Sam Houston State University
A Member of The Texas State University System

SHSU Physicians Policy FO-PC-01
Patient Collection Policies

PURPOSE: To ensure timely and consistent collection of patient balances related to SHSU Physicians.

A patient balance is determined after the insurance carrier(s) have fully adjudicated a claim. Patient balances will only be written off upon the death of the patient or as applicable under the small balance provision.

All patients seen at SHSU Physicians will be assessed charges. This includes employees, students, and their family members.

a. All lab tests and procedures that are not medically necessary should be referred to an outside lab to ensure the patient is provided the most affordable care. The only adjustment to patient account balances will be the agreed upon amounts based on the insurance agreements.
b. Consistent fee tables will be utilized to ensure there is not discriminatory pricing.

Small Balance Write Off: Patient balances between $0.01 and $4.99 will be written off on a monthly basis if the following conditions have been met:

a. Balance is a minimum of 45 days old.
b. Patient is not on a current payment plan.
c. Patient statements are not in a hold status.

Accounts not on a payment plan:

1. Patients will be sent three (3) statements, approximately thirty (30) days apart.
2. After three (3) statements are sent, the patient will be sent a Collection Notice.
3. Thirty (30) days after the collection notice the patient balances will be transferred to a collection agency if the following requirements are also met:
    a. Minimum balance of $35.00
    b. Balance has an age of 120 days or greater
    c. Patient has been issued a minimum of three (3) statements or has missed three (3) scheduled payments.
    d. Patient statements are not on hold status
    e. Patient has made no payments within the past thirty (30) days
4. Patients will not be seen if their account is in outside collections.

Accounts on a payment plan:

1. Payment plans must have a payment every thirty (30) days to remain in good standing.
2. Payment plan terms must be approved by the Clinic Director and must establish a time frame that moves toward full collection of the patient balance.
3. Patients who are on a payment plan and not in good standing will not be seen until their account is brought current.
4. Patients will receive a monthly statement while they are on a payment plan and are less than ninety (90) days behind.

5. Once an account on a payment plan has not received a payment within ninety (90) days, they will be sent a Collection Notice and their account will be sent to collections once the following requirements are also met:
    a. Minimum balance of $35.00
    b. Payment has not been made in 120 days or greater.
    c. Patient has missed three (3) scheduled payments.
    d. Patient statements are not on hold status
    e. Patient has made no payments within the past 30 days
6. Patients will not be seen if their account is in outside collections.
7. Once the account is at Collections, the patient is responsible for paying the balance and applicable collection and/or legal fees. Payment will not be accepted at the clinic.

Delinquent Accounts:
1. Patient balances will be classified as "bad debt" for financial reporting purposes when the debt is older than one (1) year. This applies to all balances, regardless of amount.
2. Patients with balances classified as "bad debt" will not be treated until their balance is current. This can include placing them on a payment plan. Patients on a payment plan that have not made a payment within ninety (90) days will be included in this classification.

If a patient presents with a medical necessity that is life threatening and it is appropriate for the staff to treat this patient, they will be seen without regard to their patient account.

Approved by Cabinet: January 2023
Next Review: January 2028