You have an established legal nurse consulting business, working with attorneys on medical malpractice and personal injury cases, that come in one at a time. You’d never considered what it would be like to work on a hundred cases of one kind.

This is Pat Iyer with *Iyer’s Insights*, one of the twice weekly shows of Legal Nurse Podcast. In this podcast, I share tips on working with subcontractors on a volume of cases.

One day I got a phone call that took my breath away. I heard, "I've got a couple dozen cases for you to review. Think you can handle it?"

I got this call from a defense firm’s legal nurse consultant. She called us about a company that made immunoglobulin or IVGG, which was being given to people with immunocompromised systems. The IVGG was contaminated with hepatitis C at the manufacturing plant. Then it was distributed widely to a bunch of unfortunate patients who received it in their homes.

The attorney who hired me wanted to know if there was any other reason the patients possibly could have gotten hepatitis C.

I had two LNCs as full-time employees on my staff at that time, and we reviewed the records. I also hired subcontractors to help me go through the volumes of records in order to answer that question.

The attorney wanted a group of reports prepared for that case: timelines, medical summaries, lists of missing records, documentation of the IVGG infusions, exhibits and exhibit lists.

I prepared a teaching manual for each of the subcontractors, explaining about hepatitis, how to review the records, and the format of reports we needed. I did a sample case and provided the sample reports in the manual.

We ultimately worked on about 3 dozen cases, which were settled.

The work on this case prepared me for the second time I accepted a large number of cases. There were about 200 cases in this multidistrict litigation case. The
defense attorney said he was defending a manufacturer of plates and screws that were put into people's backs.

These were called pedicle plates and screws and they were put in the spinal column (although they were not designed to be put in the spinal column.) The plates broke and the screws started coming out of the holes and impinging on nerves, resulting in chronic pain. Then as the screws worked their way loose the hardware that they were holding in place started moving.

The company hired a truck and brought 30 boxes to my office. The cases filled every available floor space in my first-floor office building when that truck pulled away and we moved all the boxes up to my second-floor library table and had to sort them out. I could never have done those with the 3 nurses on staff.

We received medical records from patients all over the country. My most vivid memory of this was a man who was driving in California who had rods in his back that were being held in place with these plates. The hardware had become so loose that as he was driving, the tops of the rods on both sides of his collarbone literally broke through the surface of his skin.

I told the attorney this is a case that I want to make sure you know about this because you don’t want a jury to hear what happened to this man.

I hired 60 subcontractors and gave them all instructions. My process for hiring subcontractors in both large cases included posting on an LNC listserv that I needed subcontractors. I rejected the LNCs who had typos on their resumes, and then contacted those whose background looked like a good match for the cases.

When I explained the payment terms a few of the more experienced LNCs rejected the offer. The ones I hired were mostly inexperienced, eager for the work, and motivated to do a good job.

We sent out the records the way we received them, which was unorganized, along with the teaching manual. (I prepared one that was like the first one involving hepatitis C.)

This is Pat Iyer. Before we continue, I want to share a free resource on the topic of subcontracting.
Is this you?

You are an LNC who knows how important it is to do a great job for your client. You know there is a learning curve associated with this role. Who will mentor you?

You worry about what will happen when you get a case that deals with clinical issues unfamiliar to you. Will you be able to handle that case, or should you ask someone with that knowledge to help you?

You realize a case might come in when you are too busy to do it, yet you don’t want to turn down work. What is your safety net?

Watch my on demand, instantly accessible webinar, called Get More Income with LNC Subcontracting. There are pros and cons to LNC subcontracting. There are tricky landmines you need to know about. And there are HUGE benefits to your business if you do it right. Let me show you how.

Join me for a new online training – whether you want to be a subcontractor, or you want to subcontract cases to others - this is for you.

Plan on spending about an hour with me to discover how to ramp up your skills and business through working with others. There is no charge for this training. It is my gift to you.

Get immediate access to the program by going to the show notes for this podcast on podcast.legalnursebusiness.com. Let’s return to the show.

I soon discovered the challenges of managing a group of new subcontractors. This is what I found:
• A few had trouble meeting the deadlines. I had to turn over at least 6 or more cases every week because the attorneys were relying on our summaries to do their depositions of plaintiffs.

• A few subcontractors were so intimidated by the project that they resigned as soon as they got the case.

• One person who had prior experience summarizing product liability records turned in a series of reports that did not follow the format we asked her to use.

• After awhile we learned to calculate how long we thought it would take to do the case and gave each subcontractor an estimated number of hours. When one LNC went over the number of hours, and I called her about the issue, she got belligerent and threatening. I paid her the hours and never used her again.

By carefully reviewing each LNC’s work product, I narrowed down the group of LNCs to those who were reliable, consistent and produced great quality work.

These cases came in about 12 years ago. At that time, I quoted an hourly rate of $50 an hour, which was less than our usual hourly rate of $100 an hour. I ended up billing about a quarter of a million dollars on that case over those two years even charging at fifty dollars an hour because there were so many hours involved in reviewing those cases.

I recall that the manufacturer of the devices one day did a tally of our billing and insisted that I come to the law firm to talk about the billing. I explained why the bills were so large, what the attorneys needed, the volume of records, and the painstaking amount of work. Offhandedly, I mentioned that the $50 was a discount over our usual hourly rate of $100 an hour.

The attorney from the manufacturer said, in a horrified voice, “$100 an hour! I am in the wrong profession!” I realized our perspectives were very different – I was an entrepreneur and she was an employee.

Ultimately a lot of those cases were settled. It took a couple of years from start to finish.
The methods of organizing records, preparing reports, and training subcontractors continued to help me in my business with other cases.

However, after this experience, I did not seek out this kind of work again. Many of our loyal clients recognized that it was taking longer for them to receive their reports. The mass of cases pushed out the single cases, using up our resources, and making us constantly juggle priorities to satisfy both the attorneys handling the pedicle plates and screws cases and the other attorney clients.

My recommendation, if you are considering taking on these kinds of cases, is to realize you need to be staff appropriately, ready to train a legion of subcontractors, and prepared to review the work product to be sure it meets your quality standards. You will need to stop using LNCs who don’t have the right mix of skills to do the work and to replace them with new recruits.

As I found, the work can be lucrative because of the volume of hours, but it is also demanding in its own way.

I share a lot more tips about being a subcontractor and hiring subcontractors in my free training called *Get More Income with LNC Subcontracting*. Be sure to watch this online training by going to the show notes of podcast.legalnursebusiness.com and click on today’s episode.

Be sure to tell another legal nurse consultant about Legal Nurse Podcast. We count on you loving to spread the word about our show. Ask your fellow LNCs to go to http://legalnursebusiness.com/subscribepodcast. That is http://legalnursebusiness.com/subscribepodcast. Or ask your LNC friends to look for us on Itunes.

Check out the webinars, teleseminars, courses and books at http://legalnursebusiness.com. Expand your LNC skills with our resources.

Explore coaching with Pat Iyer at http://LNCAcademy.com to get more clients, make more money and avoid expensive mistakes.

Invest in the monthly webinars at http://LNCEU.com for 2 webinars each month designed to deepen your knowledge and skills.