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â€œWhat is the cost for copying medical records?â€• has many different answers as perspectives differ or what is actually involved in the process of reproducing medical records, whether they are in paper chart format of in an electronic medical record. In fact, there are quite a few ways to discern costs of copying medical records. But, fundamental costs do apply across the board.

What is the Cost for Copying Medical Records for Patients?

Due to federal regulations defined under HIPAA, patients may be charged a copying fee, but they do not have to pay for a medical office or hospital to search and retrieve the record. As of January 1, 2011, new costs were put into place for copying medical records and the fee that can be charged to patients. These fees are dependent upon each state in which the copying takes place, so prices do vary. Those providers that charge for copying medical records by the page recently enacted price increases based on the Bureau of Labor and Statistics' Consumer Price Index.

The price for medical record copying can change on a per page basis, according to different record sizes. For example, in some cases, the first twenty pages could have a maximum per price page, but if the file is bigger, the next increment of forty pages or so would have a smaller maximum amount per page that could be charged, and so on. Again, such pricing structures depend on the applicable stateâ€™s requirements and specific healthcare organizationâ€™s guidelines, Patients may als be charged for postage, shipping, and other types of delivery charges in conjunction with copying their medical records.

What is the Cost for Copying Medical Records for Government or Insurance Companies?

Other rules apply when a medical office receives a request from a government agency, lawyer, or insurance company in terms of the cost that can be charged for copying medical records. Sometimes, there is a flat fee like that for a district attorney request. Other situations do not allow a medical office to charge, such as forwarding the medical record within a physician network or handling a request from Medicaid or Medicare. In certain instances, the state and federal government will actually reimburse a medical practice for these copying fees.

Other Costs to Consider

While it may seem that these costs and reimbursements would allow a medical practice or hospital to make a healthy profit margin, factoring in the true cost of copying a medical record illustrates that this is not likely. Here are the business expenses to consider when it comes to copying medical records:

Cost of technology and equipment to handle copying, including photocopiers, scanners, fax machines, or other more advanced devices;

Labor and training costs associated with handling the copying task;

Space costs for storing the medical records; and

Risk exposure and liability costs associated with human error and other mistakes that leave a company open to lawsuits or penalties for non-compliance.

Added together, the task of copying medical records is expensive and costly on many levels. Utilizing an outsource provider can be one way healthcare businesses reduce the actual per cost of copying each medical record requested.

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