

**Wisconsin Hospital Association  
Hospital Billing and Collection Practices**

**Confirmation of Commitment**

Wisconsin hospitals believe that hospital billing and payment policies simultaneously must reflect respect and compassion for all patients - regardless of financial circumstances - and the need to obtain fair payment for services from those patients who are able to pay.

The Wisconsin Hospital Association Board of Directors adopted the following principles to provide guidance to Wisconsin Hospital Association members seeking to balance appropriately these competing responsibilities:

- Concern regarding a hospital bill should never get in the way of a patient receiving essential health services. Hospitals should convey this message to prospective patients and local community service agencies.
- Hospitals should have financial aid policies that are consistent with the mission and values of the hospital. These policies, which should be broadly communicated, should reflect a commitment to provide financial assistance based upon a patient's ability to contribute to the cost of his or her care.
- Financial aid policies should be clear, understandable, and communicated in a manner that is dignified and in languages appropriate to the communities and patients served.
- Debt collection policies—by both hospital staff and external collection agencies—must reflect the mission and values of the hospital.
- Financial aid policies must balance a patient's need for financial assistance with the hospital's broader fiscal responsibilities.
- Financial aid provided by the hospital is not a substitute for the responsibility of government to adequately fund coverage for participants in government health care programs.
- Financial aid policies do not eliminate personal responsibility. Eligible patients may or may not be expected to access public or private insurance options in order to qualify for financial aid. However, all patients are expected to contribute to their care based on their individual ability to pay.

In support of these principles, the Wisconsin Hospital Association developed "Billing and Collection Guidelines for Wisconsin Hospitals."

\_\_\_\_\_ proudly reports that its policies and practices on charges, charity care, billing and debt collection meet or exceed the principles and guidelines set forth in the 2007 Update of WHA's "Billing and Collection Guidelines for Wisconsin Hospitals."

\_\_\_\_\_: Chief Executive Officer