Introduction to Professional Development

Today, we're diving into the why and the how of professional development in 2026. How to get started, what it can look like, and how to avoid the all too common trap of under-investing in your own growth and that of the people around you.

Welcome to Medical Money Matters, the podcast where you can find experts, answers, and resources so that you achieve mastery over the financial and business aspects of your practice.

Hello everyone, I'm your host, Jill Arena. I began my career in accounting and finance, and I have more than 30 years of experience running medical groups.

In 2020, I co-founded the Physician Leadership Project, and in 2025 I released Physicians Edge, the first of its kind CME accredited online business education for physicians.

My passion is to increase financial and business literacy for Physicians. Episode 164. Is your New Year's resolution to get more professional development for yourself and your team?

If not, it should be. New year, new goals, but how many of us actually prioritize professional development as a resolution?

Why Growth Matters in Healthcare Leadership

Most people jump into January thinking about eating better, working out more, maybe saving some money or getting more sleep. And those things are all important.

But here's something that often gets left off the list, and it might be the most important investment you can make. Developing yourself as the leader and investing in the growth of your team.

If that hasn't made it onto your list of resolutions, I'm going to make the case for why it should be. In fact, i'd argue it might be the single most strategic move you could make this year for yourself, your organization, and your team.

Whether you're a physician leader, an operations executive, or a practice administrator, staying stagnant is not an option. The world of healthcare is simply changing too fast.

the workforce is demanding more than just a paycheck. And organizations that don't evolve, well, they start to fall behind pretty quickly. Today, we're diving into the why and the how of professional development in 2026. How to get started, what it can look like, and how to avoid the all too common trap of under-investing in your own growth and that of the people around you.

Let's start with a big picture. Why is professional developments so essential in today's healthcare environment? First, let's be real about what leadership looks like right now.

It's hard. Leading in healthcare has never been simple, but right know it's the perfect storm of complexity. Changing regulations, staffing shortages, payer pressure, new technologies, and patients who expect more than ever.

That means we, as leaders, need to be sharper than ever. Strong leaders set the tone for culture, for strategy, and for innovation. If you're not growing, you are sending a message to your team, whether you mean to or not.

And it's not a great one. Leadership isn't a set it and forget it title. It's a journey. one that requires ongoing sharpening of skills, perspectives, and approaches.

But it's not just about you.

What Professional Development Can Look Like

Your team is watching. They're watching how you invest in your own growth, but they're also quietly asking themselves, is this a place where I can grow too?

Because here's the truth, smart, capable people don't stick around where they feel stuck. And that brings us to one of the biggest pitfalls of underinvesting in professional development.

You lose talent. High performers won't stay where they don't see a future, or where their skills are stagnating. And even those who stay may slowly disengage if they feel like their growth isn't valued.

There's also the risk of skill gaps. Healthcare is too complex and too regulated to run on outdated knowledge. Whether it's regulatory changes, billing updates, or evolving patient expectations, your team needs to be continuously learning just to keep up, let alone stay ahead.

So what does professional development actually look like? Well, it doesn't have to mean signing up for a $10,000 conference or going back to school. It can, but that's not the only way.

Development can be formal, informal, experiential, or structured. The key is intentionality. For leaders, development might include executive coaching, joining a mastermind group, or attending healthcare leadership events like the Practice Management Institute, MGMA, ACHE, more specialty-specific summits.

It could be diving into new models like value-based care or refining soft skills like conflict resolution, communication, and change management. You might also explore certifications in Lean, Six Sigma, or Healthcare Finance, whatever makes sense for your role and your growth trajectory.

On the team side, development should be just as thoughtful. Think role-specific training. Maybe it's deeper revenue cycle training for you billing staff or front desk communication workshops.

May be it is helping new supervisors build foundational leadership skills or offering burnout prevention programming. And don't forget about cross-training.

That not only increases flexibility but gives team members a better understanding of how the whole organization functions. It fosters empathy, efficiency, and deeper collaboration.

One thing we love doing at Healthy Practices is embedding development into the everyday. Not everything has to be a formal training. Consider ideas like learning lunches, internal TED-style talks, or peer shadowing.

These low-cost, high-impact options build a culture of learning that doesn't require massive budgets, just a commitment to growth. Speaking of culture, let me tell you a little bit about how we handle professional development at healthy practices.

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Healthy Practices' Development Approach

Please reach out if we can do anything at all to support your practice. You can find more information online at healtheps.com. That's www.healtheps dot com.

Please follow or subscribe to get all future episodes downloaded as soon as they're released. Every year, each member of our leadership team is given a professional development budget.

It's theirs to use. But more importantly, we sit down and talk as a group about what we want to learn, what were curious about, where we wanna stretch or grow.

We don't dictate the learning, we partner with each other to design it. And that matters. It signals trust, it honors individual paths, and it keeps learning aligned with what the company needs and what each person is passionate about.

It's become one of the most meaningful rituals of our annual planning, because it's not just about checking a box. It is about creating a shared understanding that we grow together.

That development isn't a nice-to-have, it is a strategic necessity. Now, let's talk for a moment about what happens when this doesn't happen, when development gets pushed to the back burner.

Maybe you've seen this, maybe you lived it. The leader who's still using the same management playbook they had 10 years ago. the team that hasn't had any formal training in years.

That's not just unfortunate, it's dangerous. Because stagnation doesn't stay still forever. It becomes disengagement. It becomes turnover. it becomes operational gaps that show up in patient experience, compliance failures, or billing errors.

And let's be clear, no one is immune to this. Even great organizations can fall into the trap of, we don't have time, or we'll get to it next quarter.

But the longer you delay, the more costly the consequences. The good news is it's never too late to change the narrative. And that's where our team comes in.

At Healthy Practices, we offer a range of development options that meet practices where they are. If you're looking for something tailored to physicians, our Physicians Edge program is designed specifically for clinical leaders wanting to learn business skills to navigate the administrative and cultural complexities of today's healthcare environment.

And it's accredited for 32 and a half hours of CME to boot.

Consequences of Stagnation and Available Programs

For administrative leaders, we offer MAPS, the Medical Administrative Performance Series, a cohort-based virtual program focused on practical, high-impact training that improves daily performance and confidence.

And for your frontline staff, we've developed FORCE, Front Office Revenue Cycle Education, a high-energy, hands-on program that helps your team understand how their role connects to revenue, compliance, and patient satisfaction.

But we're not limited to just our programs. We're also happy to help you find the right fit, even if that's a different industry training program or an external conference.

we believe in right-fit learning, not one-size-fits-all solutions. We'll work with you to identify your team's development needs and match those with the best tools, resources, or experiences, whether that's through us or through our broader network of trusted industry offerings.

At the end of the day, the message is simple. Your team growth is a strategic asset. You own development is part of a leadership legacy. And the organizations that prioritize learning are the ones that thrive, especially in an industry as complex and dynamic as healthcare.

So as you look ahead to the new year, ask yourself, what do I want to learn this year? What does my team need to grow? what's one step I can take this month to start building a culture of development?

It doesn't have to be a massive overhaul. It starts with intention, with making space for growth, With saying yes to the idea that better is always possible, and often just a decision away.

Need help getting started? We're here. Whether you want to explore physician's edge, maps, force, or simply want talk through ideas, our team at Healthy Practices is ready to help you design a development roadmap that makes sense for you and your organization.

Let's make 2026 the year that development isn't an afterthought.

Closing Thoughts and Next Steps

It's a foundation. Until next time. You can find more information online at medicalmoneymatterspodcast.com, and you can sign up to be notified when enrollment opens for the Medical Money Matters eLearning program for a mini-MBA physician style, which will carry CME credits and will be released in upcoming months.

In that, we'll do an even deeper dive so you can understand dynamic budgeting strategies, cash flow forecasting, and other more esoteric financial concepts.

We've included those links in the show notes. As I like to close out these podcasts, congratulations on taking the next step in your professional development and for making the commitment to learn about the financial and business aspects of your practice.

I look forward to being on this journey with you and send you my heartfelt gratitude for all that you do for your patients all day, every day.