

The Real Cost to Collect After the Visit: It's More than You Think

Respectfully collecting from patients at the time of service helps your bottom line, but it also protects your organization from serious damage to its reputation, its brand and its relationships with patients. Here's a snapshot of what can happen when you wait to bill and collect.



Monetary Costs

On average, **it takes more than three statements**—costing \$5 to \$15 each—to collect one patient's balance in full.¹



\$169
Average outstanding balance per patient¹

6% Percentage of outstanding balances collected when a patient's debt is more than \$200²



Approximately **75% of physician practices** wait more than 90 days to turn overdue bills over to a collections agency.¹



Collections agencies charge an average of 30% of a patient's balance and calculate their fees based on the age of the debt³

The longer an invoice has gone unpaid, **the greater the cost to collect.**

How much will you actually collect? 13.8% - Average recovery rate from collections agencies³

\$18,000 Average amount of **outstanding balances** per provider per year³

More than the Money



TIME

Post-visit billing and collections processes are labor-intensive, **taking up staff time that could be better spent on higher-value tasks.**

PATIENT EXPERIENCE AND RETENTION

The billing process is often the final and most influential point of contact between patients and their provider. **Surprise bills or an aggressive collections experience leaves patients with a bad impression and can make them less likely to return for follow-up care.**⁴



COMPLIANCE WITH TREATMENT

Research shows there's a direct correlation between patient-provider trust, cost pressures and medication adherence.⁵ **Aggressive collections efforts can diminish that trust and damage the patient-provider connection, which may negatively affect patients' health outcomes.**

REPUTATION AND BRAND IDENTITY

A bad collections experience can lead to negative patient reviews and damage an organization's hard-earned reputation.⁴



Aggressive collection efforts after the visit rarely work—the process is time-consuming, expensive, pushes patients away and can ruin your brand.

—Elizabeth Woodcock,
Principal, Woodcock & Associates

Providing patients with flexible, time-of-service collection options like **card on file, online payments** and **payment plans** will help you avoid both the monetary and non-monetary costs to bill and collect after the visit.



¹Medical Group Management Association (MGMA)

² <https://www.athenahealth.com/insight/why-physicians-are-struggling-get-paid>

³ ACA International

⁴ <https://hitconsultant.net/2018/07/16/revenue-cycle-operations-op-ed>

⁵ JAMA International Medicine