

# How to build an MA career ladder to reduce turnover

## MaineGeneral Health promotes professional development, retention through MA Enhancement Program

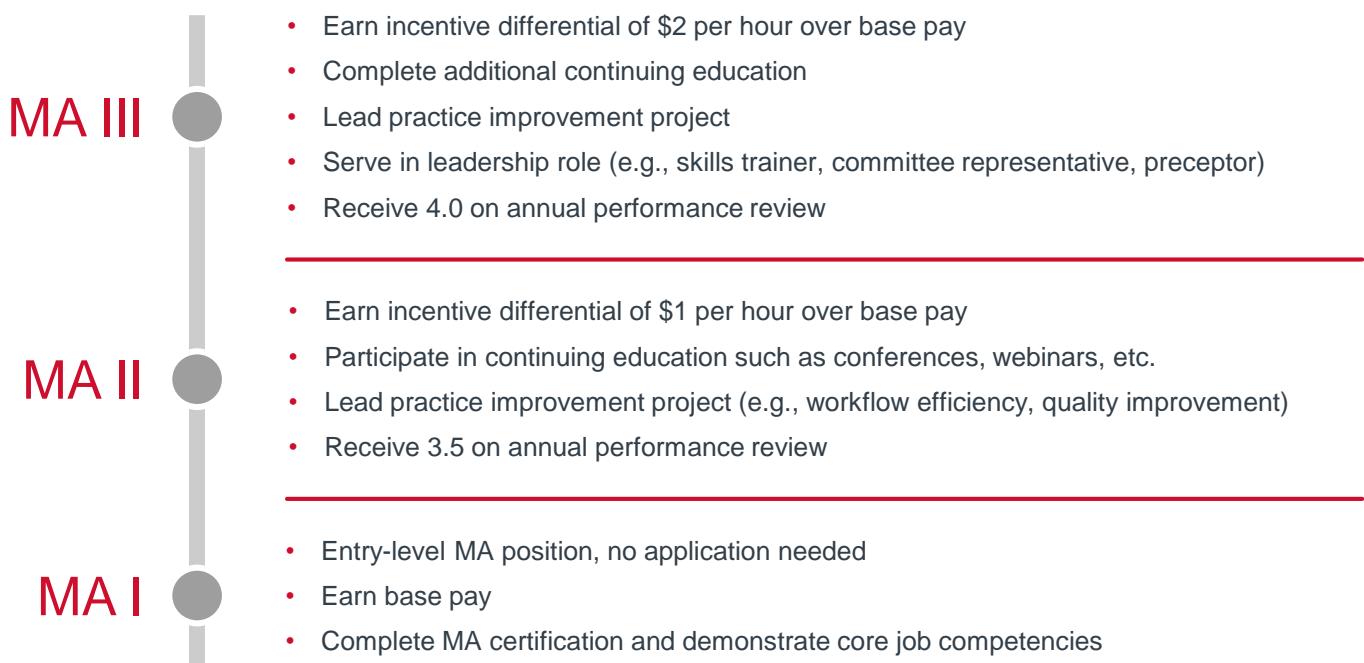
MaineGeneral Health, a 320-provider employed medical group based in Augusta, ME, developed a career ladder, called the MA Enhancement Program, to offer professional development opportunities to tenured MAs. As high-performing MAs advance up the three-rung ladder, they receive an increase in hourly pay and take on new administrative duties, including leading practice improvement projects and serving in leadership roles. MaineGeneral's application requirements for the MA II and MA III roles, outlined below, incentivize tenured, high-performing MAs to build their career at the medical group.

### Application requirements for MA II, MA III role

- ✓ Nominated by supervisor
- ✓ Meet expectations on annual performance review
- ✓ Employed for at least one year if applying for MA II, two years for MA III

### MAbs grow professional, administrative skills as they move up career ladder

MaineGeneral doesn't differentiate clinical skills across the MA I-III career ladder. Instead, they focus on incorporating leadership skills that solidify MA commitment to the medical group. Qualified candidates can apply for the MA II and MA III roles annually and must re-apply each application cycle to keep their enhanced responsibilities and benefits.



### Promising impact on engagement

Though the program is still in its first few years, MaineGeneral reports that MAs who advance up the career ladder are more engaged in their roles, and the group expects this will translate to gains in MA retention. Though MaineGeneral is paying more in MA salaries annually, this investment is worth it when compared to the cost of MA turnover.

### Costs of career ladder paid for by retention gains

**\$4K**

Approximate annual salary increase for MA III

**\$34K**

Cost of one MA turning over<sup>1</sup>

1. Advisory Board analysis suggests the cost to replace an employee that has turned over is 50% to 150% of annual salary. The cost of one MA turning over represents 100% of average MA salary in family medicine according to Advisory Board benchmarks.

Source: MaineGeneral Health, Augusta, ME; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.