

Preparing for Price Transparency: A Five-Point Checklist

Courtesy Healthcare Financial Management Association

As your organization prepares to offer price information to patients and other care purchasers, make sure you have addressed these five essential points.

1. Secure board and executive team support of price transparency. Working to implement price transparency will require dedication of organizational time and resources, as well as communication with external stakeholders, therefore it is important that leadership fully supports the effort.
2. Identify a reasonable starting point. Lower-priced, high-demand services will likely be of greatest interest to price-sensitive patients and are a good starting point for transparency efforts.
3. Consider how care purchasers will access the information you provide. Price information might be publicly posted on a website, made available on a password-protected website (e.g., for health plan members), or made available in response to an inquiry submitted via website or made by phone. However you plan to provide access to price information, make sure that patients can easily find out how to get it.
4. Identify other information sources that will help patients assess the value of the services you provide. Consider, for example, linking price information to relevant and publicly reported quality or patient safety scores.
5. Be prepared to explain healthcare pricing. Healthcare prices vary for different care purchasers and payers. Medicare and Medicaid programs set the prices they will pay providers, for example, while providers and health plans negotiate prices for insured patients based on such factors as anticipated volume of business and the cost to the provider of making the service available. As prices become more transparent, be prepared to explain why prices may be different for different care purchasers.