

Hospitals Are Refusing to Do Surgeries Unless You Pay In Full First



Americans can no longer afford the high deductibles as insurance everywhere careens towards **Catastrophic Coverage only**. How many people do you see now asking for money through GoFundMe campaigns, for example? I read about this in the Wall Street Journal and it deepens my concerns about our entire 3rd Party Pays system, our ideology of not caring better for ourselves, preventative medicine and the mentality that **we can just turn over an insurance card and everything is covered**. Not any longer.

Hospitals and surgery centers are changing their approach to billing, demanding upfront payment for procedures instead of waiting until afterward. While this helps facilities avoid chasing payments, it is causing distress for patients, many of whom are facing serious medical conditions. Some patients are forced to delay procedures due to their inability to pay, while others find themselves overcharged and fighting for refunds. This shift towards prepayment affects a range of procedures, including knee replacements, CT scans, and childbirth. Despite federal laws ensuring emergency care, hospitals argue that prepayment for non-emergency services is necessary to reduce the burden of chasing unpaid bills. However, this practice adds to the financial strain on patients, especially considering the high variability in healthcare prices. While transparency efforts aim to empower patients to make informed choices, the reality of upfront payment underscores the ongoing challenges in the U.S. healthcare system.

I bring this changing insurance environment to your attention because this is affecting households across the nation. In your retirement planning, now more attention must be paid to the inevitable increases in health care – especially as we age. It raises a serious question: are you saving enough? Are you funding a Healthcare Savings Account? This must be part of our planning. Rich Michaels Minaya, 5-9-2024 (source: WSJ)