

Billing and Collection Policy

Wheeling Hospital, Belmont Community Hospital, & Harrison Community Hospital

Wheeling Hospital Organization

The Wheeling Hospital Organization includes Wheeling Hospital, Belmont Community Hospital, and Harrison Community Hospital. It is understood that any reference to Wheeling Hospital in this policy includes and applies to Belmont Community Hospital and Harrison Community Hospital.

Prior to providing services to any patient, the patient must be registered on the Hospital Information System. This registration process, depending on the service being rendered, may occur in any one of several areas responsible for this function. All patients receiving services provided by the Hospital must be charged for those services. These charges must be generated by the servicing department within 48 hours of the service being rendered. (Exceptions are those few charges controlled by certain circumstances.) Whether the charge process is automated or manual, each charge must carry the date on which the service was rendered.

Wheeling Hospital generally expects patients or their third party payors to pay in full for services provided. Wheeling Hospital will bill third party payors in accordance with the requirements of applicable law, contracts with third party payors (if any) or applicable billing guidelines. Patients have the responsibility to pay charges that are not paid by a third party payor or for any balances that exist after payment by the third party payor, within a reasonable time frame. Patients may also be asked to pay their co-payment, deductible and/or co-insurance estimate prior to the service being rendered. Failure of the patient to pay or make financial arrangements on their portion of the balance due will result in a delinquent account.

Patients that are self pay will normally receive a bill between 7 and 14 days after the date of discharge. Patients that are self pay after insurance will normally receive a bill between 1 and 7 days after the payment from their primary/secondary insurance company has been received. A charity or financial assistance application will be available on the back of the patient's billing statement and will be accompanied by contact information for the collection department if they should have any questions about their bill or their options for assistance.

Patients with self-pay obligations may be eligible for financial assistance or charity care based on their financial circumstances. For those patients that are uninsured or underinsured, Wheeling Hospital will work to assist in obtaining and filling out the charity/financial assistance applications and to answer any questions that may arise along the way. Wheeling Hospital will accept charity/financial assistance applications from any person at any time, including after an account has been reported to collections.

After 180 days of delinquency, Wheeling Hospital may begin to employ Extraordinary Collection Actions (ECAs). ECAs include, but are not limited to turning delinquent accounts over to collection agencies, reporting delinquent accounts to credit agencies, or the sale of patient debts to another party. Wheeling Hospital expects its billing, follow-up and collections staff to maintain a high standard of fairness, honesty and courtesy when conducting their activities. Billing and collection practices should be applied fairly to each patient regardless of race, color, origin, citizenship, religion, sex, creed, age, or disability. When a patient expresses concern regarding paying for their bill, whether they are self pay or because of high deductibles, they should be made aware of the options that they have regarding

discounts, payment plans, or charity care. Express understanding and compassion when discussing a patient's financial situation and strive to assist each patient accordingly. If a patient expresses a desire to settle, present the options that they have and present the proposals to the appropriate parties for review and approval, or to determine possible alternatives. Wheeling Hospital staff will always be expected to ensure the confidentiality of patient information and that HIPAA guidelines are followed.

Wheeling Hospital and its staff abide by the Fair Debt Collection Practice Act. The Fair Debt Collection Practice Act is a federal law that impacts physicians' and hospitals' collection practices. Under the act, it is unlawful for anyone to give the consumer the false belief that a person other than the creditor is participating in the collection process.