

Purpose: The presentation is intended to introduce and educate medical physicists as to the vast new opportunities that are available for advancement in their careers. This is particularly significant when considering the turbulent nation's economy and the shrinking available funds for health care services.

Method and Materials: Medical Physicists, through their ever-expanding role, may now have an opportunity to considerably increase their influence in a medical setting, secure their positions and gain additional monetary rewards. It is of no dispute that the long term success of a medical practice is crucially dependent on reducing the cost of operation and increasing its revenue. In addition to providing competent, accurate and advanced medical service, a practice must utilize correct CPT coding; complete charge submission to Medicare, Medicaid and insurance carriers as well as full collection of the payments owed. Finally, an advanced Electronic Medical Recording (EMR) system is essential for the future survival of a medical practice.

First, the role of medical physicists in correct coding and optimization of billing for radiation oncology, radiology and nuclear medicine is discussed. Examples will be provided in the areas where medical physicists can maximize departmental income. Next, the process of selecting an EMR system will be presented in detail. The criteria for a complete EMR system are discussed and the available systems currently on the market are compared. Lastly, factors to consider when searching for an EMR system are outlined and the necessity of each factor is emphasized.

Conclusion: Medical physicists have the potential to expand their role in a free-standing medical practice, hospital department or a medical physics consulting service organization by assuming the additional responsibilities for coding, billing and EMR. It is highly recommended that medical physicists' training and education include knowledge and familiarity in the above areas.