



Patient Billing and Collection Procedures, RI-064

PURPOSE:

To ensure that patient billing is conducted in an ethical, honest, and consistent manner.

POLICY:

All billings and collections are done in accordance with guidelines established within the Business Office. Billing complaints are handled promptly and courteously

PROCEDURE:

A. General:

Uninsured patients have the right to request a reasonable estimate of anticipated charges. Such requests can be addressed to the department who schedules for the particular anticipated service. Routine requests will receive a reply within two (2) business days. Estimates for some services will also be available via the SMH website.

B. Billings:

1. Patients will receive a bill which seeks payment only for services actually rendered and which is based on the Hospital's standard rates in effect at the time of service.
2. Patients having questions on their bill, or wishing to request an audit of their bill, should call Patient Accounts Customer Service between the hours of 8am and 5pm, Monday through Thursday and 8am to 4:30 pm on Friday.
3. See RI-022 which addresses insurance company audits of patient bills and patient requests for billing audits.
4. Billing to patients is accomplished in the form of summary bills, monthly statements and periodic collection letters or telephone calls. The patient's insurance type will

determine what type of correspondence is sent to the patient as well as the timing of that correspondence.

5. Any patient may request an itemized bill by contacting Patient Accounts Customer Service.

C. Collections:

1. Collection of patient deductibles and co-payments, to the extent that the amount due is available, is done at the time of admission/service or during the patient accounts collection process.
2. All other collections are handled through correspondence to the patient, as well as telephone calls. These efforts may be made by Slidell Memorial Hospital employees and/or through contracted vendors.
3. Phone collections are handled in a courteous and respectful manner.
4. After all reasonable collection efforts have been made, the patient's account may be turned over to a collection agency. Slidell Memorial Hospital will not impose extraordinary collection efforts such as wage garnishment, liens on primary residences or other legal actions for any patient.
5. Financial assistance is available to patients who meet certain criteria, and may take the form of an adjustment to the patient's account, a monthly payment plan, or settlement for a lesser amount (on a case-by-case basis)
6. Uninsured patients receive a discount at the time of billing. In addition, uninsured patients whose accounts meet certain patient type and minimum balance criteria are screened for potential State and/or Federal assistance.

D. Complaints:

1. Billing complaints should be addressed in the following order:
 - a. Customer Service Representative
 - b. Director of Patient Financial Services.
 - c. Chief Financial Officer.
 - d. Chief Executive Officer.