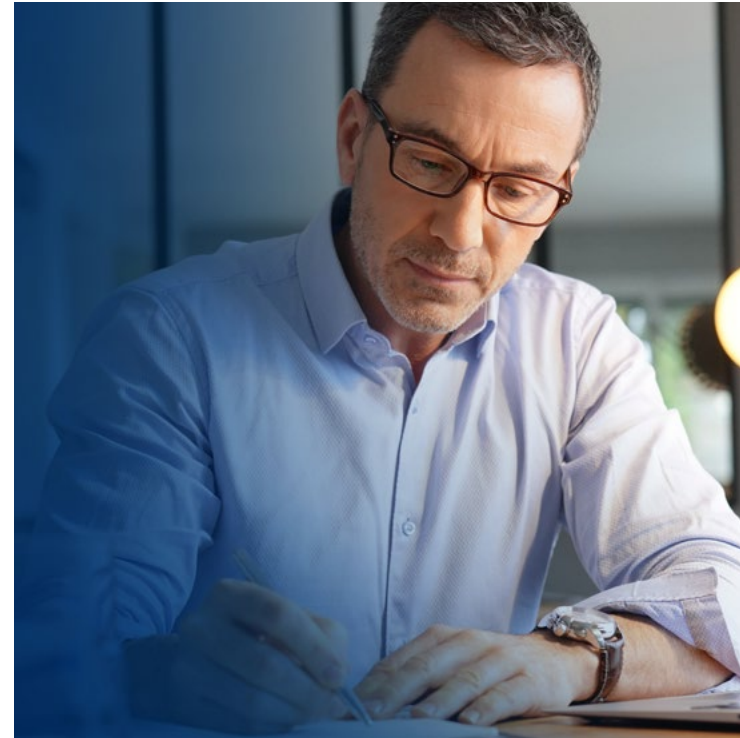




How to Improve Healthcare Business Operations

by Automating Time
and Attendance



How can healthcare practices improve and streamline their office operations to gain back the time they need to build trust and work with patients?

When compared with large healthcare organizations, small independent healthcare practices are seen in a positive light, according to [Medical Economics](#). When surveyed, more Americans preferred independent practices than large HMOs.

Even though the preference is for smaller practices, many American consumers are worried that the trend is toward “big medicine.” Surveys showed that 25 percent viewed consolidation of small practices as a “threat to their health,” and 60 percent believed purchasing of independent practices was a threat to affordable care.

These large healthcare offices don’t offer what consumers want – but smaller providers do. Small healthcare practices offer significant value in the areas of speed of service, quality of personal care, limited bureaucracy and working with small teams who are focused on the same goals.

To remain competitive, these smaller healthcare practices must continue to provide value to patients. As a dentist, doctor or wellness provider in a small healthcare practice, it’s your job to look at how you can improve operations and streamline your business in order to spend time establishing trust with your patients.



Real-world struggles in healthcare practices

As this real-world example from [“Time-Keeping and Payroll Process Systems in a Physician Practice”](#) illustrates, operational inefficiencies are hindering small healthcare practices.

“One practice administrator of a Midwestern, privately-owned six physician group (39 employees, 10 exempt) was spending eight hours per pay period, biweekly, to process the timekeeping and payroll. This is a significant portion of time for any employee to spend on one task done two to three times per month.

Another concern cited by the administrator was the antiquated time clock. The clock was a traditional time clock that required them to purchase paper cards and ink. They also needed to pay to have someone service it regularly to ensure the time was accurate and to adjust for daylight savings.

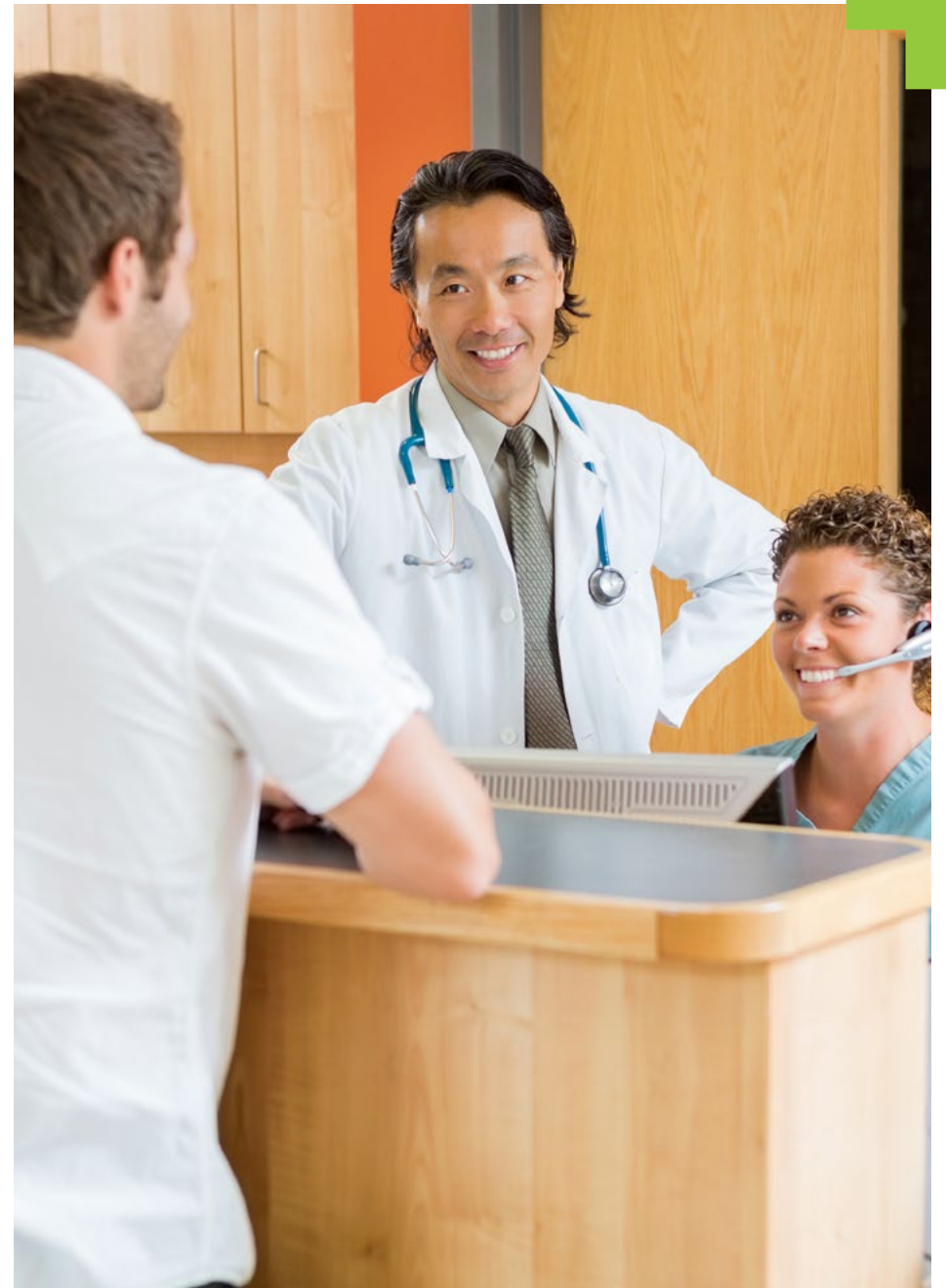
Employees were voicing frustration with the inability to know how many hours they had worked each day without taking time to tally them. They also expressed frustration about not knowing how much paid time off (PTO) they had or were accruing. Additionally, the administrator had, on occasion, failed to get the payroll taxes submitted via EFTPS due to “emergencies” that would arise during the day; the penalties and interest were a concern to the administrator.

The workflow process was to enter the total hours worked from the timecards after calculating overtime. The next steps were to enter the data in an Excel sheet set up to automatically calculate how much PTO was to be added. The calculations were based on each employee and their specific hours for which they were hired.

Once the totals were completed, the PTO used would be transferred over to another spreadsheet to update the PTO hours. This sheet was then shared with each department manager, so they would know how many hours of PTO an employee had available. The total hours worked plus PTO time used would then be entered in the accounting software to generate checks.”

Critical challenges for owners and administrators

There are four critical challenges that all small healthcare owners and administrators must address to streamline their operations so they can offer the high level of care their patients deserve and desire.



Challenge #1

Time wasted on administrative tasks

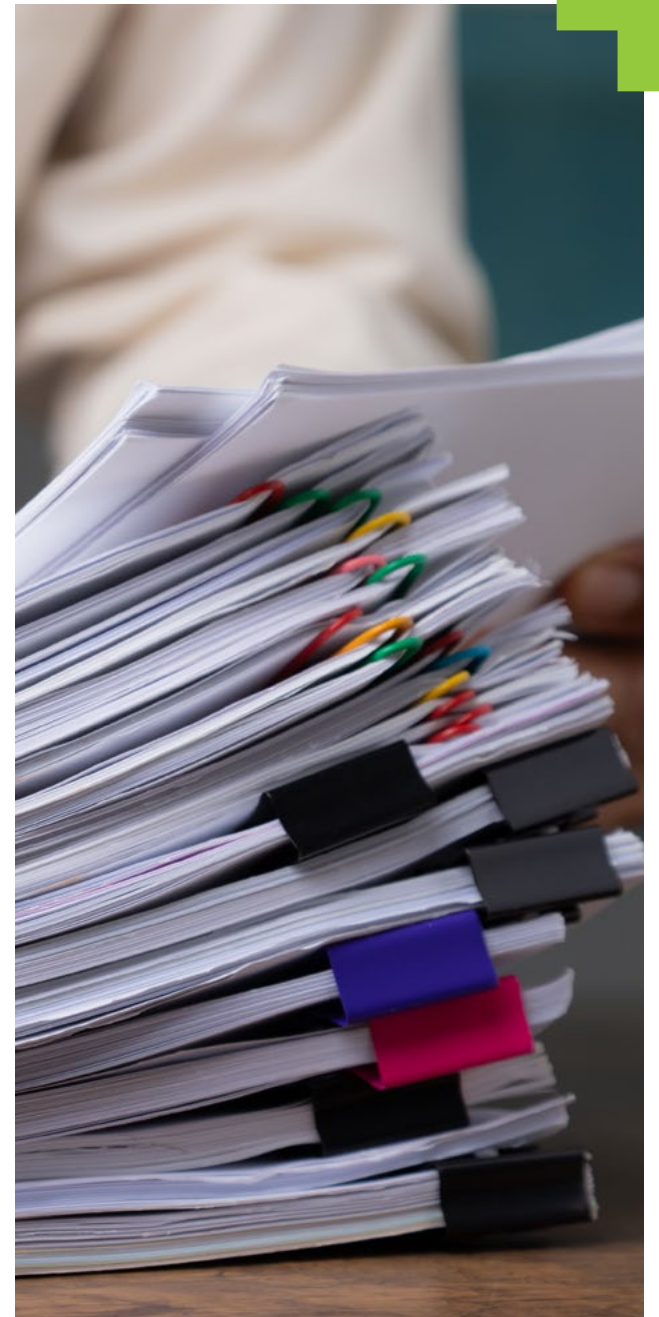
Healthcare providers often complain about the burden of administrative work. In the case of medical doctors, the [American Medical Association](#) reports that the majority of doctors (38 percent) say they spend 10 to 19 hours a week on administrative tasks.

Depending on the practice, those tasks might include:

- Scheduling
- Submitting insurance claims
- Managing patient charts
- Processing time and attendance

In smaller practices, providers may do everything from taking and recording patients' vital signs and medical histories to maintaining their files in a metal filing cabinet.

These tasks, especially when handled manually, take a significant toll on the time providers have to offer patient care. In the U.S., time with a doctor averages about 20 minutes per appointment, [reports Reuters Health](#). Unfortunately, shorter consultation times have been associated with worse health for patients and burnout for doctors



Challenge #2

Inefficient management of time and attendance

Some healthcare providers are still managing staff time and attendance by using paper notes or spreadsheets. There are several issues with these outdated methods. It's hard to confirm the accuracy of employees' start and stop times—inevitably rounding up or rounding down will occur. Similarly, if employees are working remotely and don't have access to a digital time clock, their records are left to what they can recall when they submit their timesheet.

In some cases, small healthcare providers have been convinced they need a complex timekeeping system. These systems often require multiple logins or a series of navigation steps to track and submit time worked. This level of complexity can create inaccurate time records because employees resist using the system.

These issues make for inefficient time tracking, often leading to accidental or intentional time padding, which ultimately impacts the bottom line.



Challenge #3

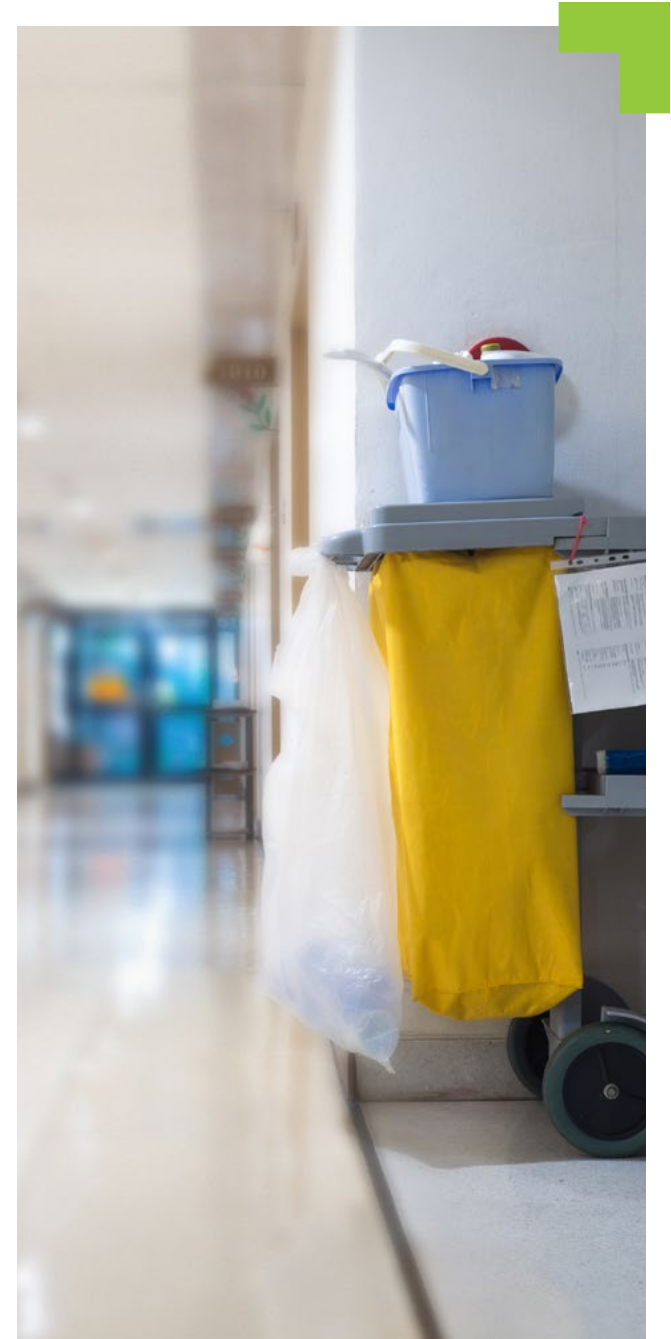
Inaccurate tracking of worker classifications

New employment laws and regulations add complexity to how workers are classified. It's tough for healthcare offices to not only stay current with frequent changes, but they must carefully follow the rules to avoid legal risk. Complexity in healthcare worker classifications include:

- Independent contractors vs. employees
- Exempt (administrative, executive, professional) or non-exempt
- Overtime
- Sick leave laws
- Final pay requirements

In healthcare settings, administrators must distinguish independent contractors from employees and follow guidance about the unique protections for various groups related to time, attendance and pay.

Whether they are employed full-time or as temporary workers, these employees may have a variety of time and pay associated with their schedule, which adds to the complexity of tracking their time. Furthermore, many healthcare employees work at multiple facilities or remote locations; however, it's still essential to capture the time they work accurately.



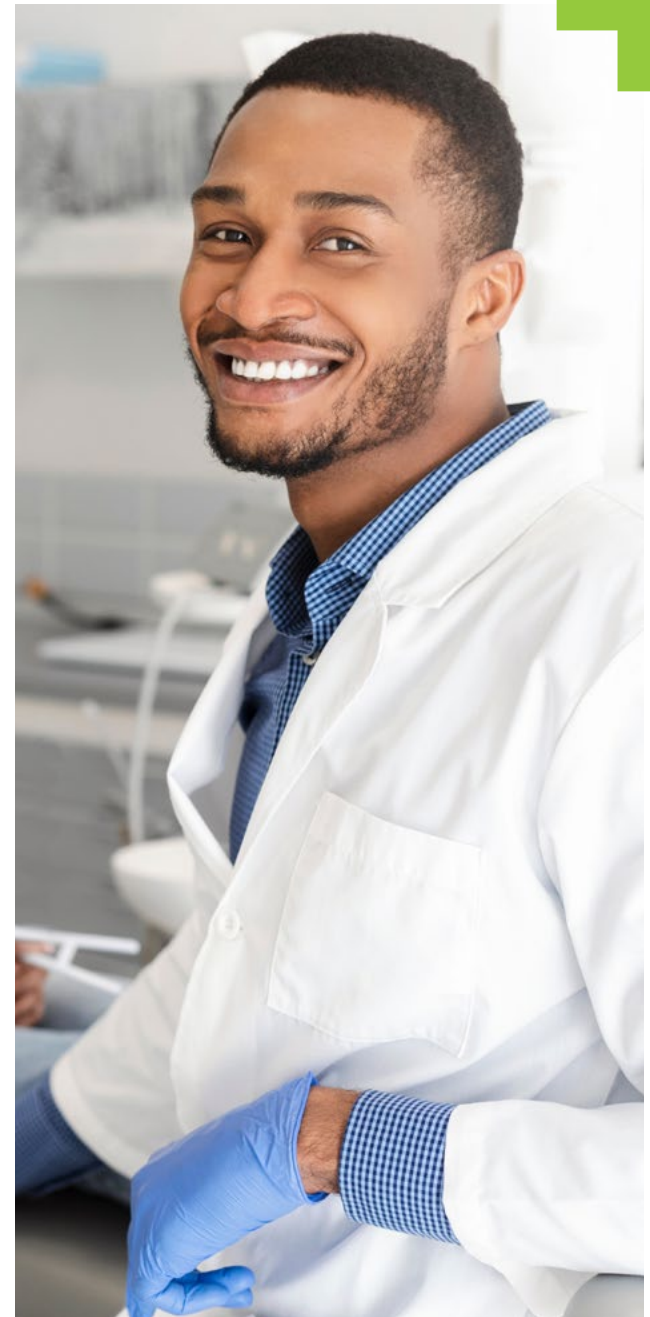
Challenge #4

Minimizing opportunities for fraud and embezzlement

A lack of streamlined checks and balances can make healthcare practices easy targets of fraud. In fact, fraud occurs at an unusually high rate in healthcare practices.

“A global study on workplace fraud and abuse found that the health care industry had the fourth-highest incidence of fraud... with a median loss of \$100,000 for incidents ranging from billing fraud to skimming, stealing cash, and tampering with reimbursements, checks, and payments,” reports the [Texas Medical Association](#).

Unfortunately, these issues are not uncommon. According to the ADA, embezzlement will strike nearly 80% of dentists in their career and most will never even discover it. In these cases, the core issue is the separation of software systems (e.g., accounting and timekeeping), according to a [forensic accounting](#) firm that detects fraud and embezzlement in the dental industry.



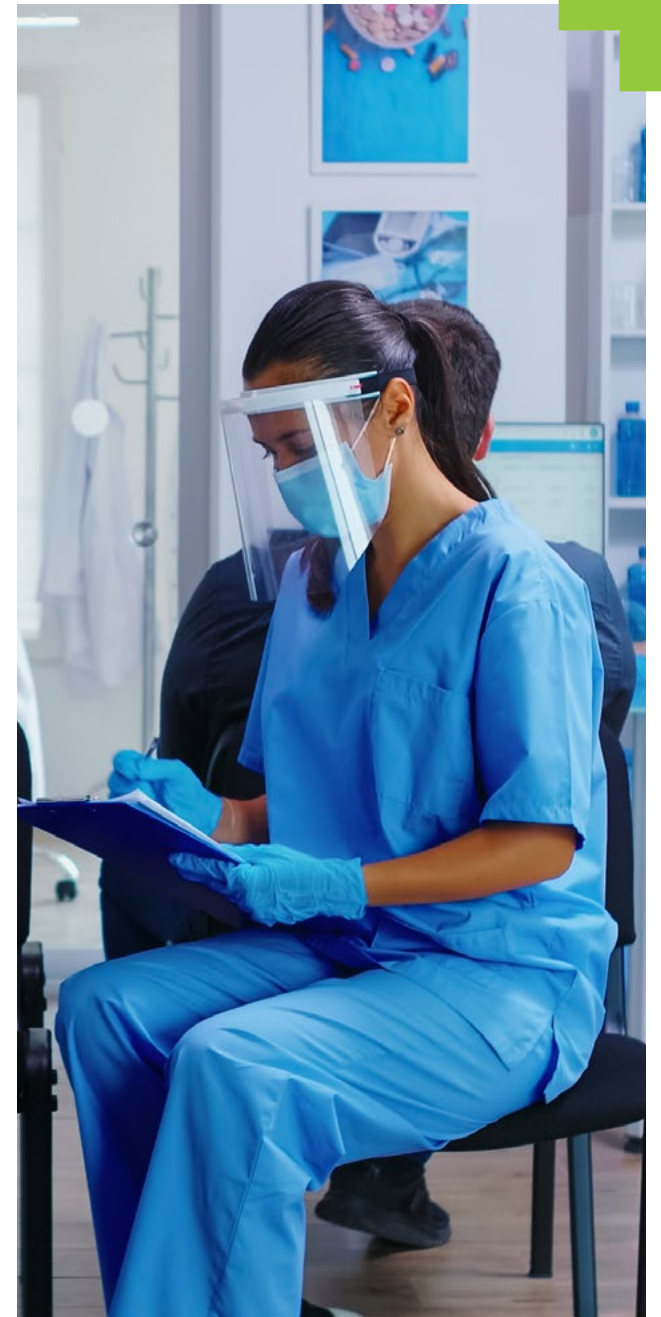
Challenge #5

Tracking movement to assist with contact tracing

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, contact tracing became not just a “nice to have” but a requirement for today’s businesses. Now more than ever, health practices must be able to quickly to identify individuals who may have had close contact with an infected individual.

When an organization doesn’t have any way to determine who was in contact with someone who was exposed to a virus, it often requires a blanket approach, such as a shutdown of operations. It also requires notifying anyone who had a remote chance of being exposed. This approach can appear haphazard at best and negligent at worst.

As the consultants at [McKinsey & Company](#) report, shutdowns are necessary where the authorities don’t know who has COVID-19. But an effective program of testing, tracing, isolation of cases and quarantining contacts can be nearly as effective. Without herd immunity and necessary vaccines, contact-tracing measures have quickly become an essential tool for healthcare businesses to continue in operation.



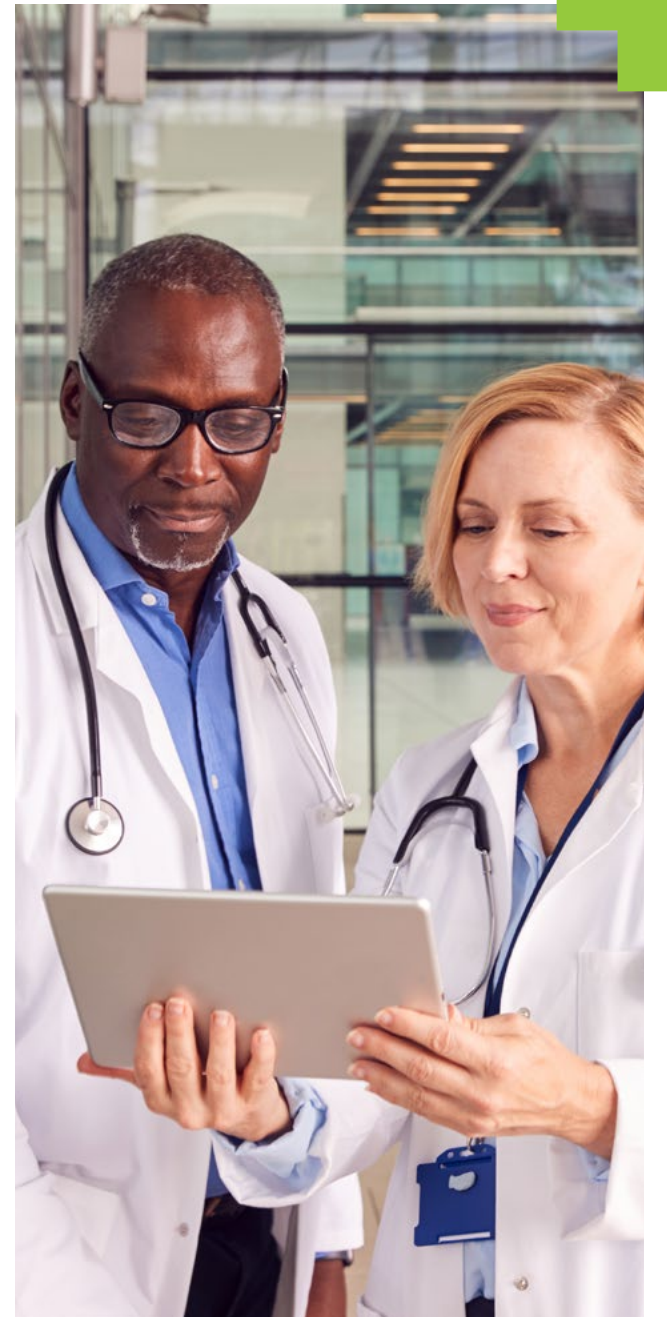
Could automating time and attendance help?

Just as the struggles we read about in the small Midwestern practice, time wasted on administrative tasks, inefficient management of time and attendance, inaccurate worker classification tracking, and the need to minimize fraud all present huge hurdles for small healthcare providers. To address the issues that healthcare offices face, providers and their staff must leverage technology.

In the competitive healthcare industry, efficiency will continue to be a top priority for organizations—small or large—that want to survive and succeed. Smaller practices may be hesitant to invest in automation, but experts say that's the wrong attitude.

“A big misconception is that decisions about automation should be different for a 50-person company versus one with 5,000 employees,” the founder and CEO of Hive Tech HR [told the Society for Human Resource Management](#).

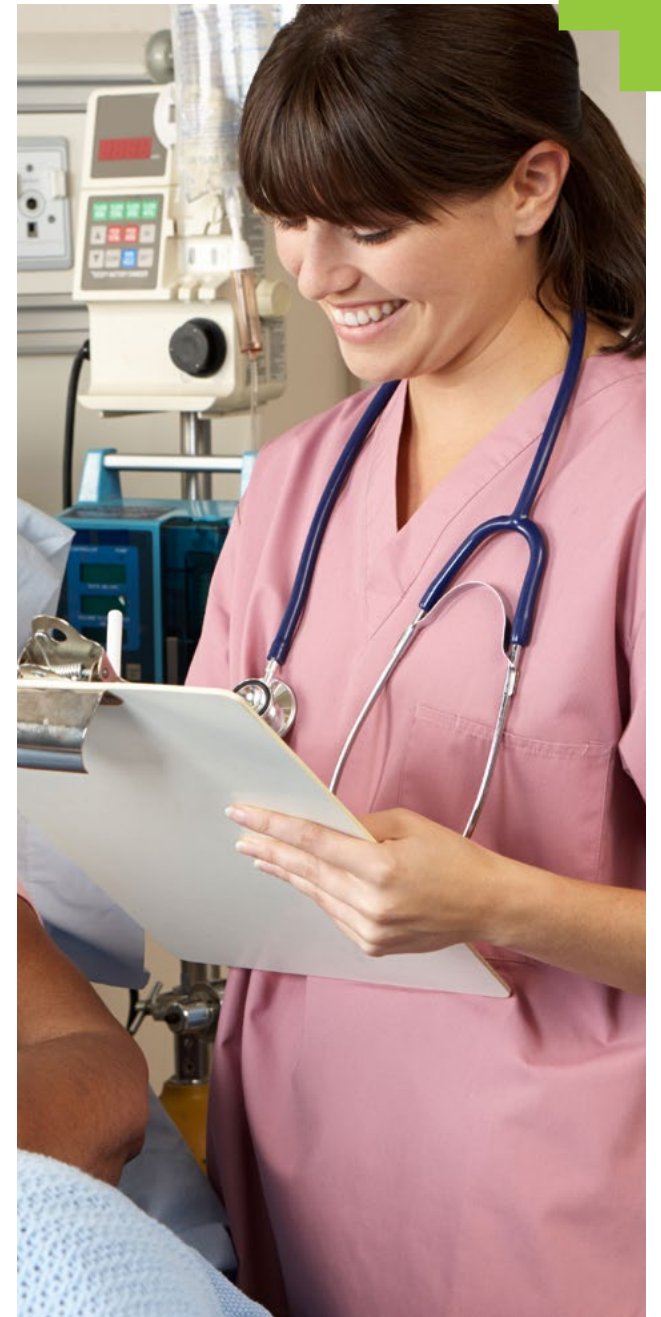
“The only questions that should be asked are, ‘Does it take me longer to do it without automation?’ ‘Would my employees benefit?’ And, ‘Would I gain additional insights by automating?’”



Streamlining time and attendance offers a powerful way for owners and administrators in small practices to increase efficiency. Here's how:

- ✔ Provide employees access to **digital time clocks** to capture and track time worked accurately.
- ✔ Allow administrators and **managers to review, approve and edit time entries** in one platform.
- ✔ Integrate timekeeping software with payroll and accounting software to ensure **accurate data** and limit opportunities for fraud.
- ✔ Engage employees in **managing their time with online access** to timesheets, schedules and time-off requests.
- ✔ Maintain precise records for **reporting on regulatory requirements**.
- ✔ Collect **location and symptom information** from staff multiple times a day to use in contact tracing to identify possible hazards based on shared proximity based on location, time, schedule or device.

Time and attendance software will help any small healthcare operation streamline processes in a way that addresses common issues and improves the overall operation. Timekeeping technology helps reduce risk and allows teams to gain back the time they need to do what they do best—provide patient care that makes a small healthcare practice stand out.



TCP is here to help

While TCP's TimeClock Plus software cannot help you care for your patients and customers, it can help with streamlining your operation, so you have more time to dedicate to treating patients. It is about giving you back your time so you can provide the best level of care possible.

TCP can equip your healthcare practice with the solution you need to manage time and attendance for your employees effectively. Through our platform, we can help you with:

- Contact tracing
- Shift differential processing
- No-touch hardware
- OT or DT auto-calculations
- Job code management
- Time off requests
- Schedule automations
- Exception monitoring
- Timesheet approvals

Our system is designed to accommodate any organization's timekeeping needs. However, we will make sure that we provide what you need before you invest. If we are not the right fit, we'll tell you.

Want to see our solutions in action? [Schedule a demo](#) today.

