# Medical Debt Collection Policy

It is St. Cloud Ear, Nose & Throat Clinic’s policy to conduct its billing practices in a legal and ethical manner, consistent with the company’s mission and values. The company requires ethical billing practices in all aspects of the services provided by St. Cloud Ear, Nose & Throat Clinic.

This policy applies to the collection of medical debt from individual Minnesota patients/guarantors by St. Cloud Ear, Nose & Throat Clinic. This policy governs the collection of medical debt from individual patients/guarantors, in compliance with Minnesota Laws and the Minnesota Debt Fairness Act.

## Communication with Patients

St. Cloud Ear, Nose & Throat Clinic communicates with patients concerning medical debt owed and collecting medical debt as follows:

• Written monthly statements delivered via U.S. mail.

• Written letters and notices through the U.S. mail.

• Telephone calls, voice messages, text messages and emails to the patient.

## Referring Medical Debt to a Collection Agency or Law Firm

Third-party collection agencies and attorneys may be used only after all internal reasonable collection and payment options have been exhausted. St. Cloud Ear, Nose & Throat Clinic shall not refer any bills to a third-party collection agency or attorney for collection while a claim for payment of the services is pending with a contracted payer, provided St. Cloud Ear, Nose & Throat Clinic received complete and accurate payer information from the patient. St. Cloud Ear, Nose & Throat Clinic may refer a bill to a third-party collection agency or attorney following a denial of the claim by a payer, unless the denial is due to St. Cloud Ear, Nose & Throat Clinic’s error and such error results in the patient becoming liable for the debt when they would not otherwise be liable. St. Cloud Ear, Nose & Throat Clinic reserves the right to validate that an error has been made and if St. Cloud Ear, Nose & Throat Clinic determines that it has not made an error, then the patient may be held liable. Patients must sign an authorization allowing St. Cloud Ear, Nose & Throat Clinic to bill the patient’s health plan, insurance company, or any other third-party payer, and must cooperate with St. Cloud Ear, Nose & Throat Clinic in a reasonable manner by providing requested information to facilitate proper billing to a patient’s third-party payer.

## Identifying Medical Debt as Uncollectible or Satisfied, and Ending Collection Activities

After accounts have been referred to a collection agency or law firm, they are returned to St. Cloud Ear, Nose & Throat Clinic under the following circumstances:

• The outstanding amount has been satisfied (the requested payment has been received).

• The account for the related charges contains a “Paid in Full comment in St. Cloud Ear, Nose & Throat Clinic’s billing system and no further collection activity is taken.

• The outstanding amount has been determined by the assigned outside collection agency to be uncollectible based on Minnesota and Federal guidelines and has been returned to St. Cloud Ear, Nose & Throat Clinic to be considered uncollectable.

• The account for the related charges is marked “uncollectible” in St. Cloud Ear, Nose & Throat Clinic’s billing system and no further collection activity is taken.

• The uncollectible balance will continue to be communicated with the patient and any payment offered will still be accepted on balances that have been determined to be uncollectible.

## Outstanding Medical Debt

St. Cloud Ear, Nose & Throat Clinic, P.A. will not deny medically necessary health treatments or services to a patient or any member of the patient’s family or household because of outstanding or previously outstanding medical debt owed by the patient or any member of the patient’s family or household to St. Cloud Ear, Nose & Throat Clinic, regardless of whether the health treatment or service may be available from another healthcare provider. As a condition of providing medically necessary health treatments or services, St. Cloud Ear, Nose & Throat Clinic may require a patient to enroll in a payment plan for the outstanding medical debt.

In this context, medically necessary care is defined as:

1. safe and effective;

2. not experimental or investigational, except as provided in Code of Federal Regulations, title 42, section 411.15(o);

3. furnished in accordance with acceptable medical standards of medical practice to diagnose or treat the patient’s condition, or to improve the function of a malformed body member;

4. furnished in a setting appropriate to the patient’s medical need and condition;

5. ordered and furnished by qualified personnel;

6. meets, but does not exceed, the patient’s medical need; and

7. is at least as beneficial as an existing and available medically appropriate alternative.

## Credit Reporting

St. Cloud Ear, Nose & Throat Clinic will not report any patient to a credit reporting agency as a result of such patient’s failure to pay a medical debt.

## Billing Errors

St. Cloud Ear, Nose & Throat Clinic shall comply with all Minnesota statutory requirements for addressing and reviewing billing errors as provided in Minnesota Statutes Section 62J.808.

## Overpayments

If St. Cloud Ear, Nose & Throat Clinic determines that a patient has overpaid a bill, St. Cloud Ear, Nose & Throat Clinic shall refund the amount of such overpayment to the patient within thirty (30) days of making such determination.

## No Assignment

St. Cloud Ear, Nose & Throat Clinic shall not assign or sell any claim for compensation or settlement of a claim for compensation owned by an injured employee or dependent.

## Debt Collection

St. Cloud Ear, Nose & Throat Clinic shall comply with all applicable Minnesota and federal debt collection statutes and regulations.

## Policy Availability

This policy shall be posted on the St. Cloud Ear, Nose & Throat Clinic website for Minnesota and a copy shall be provided to any patient who requests one.