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More than 150 Healthcare Organizations Adopt Best Practices for Patient Financial Communications

(June 27, 2016, Las Vegas) – As of June 2016, more than 150 hospitals and clinics had formally adopted the Healthcare Financial Management Association’s PATIENT FINANCIAL COMMUNICATIONS BEST PRACTICES[®], demonstrating their commitment to creating a positive financial experience for patients. The announcement was made during HFMA’s annual conference in Las Vegas. Developed in 2013, the [Best Practices](#) are designed to address the industry-wide call for better communication about billing, payment, and financial responsibility between patients and healthcare organizations.

“Adopting the best practices promotes trust and helps prevent misunderstandings between patients and healthcare providers,” said HFMA President and CEO Joseph J. Fifer, FHFMA, CPA. “In a time when patients are paying more out of pocket for their health care, clear communication about financial matters is crucial. We encourage all provider organizations to seek Adopter recognition.”

Many of the 85 hospitals and 68 clinics that have attained Adopter status to date are members of nine healthcare systems: Carolinas HealthCare, Charlotte, N.C.; Duke University Health System, Durham, N.C.; Essentia Health, Duluth, Minn; Geisinger Health System, Danville, Pa; Intermountain Healthcare, Salt Lake City, Utah; Novant Health, Winston-Salem, N.C.; St.

Luke's Health System, Kansas City, Mo; The Metro Health System of Cleveland, Cleveland, Ohio; and UAB Medicine, Birmingham, Ala. In addition, Henry County Health Center, Mount Pleasant, Iowa, a critical access hospital, and Maury Regional Medical Center, Columbia, Tenn., have been recognized as Adopters.

“It's important to take a holistic approach in understanding how the cost of a procedure or hospitalization is going to ultimately impact patients,” says Rodney Williams, Senior Manager of Patient Revenue Management Organization at Duke University Health System, an Adopter organization. “We perform a comprehensive analysis to make sure that patients are not going to be surprised by the costs they are responsible for on the back end.”

To achieve [Adopter recognition](#), organizations attest that they have well-established processes in place to help patients understand their health insurance coverage and their out-of-pocket responsibility for the services they receive, and that compassion, patient advocacy, and education are part of all of their financial discussions with patients.

“We know this is the right thing to do for our patients, and this is the direction our industry is progressing,” said Mary Beth Briscoe, Clinical Operations CFO at UAB Medicine, in discussing why UAB Medicine sought Adopter recognition. “Revising how our frontline, patient-facing personnel approach the conversation of financial obligation has begun to de-mystify the concept of patient responsibility and contributed to a more positive overall patient experience.”

Experts across the healthcare field, including representatives from the American Hospital Association, America's Health Insurance Plans, the American Academy of Family Physicians, and the National Patient Advocate Foundation, along with a patient, participated in the best practices development process. They were advised by national healthcare policymakers, including former Health and Human Services Secretaries Michael Leavitt and Donna Shalala, as well as former Senate Leaders Bill Frist and Tom Daschle and Clinton Administration Deputy Attorney General Jamie Gorelick.

In a related development, a statewide effort by the Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems (OAHHS) to implement HFMA's Price Transparency Task Force recommendations, which are a companion to the Best Practices, resulted in OAHHS's recent announcement that

every hospital in Oregon can now provide a price estimate for hospital services for a scheduled procedure within three business days. To facilitate access to price information, OAHHS added to OregonHospitalGuide.org in order to provide comprehensive information for consumers to contact hospital price estimate and billing departments and link directly to each hospital's financial assistance policy.

The Price Transparency Task Force recommendations, Patient Financial Communications Best Practices, and Best Practices Adopter recognition program are part of HFMA's [Healthcare Dollars & Sense](http://HealthcareDollars&Sense.com)[®] initiative, which is designed to help make sense of prices and value in health care. For more information, visit hfma.org/dollars.

About HFMA

With more than 40,000 members, the Healthcare Financial Management Association (HFMA) is the nation's premier membership organization for healthcare finance leaders. HFMA builds and supports coalitions with other healthcare associations and industry groups to achieve consensus on solutions for the challenges the U.S. healthcare system faces today. Working with a broad cross-section of stakeholders, HFMA identifies gaps throughout the healthcare delivery system and bridges them through the establishment and sharing of knowledge and best practices. The Association helps healthcare stakeholders achieve optimal results by creating and providing education, analysis, and practical tools and solutions. Its mission is to lead the financial management of health care. hfma.org

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