

WHA Position

WHA supports Congressional efforts to improve transparency in health care.

- WHA has been a national leader in price transparency, allowing consumers to compare prices & quality online across all Wisconsin hospitals for 15 years.
- WHA supports efforts to reduce the occurrence of surprise medical bills and to make it easier for consumers to understand what they will pay before they access health care services.

WHA Ask:

Health care price transparency and issues that lead to surprise medical bills can be multifaceted and complex. WHA and its members want to be part of the solution and ask that Congress work with all stakeholders as it explores legislation to address these complicated issues.

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Wisconsin Hospitals Support Transparency

Efforts to increase transparency should put patients first

Highlights

- WHA supports Congressional efforts to improve health care price transparency, having voluntarily provided Wisconsin consumers with pricing and quality data since 2004.
- WHA is reconvening a Transparency Task Force to delve into the complex topic of surprise billing and explore efforts to expand transparency for consumers.

PricePoint & CheckPoint – Valuable Tools for Wisconsin Health Care Consumers

WHA and our members are strong proponents of transparency. We have voluntarily reported price information through a website called PricePoint since 2005. PricePoint provides complete, accurate, and timely data about charges for the top 75 services provided by Wisconsin hospitals and ambulatory surgery centers. Every Wisconsin hospital participates in PricePoint, and it is even licensed out for use in 10 other states.

By logging onto www.wipricepoint.org, consumers can easily compare charges for common health care services across three hospitals at a time. The site also includes an insurance checklist to help patients contact their insurers, so they may determine their out-of-pocket cost. The checklist also includes reminders to ask about particular practitioners, such as radiologists and anesthesiologists, to help avoid potential surprise billing issues in the event those practitioners are not covered by their insurance plan. Consumers can also go to www.wicheckpoint.org to find data on the quality of care provided by hospitals, giving them a tool to better understand the value of health care services before they schedule them.



WHA Transparency Taskforce

PricePoint and CheckPoint are great tools, but we recognize consumers need better information about how much they will pay for health care. For this reason, WHA has reconvened its Transparency Taskforce with Wisconsin providers, billing experts, and insurers to explore ideas to make health care billing more consumer friendly. The taskforce will be gathering industry advancements and best practices that can be replicated on a wider scale, with recommendations coming later this year.

Transparency Efforts Should Protect Consumers and Preserve the Free Market

No patient should be faced with an unexpected medical bill. WHA applauds Congress for tackling the difficult issue of price transparency and surprise billing. Today's health care billing system can be very difficult for consumers to navigate and can sometimes pit consumers between providers and insurers.

As Congress examines this important issue, we urge them to bring all stakeholders to the table and focus on solutions that preserve the ability of providers and insurers to negotiate in a free market. Issues that lead to surprise billing today can be complex, and to solve them, we need buy-in from consumers, provider, and insurers. *WHA stands ready to assist lawmakers as they search for ways to prevent situations that lead to surprise medical bills and improve transparency for consumers.*