



OPEN ENROLLMENT

*Keep Patient  
Payment  
on Track*



## Is it a struggle to collect patient payments?

Healthcare providers are increasingly finding themselves acting as banks and bill collectors when it comes to getting paid for care. With the rise of high-deductible health plans and other cost-sharing responsibilities, many patients are struggling to pay what their plans don't cover. All too often, collection becomes the problem of clinical practices and hospitals. But there are ways to manage patient bad debt and prevent write-offs.

# The Prep Work for Payment Starts at the Visit

- Know your patient's eligibility, deductible and copayment before or at the time of the visit.
- Be as transparent as possible about your charges up front. Patients are more likely to pay when they aren't surprised by a big bill.
- Collect in person. Research consistently shows that this is an industry best practice and brings in the best results.
- Offer a variety of payment methods, including cash and online.
- Make sure your patients are aware of public funding and assistance programs available to them.



A stylized illustration of a robot with a white body and blue limbs, running on a light green hill. The robot has a white head with a small blue square on its forehead and a white torso with a dark blue square on its chest. Its right arm is raised, and its left leg is bent in a running motion. The background features soft, wavy hills in shades of light green and blue.

## How Effective is Your Bedside Manner?

- Don't jump to conclusions about a patient's ability to pay. More than half of bankruptcies are caused by medical debt and many are among insured, employed homeowners.
- Be sensitive to how and when payment conversations are held. Avoid mentioning money when a patient is very anxious or in pain.
- Understand that while patients realize you don't set copay and deductible amounts, research shows increased anger among patients about their share of the cost. A little empathy goes a long way.



## Know the Laws in Advance

- Have a written payment policy and apply it fairly, as consumer protection laws govern their use.
- The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, state law, and insurance contracts also have a say in what you collect and how you collect overdue payments.
- Don't waive copays as a matter of habit. This can be construed as fraud by some insurance plans, which consider collecting copays as part of your contractual responsibility.
- Get good tax advice before "writing off" unpaid care. The IRS differentiates between bad debt and charity care.

# Follow Up to Maximize Payments

- Process claims quickly to speed payments and prevent them from timing out.
- Don't leave money on the table by giving up on denied claims.
- Collect as much as you can, as soon as you can, even if it means heavily discounting a bill. Empower billers to accept a lower amount when they sense a patient's willingness to settle.
- Set up and manage payment plans easily with a software application such as ABILITY SECUREPAY.
- Write off bills below a certain dollar value since they may be more expensive than worthwhile to collect.
- Don't wait too long if you have to resort to bill collection. The recommended trigger dates are six-to-eight weeks.





*Early preparation pays off.*

**Let us help.**

With ABILITY applications, you can improve efficiency, increase cash flow and maximize your revenue.

For more information, visit our [Resource Center](#), or [contact us](#).