

## Managing Healthcare Finances

Family leaders from the Family Advisory Council of The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia offer these top nine tips for managing your healthcare finances:

### Create a system for all your health insurance and billing records.

File folders labeled by category will help you stay organized, for example, "Paid," "Pending," "Correspondence" and "Telephone Contact." You could also make files on your computer and add scanned documents to the appropriate folder.

### Keep dated records.

Date each piece of paperwork as you get it and keep a dated record of everything on which you have taken action.

### Make copies.

Keep copies of every billing document and staple together bills, explanations of benefits (EOB) and statements that are about the same doctor visit or test. If you choose to keep records on your computer, scan each bill and EOB and file them.

### Keep a log of all phone calls.

Use a telephone log to document all calls about billing and insurance issues. This log may include: date of contact, date of service, name and phone number of the person you contacted, the result of the phone conversation, and any follow up you need to do.

### Keep receipts and records of your non-reimbursable medical expenses.

These could include car mileage, tolls, parking, meals, telephone bills, lodging and conferences. These costs may be covered through Medicare or used as an itemized deduction when you file your taxes. Check to see if you qualify for Medical Assistance or a program such as The New Jersey Catastrophic Illness Relief Fund — don't make any assumptions about qualifying because many families are eligible for some level of benefit.

### Explore options for financial assistance.

The Family Health Coverage Program at CHOP helps uninsured and underinsured families work through the application and enrollment process for financial assistance programs.

## Contact Us

Reach the Pre-Visit Financial Counseling Hotline at **1-800-664-7855**

For answers to your Hospital bill (green) questions, please call **1-800-283-3055**

For answers to your Physician bill (blue) questions, please call **1-877-724-2467**

For answers to your Home Care bill (white) questions, please call **1-800-866-1242**

### Make a directory of your go-to financial resources.

Keep a list of the names and contact information of people who can help you handle your bills and insurance. This could include case managers, social workers, physicians' billing managers, representatives from CHOP's billing office and staff from the state Office of Advocacy. Use these people as resources whenever you have a question, and contact them early in the process, especially if you are feeling overwhelmed and concerned about paying on time.

### Get detailed copies of exactly what your health plan covers.

Contact your employer to let them know your situation and ask for specific information about what benefits are available to you. If you have a question regarding the coverage of a specific benefit for your child, ask for help from different resources. If you feel you have been unfairly denied coverage, ask about your insurance company's appeal process. Many times you can work with your insurer to get a benefit that is not stated in your plan. Your case manager or social worker can help with this.

Let us know if you are having trouble paying your bill. CHOP staff members know that it is often overwhelming to care for a sick child and manage all the financial paperwork. Don't panic if you receive a collection notice. It is important to contact the Billing Department and talk about setting up a reasonable payment plan for your family. We are here to help.