Enhancing point-of-service collections while **simultaneously enhancing patient experience**

As care delivery options increase and patients become more selective about their choice of healthcare providers, **patient experience is becoming increasingly important to consider across all touch points in the care continuum, not just clinical.**

Defined as 'the sum of all interactions shaped by an organization's culture that influence patient perception across the continuum of care', patient experience has a critical impact on patient retention and overall satisfaction of patients and providers.

Ensuring a positive patient experience means not talking about financial obligations or payments, right? WRONG.

IN THIS GUIDE:

Results form Bon Secours Mercy Health's POS collection program

Key considerations for establishing your own POS collection program that puts patients first
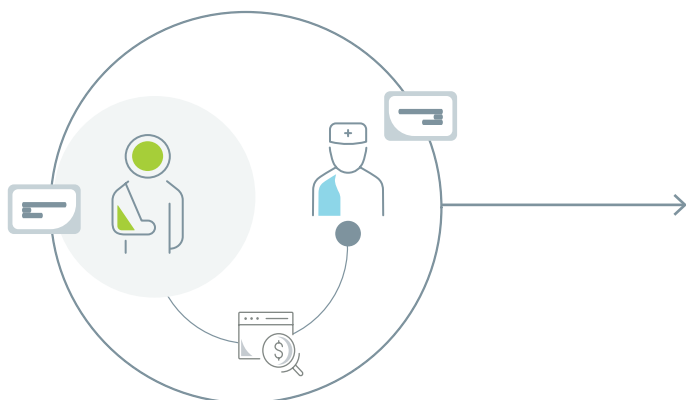
80% of patients want their doctors to help them manage financial responsibilities by clearly communicating what insurance covers vs what they owe

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THE MYTH

There is a common myth that if healthcare organizations implement best practices for revenue cycle, like collecting at the point-of-service, patient experience scores automatically drop.

THE TRUTH

If you lead with empathy, engagement and empowerment you'll successfully improve point-of-service (POS) collections while simultaneously improving patient satisfaction scores, like **Bon Secours Mercy Health.**

Discussing financial liability with patients upfront isn't just about telling them how much they owe — it's about helping them be informed about their financial responsibility, helping connect them to financial air, determining if they are eligible for discounts and helping them set up payment plans if needed.

Confusion leads to failure to pay and adds unnecessary stress to the patient. A successful point-of-service conversation results in payment and provides education to patients.

BON SECOURS MERCY HEALTH

- >1,200 sites of care
- 50 hospitals
- 60,000 associates
- > $2M a day in communicity benefits

20% increase

in POS collections with consistent quarterly increase in patient satisfaction scores as a result of partnering with Ensemble to implement a POS collection program.

> "Nothing will kill patient experience faster than getting a bill two weeks after you've been seen and not knowing it's coming."

- Susan Milligan, Director of Patient Experience, Ensemble Health Partners

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THE PLAN

Organizational vision: Develop an overarching vision regarding implementing or increasing overall POS collections and ensure there is strong executive support.

Interdepartmental strategy: Plan initiatives to ensure an associate- and patient-centered implementation — and don't only include patient access teams.

> **Access current state tools and practices** to determine how much system support you need vs training vs education.

> **Identify gaps** and have strategic planning sessions to address gaps.

> **Document your approach** and gain approval from all necessary participants, ensuring you include departments outside of Patient Access.

> **Develop a detailed implementation plan** with detailed due dates, training efforts and communications, to stay accountable to deadlines and ensure no key items are missed.

> **Share the vision** so everyone understands the 'why' and 'how' so they can collect with confidence.

Communication + education: Communicate the vision to teams and patients effectively.

> **Ensure consistency:**
Provide process documentation and scripting for all locations and areas (ED/OP/IP) to ensure that consistent conversations are taking place regardless of it is a scheduled outpatient, walk-in lab, or scheduled physical therapy.

> **Strive for inclusion:**
Make sure there is open communication between leaders in Patient Access and other departments. Share initiatives with all areas, collaborate with advocacy groups and take opportunities to present in clinical leadership and associate meetings.

> **Develop robust communication plan:**
Connect with your Marketing Department to create robust social media and signage programs and to ensure that teams understand the 'why' behind the effort so they can clearly articulate it to patients.

Tools + resources: Ensure you can provide relevant and accurate information to patients and drive successful collections.

> **Establish cohesive training and education so teams fully understand the program.** Empower your associates to be patient experience subject matter experts. Ensure training covers patient experience, service recovery, insurance verification, benefits and POS scripting

Preparing for a successful registration + POS collection is **all about exuding confidence and having your script in order.**

Example Script:
"Hi Ms. Smith, my name is Susan and I've been with registration for about 3 years now. I'm going to be asking you a series of questions to get you registered today and I'm also going to be reviewing your financial responsibility. Let's get started."

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Ensure the right tools are in place:

> A real-time eligibility tool integrated in your HIS provides real-time answers to key questions — Is the patient eligible for insurance? What's the deductible? What has the patient already paid?

> Patient liability estimator is critical to provide real-time estimates on out of pocket liability instead of just collecting on remaining deductibles or strictly co-pays.

> Thorough reporting ensures you can track how far you've come, where your opportunities are, and where to focus efforts with reports like daily collections, missed opportunities and estimate accuracy. Ensure you are monitoring collections and patient experience so that neither degrades.

Implementation + accountability: Set standards and expectations for leaders and associates to maximize POS collections and improve overall patient experience.

> Ensure your team knows you're in it with them. Be prepared to be onsite to support associates and patients during program launch.

> Focus on real-time — don't let patients leave unhappy.

> Recognize wins and celebrate team successes.

The most important thing is to never abandon the efforts.
Stopping once you start can be damaging to your organization's reputation.

Making these conversations part of your daily routine, supporting financial advocacy for patients and clearly outlining benefits prevents unwelcome surprises during times with so many unknowns and will create a positive experience for your patients.

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