WHEN A LOVED ONE IS HOSPITALIZED

A FINANCIAL WORKSHEET AND GUIDE FOR FAMILIES

Focus on their care first. Use the guide to know what to ask, what to keep, and what to do next with the finances

1 BEFORE THE EMERGENCY

Keep important information somewhere a trusted family member can find it, like the following:

- [ ] Health insurance information
- [ ] Medication list and physician contacts
- [ ] Emergency contacts
- [ ] Bank, investment, and retirement account information
- [ ] Life and disability insurance information
- [ ] Employer and HR benefits
- [ ] Will and trust documents, if applicable

2 AT THE HOSPITAL

- [ ] Locate **insurance card** and information
- [ ] Ask: **Inpatient** or Observation?

Observation means the patient is receiving hospital care but is still classified as an outpatient. This can affect costs and Medicare coverage.

- [ ] Get **billing/financial counselor** contact
- [ ] Ask about **financial assistance** or **charity care**

Programs may reduce bills for eligible patients

- [ ] Save all hospital paperwork
- [ ] Ask which doctors or other providers may bill separately

Billing/Financial Counselor: ______

Phone number: ______

3 INSURANCE & MEDICAL BILLS

Insurance Company: ______

Member ID: ______

Deductible: $ ______

Out-of-pocket max: $ ______

Deductible *= the amount you may pay for covered care before your plan begins paying according to its terms.*

Out-of-pocket maximum *= the most you generally pay for covered, in-network services during a plan year*

- [ ] Compare each bill with the Explanation of Benefits (EOB) — the statement from your insurer showing what was billed, what insurance paid or allowed, and what you may owe. **An EOB is not a bill.**
- [ ] Request an itemized bill if charges are unclear.
- [ ] Review unexpected out-of-network charges.
- [ ] If insurance denies a claim, ask about the appeal process and deadline.
- [ ] Ask about financial assistance and payment arrangements.

Claim/Account Number: ______

Amount we may owe: ______

4 WORK & HOUSEHOLD INCOME

- [ ] **PTO (Paid Time Off):** Paid time away from work under the employer's plan.
- [ ] **FMLA (Family and Medical Leave Act):** May provide eligible employees of covered employers with job-protected leave for qualifying medical or family-care reasons. **FMLA is not automatically paid leave.**
- [ ] Short-term disability benefits
- [ ] Long-term disability benefits
- [ ] Other employer benefits or assistance

Employer/HR Contact: ______

Phone number: ______

Estimated monthly income affected: $ ______

New childcare/caregiving/transpo costs: $ ______

5

BEFORE MAKING A BIG MONEY DECISION

Before using retirement funds, selling investments, taking a large loan, or putting a significant medical balance on a credit card, consider finding out:

- [ ] Has insurance fully processed the claim?
- [ ] What is our actual patient responsibility?
- [ ] Is hospital financial assistance available?
- [ ] Is a payment arrangement available?
- [ ] Are employer or government benefits available?
- [ ] Have we considered possible tax or investment consequences?

The goal is to understand the full financial picture before making a decision that may have longer-term consequences.

BILLING PROTECTIONS TO KNOW

NO SURPRISES ACT

Federal law that provides protections against certain unexpected out-of-network medical bills

Does not apply to every bill. Generally does not cover ground ambulance

GOOD FAITH ESTIMATE

If you don't have insurance or aren't using it for scheduled care, providers generally must give you an estimate of expected charges

If the final bill is atleast $400 more than the estimate, a federal dispute process may be available

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE / CHARITY CARE

Federal law that provides protections against certain unexpected out-of-network medical bills

AFTER DISCHARGE

- [x] Collect bills and EOBs
- [x] Match bills with insurance claims
- [x] Follow up denied claims
- [x] Question charges that don't make sense
- [x] Apply for financial assistance and arrange payments if needed
- [x] Track ongoing medical expenses (prescriptions, therapy, equipment)
- [x] Complete leave or disability paperwork
- [x] Review household budget and emergency savings

Take it one step at a time. You don't have to do it all today.

TERMS TO KNOW

CMS — CENTERS FOR MEDICARE & MEDICAID SERVICES:
The federal agency that administers Medicare and works with states on Medicaid, and oversees certain federal healthcare and medical-billing protections.

MEDICARE
Federal health insurance primarily for people age 65 and older and certain younger people who meet eligibility requirements.

MEDICAID
A joint federal-state health coverage program for eligible people; eligibility and benefits vary by state.

NO SURPRISES ACT
A federal law that provides protections against certain unexpected out-of-network medical bills.

HSA — HEALTH SAVINGS ACCOUNT
A tax-advantaged account available to eligible individuals that can be used for qualified medical expenses.

FSA — FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNT
An employer-sponsored account that can be used for eligible healthcare expenses, subject to the plan's rules.

This worksheet is intended for general educational purposes. Healthcare coverage, employment benefits, financial assistance, and eligibility requirements vary by individual circumstances and plan.