

CHOOSE A PATIENT PAYMENT SOLUTION THAT IS HIPAA COMPLIANT

TODAY'S ENVIROMENT

In today's healthcare environment, providers are faced with numerous challenges around patient billing and payment acceptance. Patient payments have become one of the fastest growing portions of a providers' revenue stream, yet can be one of the most difficult for a healthcare provider to collect.

In the April 2010 issue of Medical Group Management Association's *Connexion*, providers reported that \$1 of every \$4 comes directly from patients, and up to 50% of patient payments are being written off as bad debt due to their inability to effectively collect from their patients. Both tremendously impact a healthcare provider's bottom line.

The reason for this shift varies. Unemployment and uninsured patients are a factor as are insured patients with higher deductible plans and the overall decline in payer reimbursement rates. All of these variables have led to patients becoming more fiscally responsible for healthcare services and providers needing more robust patient payment acceptance solutions.

Healthcare providers state they need a payment solution designed for healthcare – not for retail – that will help them:

- Accept patient payments of any kind quickly and easily
- Improve cash flow by bringing in payments sooner
- Increase staff efficiency for patient payment acceptance
- Decrease billing and collection costs
- Offer patients an online payment option
- Ensure the solution complies with HIPAA to protect sensitive patient information

TRADITIONAL CREDIT CARD PROCESSING SOLUTIONS

Traditional payment processors do not meet the needs of healthcare providers. Their systems are designed for retail environments and not equipped to handle the unique challenges of patient payment acceptance. Many only support basic credit card processing and lack the features and functions needed to collect payments from patients after services have been provided.

If a traditional processor does support more advanced features, use of those features by the practice may violate one or more HIPAA regulations as they relate to the sharing of protected health information. As a general rule, most traditional payment processors have not taken the steps necessary to become HIPAA compliant, putting the practice at risk with any patient information they may share with the processor.

A PATIENT PAYMENT MANAGEMENT SOLUTION

A payment processing system designed for the healthcare environment that meets the stringent requirements of both the payment card industry (PCI), and HIPAA can make a significant impact on any healthcare practice.

A patient payment management solution can provide the tools necessary to improve patient collections — both at the point of care and after the patients have left the office. By offering an online patient payment portal, secure patient payment data storage for future processing, automated recurring

payments and space for detailed demographic information for every patient payment — whether in the form of cash, ACH or credit card — a patient payment management solution can make posting and payment reconciliation easier at the end of the day. Additionally, this solution is one that allows healthcare practices to securely use patient information to better manage business, knowing it will not violate HIPAA rules.

In the ever-changing dynamics of healthcare where patients are becoming more and more fiscally responsible for healthcare services, providers are in need of robust patient payment management solutions — for example, Heartland Payment Systems' ConfirmPay™, powered by TransEngen.

There are plenty of payment processing options on the market today, but that doesn't mean they are all good for a healthcare practice. By choosing the right processing partner — one that will meet the healthcare providers and patients' needs and offer a HIPAA compliant solution that meets PCI requirements — a provider can be confident that its HIPAA compliance is in good hands — and perhaps even see an improvement in its bottom line.

William Collins is the executive director of vertical market strategy at Heartland Payment Systems, provider of the ConfirmPay patient payment management solution. To learn more about Heartland's full line of healthcare business solutions — including ConfirmPay — call 972.295.8677 or visit HeartlandPaymentSystems.com/healthcare.