**THE EYE INSTITUTE FOR MEDICINE & SURGERY**

**POLICY/PROTOCOL**

**SELF PAY BALANCES**

07/24/2012

Applies to: Billing Department, Front Office Receptionists, Front Office Leads, Clinic Leads

The information following pertains to all of our physicians and applies to all services provided to all patients.

Collecting on old balances prior to placing charts up to be worked up is the duty of our front desk staff tasked with checking patients in.  Try to collect on as many old balances as possible.  You are also authorized to set up payment plans within the parameters previously established under other policy emails.

If a patient has numerous questions about their account prior to agreeing to make payment, have a member of our Billing Department speak to the patient.  (Our Billing Staff is tasked with responding promptly to all such requests for assistance).

At Melbourne, please have the patient seated in the office behind the front desk across from the Retina & Central Hallway Dilating Sub-wait area and have the Billing Staff Member meet the patient there;

At Rockledge, please have the Staff Member responsible for Charge Entry greet the patient at the Front Desk and escort them back to her office to discuss the matter there.

DO NOT INTERRUPT ANY OF OUR PHYSICIANS IN THE MIDDLE OF EXAMINING PATIENTS OR OTHERWISE PLACE THEM ON THE SPOT TO GET INVOLVED WITH MATTERS PERTAINING TO PATIENT ACCOUNT BALANCES.  DOING SO COULD COMPROMISE PATIENT CARE.  IT IS A VIOLATION OF PRACTICE OPERATIONS POLICY & WILL LEAD TO DISCIPLINARY ACTION.

If there is a circumstance in which you believe that the Physician or the Practice may not want to charge a particular patient, speak the Front Office Lead or the CEO and we will help you to resolve the situation.

We understand that there may be some "special circumstance" patients.  We will attempt to compile a list of such patients and note their accounts accordingly.

A member of the Billing Department asked if they should attempt to collect a balance older than "X" date.  Here is the bottom line:  the patient received a very valuable service; in exchange, it is our reasonable expectation that we are going to get paid.  Sometimes, and due to a variety of factors, this does not occur as we would desire.  Nevertheless, in the final analysis, we provided a service to a specific patient, and ultimately, the patient who received the service, is responsible for payment.

No member of our staff should ever feel "bad" or in any way look at the attempt to collect a debt owed to the Practice as a "bad" thing.  It is payment for services provided that fuels the engine of the Practice;  it is how each of our vendors gets paid for the products and services they provide us;  it is how we pay the bank for our mortgage;  it is how each of the physicians. managers, clinical and business office staff members get paid.  It is fair and appropriate.

There are no "bad" questions regarding any such matters.  Always feel free to ask the Billing Lead or CEO any question at any time.

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Authorized Signature/Date