

§ 180.50 Requirements for making public hospital standard charges for all items and services.

(a) *General rules.* (1) A hospital must establish, update, and make public a list of all standard charges for all items and services online in the form and manner specified in this section.

(2) Each hospital location operating under a single hospital license (or approval) that has a different set of standard charges than the other location(s) operating under the same hospital license (or approval) must separately make public the standard charges applicable to that location.

(3) Each hospital must:

(i) Beginning January 1, 2024, make a good faith effort to ensure that the standard charge information encoded in the machine-readable file is true, accurate, and complete as of the date indicated in the machine-readable file; and

(ii) Beginning July 1, 2024, affirm in its machine-readable file that, to the best of its knowledge and belief, the hospital has included all applicable standard charge information in accordance with the requirements of this section, and that the information encoded is true, accurate, and complete as of the date indicated in the machine-readable file.

(b) *Required data elements.* (1) Prior to July 1, 2024, a hospital must include all of the following corresponding data elements in its list of standard charges, as applicable:

(i) Description of each item or service provided by the hospital.

(ii) Gross charge that applies to each individual item or service when provided in, as applicable, the hospital inpatient setting and outpatient department setting.

(iii) Payer-specific negotiated charge that applies to each item or service when provided in, as applicable, the hospital inpatient setting and outpatient department setting. Each payer-specific negotiated charge must be clearly associated with the name of the third party payer and plan.

(iv) De-identified minimum negotiated charge that applies to each item or service when provided in, as applicable, the hospital inpatient setting and outpatient department setting.

(v) De-identified maximum negotiated charge that applies to each item or service when provided in, as applicable, the hospital inpatient setting and outpatient department setting.

(vi) Discounted cash price that applies to each item or service when provided in, as applicable, the hospital inpatient setting and outpatient department setting.

(vii) Any code used by the hospital for purposes of accounting or billing for the item or service, including, but not limited to, the Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) code, the Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) code, the Diagnosis Related Group (DRG), the National Drug Code (NDC), or other common payer identifier.

(2) Unless otherwise specified in this paragraph (b)(2), beginning July 1, 2024, each hospital must encode in its machine-readable file all standard charge information, as applicable, for each of the following required data elements:

(i) General data elements, including:

(A) Hospital name, license number, and location name(s) and address(es) under the single hospital license to which the list of standard charges applies. Location name(s) and address(es) must include, at minimum, all inpatient facilities and stand-alone emergency departments; and

(B) The version number of the CMS template and the date of most recent update to the standard charge information in the machine-readable file.

(ii) Each type of standard charge as defined at § 180.20 (gross charge, discounted cash price, payer-specific negotiated charge, de-identified minimum negotiated charge, and de-identified maximum negotiated charge) and, for payer-specific negotiated charges, the following additional data elements:

(A) Payer and plan names; plan(s) may be indicated as categories (such as “all PPO plans”) when the established payer-specific negotiated charges are applicable to each plan in the indicated category;

(B) Method used to establish the standard charge; and

(C) Whether the standard charge indicated should be interpreted by the user as a dollar amount, or if the standard charge is based on a percentage or algorithm. If the standard charge is based on a percentage or algorithm, the machine-readable file (MRF) must also describe the percentage or algorithm that determines the dollar amount for the item or service, and, beginning January 1, 2025, calculate and encode an estimated allowed amount in dollars for that item or service.

(iii) A description of the item or service that corresponds to the standard charge established by the hospital, including:

(A) A general description of the item or service;

(B) Whether the item or service is provided in connection with an inpatient admission or an outpatient department visit; and

(C) Beginning January 1, 2025, for drugs, the drug unit and type of measurement.

(iv) Coding information, including:

(A) Any code(s) used by the hospital for purposes of accounting or billing for the item or service;

(B) Corresponding code type(s). Such code types may include, but are not limited to, the CPT code, the HCPCS code, the DRG, the NDC, Revenue Center Codes (RCC), or other common payer identifier; and

(C) Beginning January 1, 2025, any modifier(s) that may change the standard charge that corresponds to a hospital item or service, including a description of the modifier and how it changes the standard charge.

(c) *Format.* (1) Prior to July 1, 2024, the information described in paragraph (b)(1) of this section must be published in a single digital file that is in a machine-readable format.

(2) Beginning July 1, 2024, the hospital's machine-readable file must conform to a CMS template layout, data specifications, and data dictionary for purposes of making public the standard charge information required under paragraph (b)(2) of this section.

(d) *Location and accessibility.* (1) A hospital must select a publicly available website for purposes of making public the standard charge information required under paragraph (b) of this section.

(2) The standard charge information must be displayed in a prominent manner and clearly identified with the hospital location with which the standard charge information is associated.

(3) The hospital must ensure that the standard charge information is easily accessible, without barriers, including but not limited to ensuring the information is accessible:

(i) Free of charge;

(ii) Without having to establish a user account or password;

(iii) Without having to submit personal identifying information (PII); and

(iv) To automated searches and direct file downloads through a link posted on a publicly available website.

(4) The machine-readable file and standard charge information contained in that machine-readable file must be digitally searchable.

(5) The machine-readable file must use the following naming convention specified by CMS, specifically: <ein>_<hospital-name>_standardcharges. [json|csv].

(6) Beginning January 1, 2024, the hospital must ensure that the public website it selects to host its machine-readable file establishes and maintains, in the form and manner specified by CMS:

(i) A .txt file in the root folder that includes:

(A) The hospital location name that corresponds to the machine-readable file;

(B) The source page URL that hosts the machine-readable file;

(C) A direct link to the machine-readable file (the machine-readable file URL); and

(D) Hospital point of contact information.

(ii) A link in the footer on its website, including but not limited to the homepage, that is labeled “Price Transparency” and links directly to the publicly available web page that hosts the link to the machine-readable file.

(e) *Frequency of updates.* The hospital must update the standard charge information described in paragraph (b) of this section at least once annually.

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