tuned for updates as we pursue additional opportunities for learning and growth within Medical Staff Services for all MSPs. <<



Sherrie Malmad, MHA, CPMSM, CPCS, is the Director of Medical Staff Services at Medical City Arlington in Texas. She started her MSP career in 1999 as an

Administrative Assistant for a two-facility health system in Maryland. In 2005, she obtained her Bachelor's Degree in Health Care Management and later received the CPMSM certification in 2015. In her free time, she enjoys gardening, cooking and traveling.

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