Welcome to the Challenging World of Self-Pay Healthcare

DECA

bottom-line results matter

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Effective Strategies and Best Practices for Early-Out Self-Pay (EOSP) Service

There is a perfect storm of dire conditions out there for patients and healthcare consumers: a slowly recovering economy; new relationships with insurance; regulatory changes. All of these have combined in ways that, challengingly, leave patients responsible for higher percentages of their medical bills.

These are the self-payors; and they're directly affecting your bottom line as a healthcare provider.

The more financial responsibility placed on the already-burdened shoulders of consumers, the more chances there are for later payments and defaults.

What you need: a solution that helps you effectively collect self-pay balances with finesse and experience, maintaining patient relations while collecting payment for services performed.

The more chances for later payments and defaults, the more exposure your organization has to bad debt.

What you need is a solution that helps you effectively collect these self-pay balances. This solution, though, needs finesse and experience: you want to maintain good patient relations while collecting payment for the services performed.

There are many paths up the mountain of effectively implementing an early-out self-pay service; we at DECA Financial Services have experience guiding healthcare organizations – both facilities and physicians – through the labyrinth of choices. We've put together some Best Practices for organizations to consider in order to maximize their return on investment, both in terms of dollars collected, as well as efficiencies achieved.

Early Out: A Look at the New Normal

Early-out accounts are commonly worked in each client's name, invisible to the patient. Working accounts in this way decreases any confusion that might arise; the patient's entire relationship is with his or her healthcare provider.

Successful early-out programs require working with patients, who have no insurance or who are classified as self-pay accounts, to setup payment plans and make sure they make any and all payments in a timely manner – and as much upfront as possible. You'll want to make sure to partner with an agency that provides exhaustive ongoing reporting, keeping all key management up-to-date on each early-out patient's status and strategy for collection.

Clients benefit from early-out solutions designed to identify additional billing requirements (secondary insurance, Medicare, additional demographics, etc.) and that prompt patients to pay, thereby eliminating the need for extensive collection activity. Your effective partner can either return the patient back to the client if insurance is identified, or complete the billing transaction on your behalf.

By implementing early out programs, fewer accounts go to collections, yielding measurable returns as early in the collection process as possible. Customized self-pay early-out programs accelerate cash from self-pay accounts and reduce days in A/R.

It also increases patient satisfaction, lowers complaints, and reduces accounts written off to bad debt. A well-defined self-pay process is an asset in terms of patient satisfaction scores and repeat business.

What to Look for in a Successful Early-Out Self-Pay Partnership

As you begin the process of finding a business outsourcing partner, we feel you'll achieve the best results – not just for your bottom line, but for regulatory compliance and patient satisfaction – if you keep the following Best Practices in mind.

Ask the following of potential vendors/partners. Listen to how they answer. Have they taken the special and specific needs of your organization into consideration? Or does it instead sound as if you're getting the same laundry list of options everyone else is getting? Those kinds of answers generally speak to companies that are good at billing you, without being good at protecting your organization, and your organization's bottom line.

Will your business partner…

Rely on best practice methodologies to help increase cash?

Comprehensive EOSP processes should include balance liquidation, charity screening, Medicaid eligibility, adjustments, and more.

Reduce accounts receivable days while managing cost-to-collect ratio?

When talking with the references provided by your business partner, ask if that reference felt it received high-quality, results-driven service, with a focus on total account resolution rather than simple collections. Simple collections? That speaks to an organization that probably isn't capable of the level of finesse and sophistication this kind of account requires.

Deploy staff to other focus areas?

Is your potential business partner willing to assume complete responsibility for these accounts until resolution? It makes no sense to partner with an agency that's going to leave you in the middle, or doing double work. The point is to save you time and money by streamlining processes, allowing your staff to focus on other efforts.

Improve cash flow and accelerate income?

You want an agency that assigns a dedicated team of experienced account representatives to your project, facilitating a rapid transition to full service.

Reduce bad debt and maintain patient satisfaction?

You want to partner with a team that will work quickly, effectively, and professionally to maintain positive relationships with your patients.

Enjoy a seamless extension of your staff?

Insist on structured workflow protocols tailored to your exacting needs. You want a team that becomes, in effect, a seamless, transparent extension of your business office.

Provide data security and HIPAA compliance?

You want an agency that demonstrates a commitment to protecting sensitive health care data. Where is data housed? (The correct answer: in secure, independent data warehousing locations and follow leading security protocols.) This is another excellent question to bring up with references provided by your potential business partner.

Putting it Together…

Collecting at the point of service is a key to avoiding delayed payment and non-payment, but it requires effective communication skills, diplomacy and empathy. On the other hand, and just as important, every day that a payment is delayed diminishes the probability of being paid in full.

Partnering with an agency that provides Early-Out Self-Pay services can be key to your organization's financial health and success. Keeping these best practices in mind when searching the marketplace will insure that you're a step ahead of your competition.

About DECA Financial Services

DECA Financial Services, LLC (DECA) is a nationally licensed collection agency, located in Fishers, Indiana, which specializes in Healthcare (facility and physician)based debt. DECA is staffed with professional account representatives who consult with consumers that are financially responsible for resolving any outstanding balances.

DECA Financial services, LLC's executive team has more than 80 years of combined experience in revenue cycle management related to healthcare physicians and providers. Our commitment to healthcare portfolios evolved from a strategic awareness of analytics and a talent for maximizing all facets of the revenue cycle. Ultimately, our success and unprecedented performance is the direct result of this devotion to proven analytics, tireless execution, and discipline to quality.

DECA Financial services, LLC, has been acknowledged as one of the Best Places to Work in Collections and also as a distinguished member of the 2013 Class of Indiana Companies to Watch.

