

Pricing Transparency  
FAQs for Revenue Cycle: FINAL  
November 27, 2018

**Q: Why are your prices so high?**

**A:** Our prices are set at the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of the prices set within our community's hospital peer group. We believe the prices we set are reasonable for the quality provided—as Houston Methodist is a leader in health care nationally and invests heavily in providing the best in quality care, teaching and research.

Please note that these published prices are not our actual expected reimbursement from patients or insurance companies. Our reimbursement depends on a variety of negotiated factors – the charges are simply a starting point.

**Q: I looked up the procedure I need on your website, is this the amount I will pay?**

**A:** There are many factors involved in figuring out what you will pay for services. They are:

**Commercial Insurance:** Your insurance company negotiated a contract with Houston Methodist that determines what it will pay (called the allowable amount). Your benefit plan will determine what portion of the allowable amount is due from you in the form of a co-pay, deductible, co-insurance.

**Medicare and Medicaid:** Your insurance company has pre-determined what it will pay regardless of the charges (called the allowable amount). Your benefits will determine what portion of the allowable amount is due by you in the form of co-pay, deductible and co-insurance.

**Self-Pay:** You will be responsible for 50 percent of the prices that are listed on our website. There are resources available for those who qualify for charity care. Would you like to know more about that?

**Q: What if my insurance does not cover the services?**

**A:** You will be responsible for paying 50 percent of the prices that are listed on our website for non-covered services. Please make sure to check your benefits coverage package for items your insurance plan does not cover.

**Q: Why are there price differences between hospitals within your system? I see there are multiple hospitals to choose from and the prices are different.**

**A:** Our prices are set at the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of the prices set within hospital peer groups in our community. Houston Methodist has seven hospitals located in seven counties; it is expected that the community peer groups' prices may vary. There are sometimes large variations in the prices because each hospital has its own set of factors to manage. Our hospitals provide a high level of acute care that others do not offer, as well as our teaching and research missions. As a patient, prices are just one component to consider as the quality and safety of services a hospital provides is as important.

**Q: Why are there price differences between your hospitals and other hospitals in Houston?**

**A:** There likely will be differences in prices among hospital systems as each hospital has its unique pricing strategy based on the services and quality provided. Our hospitals provide a level of care that others do not offer, as well as our teaching and research missions.

**Q: Why are you posting your prices online?**

**A:** We are committed to being more transparent as we want to empower our patients to make informed decisions about their health care. The information on the website include charges for our services, complying with a federal mandate that all hospitals publish their prices by December 31, 2018.

**Q: Why haven't you posted your prices online before?**

**A:** Understanding pricing is very complicated, and the cost structure for health care has become even more complicated in recent years. Prices have always been available to patients who requested it, now hospitals must publish them even if not requested.

**Q: How do I compare prices between your hospital and other hospitals in my area?**

**A:** You can compare prices by going to each hospital's website as all hospitals are mandated to provide their prices online on December 31, 2018. But remember, these prices are not usually indicative of what you will pay out of pocket. For an estimate of what your service will cost you, please see list of contact numbers below.

**Q: Are prices for my physician's charges included on your website?**

**A:** No, only hospital charges and prices are included on our website. Physicians who provide services during a hospital stay bill separately from the hospital for their services.

**Q: What options do I have if I'm uninsured?**

**A:** Houston Methodist offers a 50 percent discount for uninsured patients, monthly payment plans, prompt pay settlements, case rate options and financial assistance if you qualify. For financial assistance, please see [www.houstonmethodist.org/billing](http://www.houstonmethodist.org/billing).

**Q: Can you tell me exactly what I will owe?**

**A:** Most patients will not pay the full price for health care services. We can provide you with an estimate of what you will owe, but it will not be exact because of some variables:

- Not all charges may be known at the time of providing your estimate
- Once in the procedure room, additional procedures may be ordered
- Any remaining deductible amount will be known only by the insurance company.

**Q: Why are the prices on your website different than the Blue Book?**

**A:** We do not know how the data from the Blue Book is reported or calculated.

**Q: Why don't you send out itemized statements with prices for all services provided during my visit?**

**A:** When determining how to bill our patients, Houston Methodist sought input from patients. The patient focus groups expressed that a detailed statement was not necessary to be mailed with the billing statement if the information is available elsewhere. At Houston Methodist, itemized detail is available in your MyChart account and by request through a customer service representative.

**Q: Does Houston Methodist match the lowest price in your local peer hospital community?**

**A:** No, there are many factors involved in setting a cost structure— quality of care provided is one.

**Q: Are your prices negotiable? Are they the same for insured and uninsured patients?**

**A:** Our prices are applied uniformly to all patients regardless of insured or not insured. However, for the insured patient, the hospital negotiates payment rate via contracts with each insurance company, annually. Based on that negotiated payment rate, the amount you owe would be a portion of that negotiated payment rate in the form of co-pay, deductible, and co-insurance. For the uninsured patient, Houston Methodist offers a 50 percent discount, monthly payment plans, prompt pay settlements, case rate options, and financial assistance upon qualify. For financial assistance, please see [www.houstonmethodist.org/billing](http://www.houstonmethodist.org/billing).

For estimates, please see list of contacts per entity:

Houston Methodist Hospital: 713-441-6805  
Houston Methodist Sugar Land Hospital: 281-274-7020  
Houston Methodist Willowbrook Hospital: 281-737-2048  
Houston Methodist West Hospital: 832-522-0275  
Houston Methodist Baytown Hospital: 832-556-6779  
Houston Methodist Continuing Care Hospital: 832-522-7283  
Houston Methodist The Woodlands Hospital: 936-270-2194  
Houston Methodist Clear Lake Hospital: 281-523-2526