

Refine your patient payment management process with these tips

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With more patients obtaining health insurance and seeking care, now is the right time for physician practices to review their patient payment management process and ensure making payment is convenient and transparent for both the practice and patients.

Start by making sure you have your patients' current contact information, including all current phone numbers. Having this information at the ready will ensure you can easily reach patients and follow up regarding payment when necessary.

Next, consider these ways to sharpen your payment management process:

- **Make all materials clear and concise.** Patients might not understand why they are being asked for payment, so make sure all communications clearly detail the date of service, services performed, insurance payments received and other pertinent information. You can also review the details of health plans with patients, which will save them time later and allow them to get the care that's best for them.
- **Offer several options.** You can accommodate most patient preferences by offering flexibility in the method and delivery of payment. For example, consider using online patient portals or waiting room kiosks to facilitate payment. Remember to check with your legal counsel before implementing new payment options.
- **Be kind and courteous.** Make sure your staff is trained in proper telephone etiquette, and remind them of the Golden Rule: Treat others as you would want to be treated. This can go a long way in establishing a strong patient-physician relationship.
- **Choose the right time.** Avoid discussing financial issues when patients are in pain, anxious or stressed—for example, the moment prior to a procedure. This sensitivity will protect and cultivate your practice's positive relationship with patients.

More resources on this topic are available on the AMA's administrative simplification Web page.



Learn more about how you can spend less time with paperwork and more time with your patients by using AMA resources to streamline claims processing, and check out the top tips for providing point-of-care pricing at *AMA Wire*®.