

HOSPITAL BILLING AND DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES PRINCIPLES

Approved by MHA's Council on Financial Policy (9/16/03) and the Council on Legislative and Regulatory Policy (9/12/03). Endorsed by the MHA Executive Committee on October 28, 2003.

- Treat all patients with dignity and respect, regardless of their ability to pay, in all financial interactions.
- Clearly communicate the availability of financial assistance to all patients.
- Clearly communicate your hospital's charity care policy to all patients.
- Assure debt collection information provided to patients is in easy-to-understand language.
- Make charge information promptly available to the public upon their request.
- Provide training and ongoing guidance to hospital financial counselors and collection agencies to assure their practices reflect your hospital's values and collection policies.
- In determining a financial payment schedule for patients, take into account, among other factors, the amount of the charge and the income and financial assets the patient has available.
- Provide hospital sign-off before the collection agency takes any legal action. Reevaluate the patient's financial condition prior to approving legal action.